

**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY HON. UHURU KENYATTA, C.G.H.,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA AND COMMANDER IN
CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCES DURING INAUGURAL SESSION OF
THE 9TH SUMMIT OF THE ACP HEADS OF STATE AT KICC, NAIROBI**

DATE: 9TH DECEMBER, 2019

**Your Excellency, James Marape, Prime Minister of Papua New
Guinea and the Immediate Former Chairman of the ACP Summit of
Heads of State and Government,**

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,

**Your Excellency, Dr. Patrick I. Gomes, Our ACP Secretary General,
Ms. Hanna Tetteh, Special UN Representative to the African Union,
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,**

Honourable Ministers,

Delegates,

Representatives of Regional Economic Blocs,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted today to preside over the opening ceremony of the 9th Summit of the African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Heads of State and Government.

And indeed, On behalf of the **Government of Kenya** and the People of Kenya, and on my own behalf; I warmly welcome all of you to Kenya, and thank the ACP Member States for according us the privilege as a country to host the 9th ACP Summit.

The theme of our 9th ACP Summit, "*A Transformed ACP: Committed to Multilateralism*", resonates very well with Kenya's national transformative agenda as well as the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

From the very onset, I would like to take this opportunity to express through the Deputy Prime Minister, our gratitude to the outgoing Chair of the Summit, H.E. James Marape, the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea.

During his tenure, he has provided us with sterling leadership as a Group and ensured that the Group remains united, vibrant and relevant; and that it continues to serve our collective interests. And we are all very proud of our solidarity and our growing capability to support South-South as well as North-South cooperation.

I also acknowledge the support and advice that we have all received from H.E. Dr. Patrick I. Gomes, the Secretary General of our Group. He has been a valuable asset and run the ACP Secretariat with great professionalism and dedication. And indeed as he prepares to leave office in the next few months, we wish him well in his next endeavours.

Thank you very much.

Allow me also to extend our compliments to H.E. Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, for his commitment to the ACP Group of States; and more specifically for

his generous offer to host the ACP South-South Centre. Through you Mr. Vice President Excellency, I thank Equatorial Guinea for this very kind gesture.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It has been 44 Years since the signing of the Georgetown Agreement, which established our Group. Underlying the establishment of the ACP Group was our desire to promote unity and solidarity of the ACP States, achieve sustainable development and reduce poverty within our Member States, deepen ACP trade and development cooperation with the European Union, and achieve greater integration into the world economy.

Since then, global dynamics have changed. Today's multi-polar world is characterized by competing geo-political interests, new challenges to peace and security, and unprecedented constraints to the free movement of people. But despite these challenges, the ACP Group of countries continues to thrive, and now stands out as the world's largest transcontinental formal organization.

As I take over as the President of the ACP Group, I want to pledge to you that I will ensure that the vision and goals of this group, are placed at the very centre of all our international engagements and that the ACP Group becomes a beacon of hope for multilateralism.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I note that the revised Georgetown Agreement will be placed before us for consideration and adoption.

This revised Agreement will reinvigorate our Group; giving us more dynamism vision, fresh impetus and drive; while at the same time helping to galvanize the modernization of the ACP Group.

Kenya welcomes the envisioned transformation of the ACP into a more influential actor in the arena of global economic as well as political governance.

As has been stated before, with a combined population of over 1.1 billion people and a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of ACP member states is about 3.2 trillion US dollars; the ACP Group presents enormous opportunities for intra-ACP trade and investments, people-to-people relations, and the celebration also of the cultural diversity among the Member States.

Going forward, we should not just only use the numerical and economic strength to exert greater influence on the international stage, but also our intellectual capacity and use all of these for the purpose of achieving greater shared prosperity for all our People.

Most of our Countries, unfortunately today, continue to trade in primary extractives, fisheries, agricultural commodities; with little value addition and wealth creation in our home countries. This exposes our economies to product-price volatility, constraining structural transformation of our economies and also constrains our pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

So therefore in this regard, we need to embrace innovation and technology, and accelerate the implementation of structural reforms and policies as well as infrastructural development, targeting at fostering industrial development and diversification of our economies.

Indeed in the Kenya's experience, as we move towards implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we have undertaken a deliberate path of structural transformation, and identified four priority sectors, namely: Manufacturing, Affordable Housing, Universal Health Coverage and Food and Nutrition Security.

And our reason for prioritizing these areas was to ensure that we drive equitable and inclusive economic development improved quality of life, create jobs particularly for our youth, and improve our economy's resilience against the challenges posed by Climate Change.

Indeed as Prime Minister Mottley has put very strongly, climate change poses the greatest threat to our combined future and the time to deal with this critical issue is indeed now. I therefore urge this ACP fraternity to use this gathering to share successful experiences and strategies that can be adopted by other Member States as we strive to improve the lives of our People.

Since 2000, the relationship between the ACP and the EU has been anchored on the Cotonou Partnership Agreement; and the relationship has largely been focused on sustainable development, poverty reduction and the gradual increased integration of ACP Countries into the global economy.

Through this partnership, the ACP States have had an access to predictable development finance, especially from the European Development Fund. And, Furthermore, the European Union remains one of our key destinations for ACP exports under the Non-Reciprocal trading arrangements.

For some time now, the European Union has been urging for a change to our trading arrangements, which has given rise to the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs).

However, as you all know, our experience with EPAs has been mixed, and this arrangement is yet to fully achieve its stated objective, of helping our countries pull out of the vicious cycle of low trading volumes and low value transactions.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

As you are all aware, the **Cotonou Partnership Agreement** as currently constituted expires in February 2020. We all take note of the progress made in the negotiations for a post-Cotonou ACP-EU Partnership Agreement.

An indeed, It is my sincere hope that the new agreement will enhance integration of ACP countries into the global value chains and indeed work towards accelerating the achievement of our 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

We all look forward to a more balanced trading arrangement with the European Union in the New Partnership Agreement, which gives priority to emerging opportunities especially in e-commerce and trade in services and

arrangement that assures us of equitable and sustainable growth in order to assure mutual prosperity.

At this point, I wish to sincerely thank the chief negotiators for the progress made so far. We all look forward to timely conclusion of the negotiations and the execution of a new Agreement, better able to deliver on its objectives.

However, even as we focus on our South-North partnership, I cannot but emphasize the need for us to deepen our South-South partnership that should ultimately be the future of our organization.

Excellencies,

Let me now turn to the theme of the 9th Summit. This Summit is happening at a time when multilateralism is facing its greatest series of threats.

We all appreciate that the current multilateral trading system has allowed, both big and small economies to push their development ambitions. As participating entities in the architecture of this system, we are called upon to work together to forge a consensus on the pressing global challenges and indeed define the way forward.

In this respect, I look forward to seeking all your support for the ACP positioning during the MC 12 Ministerial meeting in Astana, Kazakhstan in June, 2020.

As ACP Member States, we should be very firm in advocating for and supporting an equitable and fair multilateral trading system that safeguards our economies from unfair trading practices.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen;

As Kenya takes over the Chairmanship of the ACP Group for the next three (3) years, I wish today to once again reaffirm Kenya's commitment to the objectives and principles of the ACP Group.

During my tenure, I will seek to promote and indeed protect the interests of our Group at regional, continental and international levels.

I will also champion the Group's solidarity and unity; advocate for an enhanced intra-ACP and South-South as well as Triangular Cooperation and Champion a Reform Agenda for the ACP Group; push for the integration of our States into the global economy, as well as the conclusion and implementation of the New Partnership Agreement.

Indeed in the next few months, I will take time to share with you my own vision of how we can collectively pursue a common roadmap for the actualization and the strengthening of the voice of our ACP Group.

As I conclude, I want to once again take this opportunity to welcome each and every one of you to Kenya, and to tell you to totally feel at home amongst your fellow ACP citizens; Kenya welcomes and we ask you, and encourage you at the end of this summit to take time and engage, and enjoy the hospitality of our Kenyan people and the beauty of our landscape as well as that of the wider Eastern African region.

Karibuni Kenya. Ahsante sana and I wish us all successful deliberations.

THANK YOU

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