



Welcome Remarks

by

Dr Patrick Gomes, ACP Secretary-General

**to the 9th Summit of ACP Heads of State and Government Meeting
in Nairobi, Kenya, 9 December 2019**

Your Excellency, Uhuru Maigui KENYATTA, President of the Republic of Kenya,

Your Excellency, Dr. William RUTO, Deputy President,

Distinguished Heads of State and Government,

Vice Presidents, Honourable Ministers,

Distinguished Representatives of International and Regional Organisations,

Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Honoured Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I begin by conveying on behalf of the Secretariat of the ACP Group of States, to You Mr. President, your Government and the People of this glorious Republic of Kenya, our deep gratitude. You have so graciously and generously, left no stone unturned, to host this 9th Summit of ACP Heads of State and Government.

Kenya remains unique as the only developing country to be the home and host of a Headquarters of the United Nations. But even more telling than geographic location has been the sterling sacrifices and solidarity of Kenya with the international community, and with neighbouring countries of East

Africa, for peacekeeping and the Quest for lasting peace across the continent of Africa - a "Pax Africana", that dream of your own eminent scholar and diplomat, Ali Mazrui.

By history, geography and timely relevance, the theme and venue of this Summit seems most significant. *The Transformed ACP Committed to Multilateralism.*

A cursory glance reveals that in the face of global turbulences, the fragility of all states, large or small, and an increasingly precarious balance between survival or utter devastation of our only home, planet earth, the role and relevance of the United Nations has assumed unparalleled importance. "Now more than ever", as we may need to be reminded!

And today, You our Leaders of 79 developing countries, assembled from across three continents of Africa, the Americas and the Blue Pacific in Oceania, will deliberate and offer a response to that enduring imperative, our beloved, the late Nelson Madiba Mandela, regarded as confronting the United Nations.

On October 3rd 1994, in that landmark address to the General Assembly, Mandela said, "*the great challenge of our age to the United Nations Organisation is to answer the question – given the interdependence of the nations of the world, what is it that we can and must do, to ensure that **democracy, peace and prosperity** prevail everywhere*".

Ensuring that democracy, peace and prosperity should prevail everywhere in today's world is at the heart of the vision and **strategic imperative** of the Transformed ACP.

That call of Mandela is to be acted on, not only as the great challenge of our age, but also the ultimate measure against which the survival of values, of justice, solidarity, and respect for fundamental freedoms of the United Nations Charter define the qualities of the relations between States and governments and their peoples.

These values remain essential to enable each citizen to enjoy the right to life, liberty and opportunities to accomplish the creative potential with which each human person is endowed.

These rights and their practice, taken together, help us to understand that multilateralism is simply a means to organize relations for a common purpose.

In this system of geopolitical engagements, described as multilateralism, the United Nations is its centre.

It is however naïve to not acknowledge that with interdependence and enormous connectivity, the contradictions of excessive abundance and wealth, with gross inequalities and extreme deprivation, have fuelled

globe-wide debate and aggressive political reaction that encourages nationalism in its worst forms of xenophobia and hate crimes.

Mr. President, Heads of State and Government, Distinguished Guests,

In this complex and turbulent re-alignments of countries, and the emerging economies of new centres of power, the ACP Group of States sees its defining role as **catalyst and advocate of an inclusive multilateralism.**

We draw on 44 years of an accumulated experience on trade policy and negotiations to defend the multilateral trading system in the WTO in many areas.

For example, in defence of the principle of special and differential treatment for all developing countries.

Secondly, the combined solidarity of the ACP Group in the WTO made possible a trade facilitation agreement in Bali, Indonesia.

Thirdly, the catalytic force of ACP's 79 developing countries in the "ambition coalition" made possible the passage of the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change, requesting all countries to make Nationally Determined Contributions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Moreover, the ACP Group continues to lead in implementation of the UN's Agenda 2030 and 17 SDGs in several areas with UN agencies, such as FAO on ending hunger, WHO, UNWOMEN, UNFPA, UNIDO, UNHABITAT, UNDRR, UNFCCC at an annual commitment of development assistance on average of Euro 400 million through co-management with the European Commission.

The centrality and driving force of the ACP Group as catalyst and advocate in advancing multilateralism is "to ensure that democracy, peace and prosperity prevail everywhere", and give life to the call of Madiba Mandela.

In this Summit, Excellencies, you will consider the ACP's deeper political partnerships with traditional allies and new associates across the global South. The Nairobi Nguvu Ya Pajoma Declaration has been crafted and considered by the Council, seeking endorsement by the Summit... to give life and courage to those noble ideals to which all our Leaders have pledged their commitment.

The ACP – transformed and reinvented – looks to the continuation of Your renewed guidance and wise counsel, as we enable a multilateralism rooted in everyday life and embedded to principles of justice and democratic governance.

These will make possible the realisation of the first of the SDGs: Ending poverty in all its forms, everywhere!

Together the Organisation of ACP States can and will, side by side, become the catalyst and advocate to end poverty ... and fulfil Mandela's dream that "democracy, peace and prosperity prevail everywhere!"

Welcome to this 9th Summit of Heads of State and Government.

Thank you – asante sana!

Nairobi, Kenya 9 December 2019.