



Towards a renewed partnership with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries after 2020

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The Joint Communication **Towards a renewed partnership with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries** builds on the longstanding relationship with the ACP countries, which provides a good starting point to build a strong and modern alliance that is apt for the challenges of a more interdependent, complex and contested world. It should help building peaceful, stable, well-governed, prosperous and resilient states and societies at our borders and beyond and deliver on our objective of a multilateral rules-based order addressing global challenges. High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** and Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven **Mimica**, propose significant changes with the aim of setting out with partner countries on an umbrella agreement with common values and interests and facilitating increased cooperation at international level. This would be combined with regional tailored partnerships for Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. Furthermore, future relations should also link up ACP countries with neighbouring regions, which are not part of the ACP group of states, but play a key role in relation to achieving EU objectives.

What is the Cotonou Partnership Agreement between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific countries?

Since 2000, the Cotonou Partnership Agreement has been the framework for EU's relations with 78 countries from Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP). The relationship focusses on the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and the gradual integration of ACP countries in the world economy. It seeks to increase peace and security, and to strengthen the democratic political environment. The Agreement entered into force in April 2003 and has been revised in 2005 and 2010 in accordance with the revision clause to re-examine the Agreement every five years.

In 2010, ACP-EU cooperation has been revised to be adapted to new challenges such as climate change, food security, regional integration, State fragility and aid effectiveness.

What are the key elements for a revised EU-ACP Partnership Agreement?

The Joint Communication presented on 22 November 2016 sets out the ideas and proposed building blocks for a political partnership with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. It builds on the internationally agreed UN 2030 Agenda, which provides a universal set of common objectives and on the Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy, which provides strategic guidance on the EU's external interests and ambitions. The Communication is also coherent with the Commission proposal to revise the European Consensus on Development.

The longstanding relationship with the ACP countries provides a good starting point to build a renewed political partnership. Partners on both sides will need to undertake significant changes in order to make their future relationship right for the task in today's world and to forge a powerful alliance delivering on key priorities.

The EU considers that decision-making and implementation of the new partnership will require an important shift towards the regional levels. Furthermore, future relations should link up ACP countries and neighbouring regions, which are not part of the current CPA, but play a key role in relation to key objectives as peace and security or better managed migration.

What do we want to achieve together after 2020?

Europe and the ACP countries share principles which should remain the foundations of our societies: peace, democracy, good governance, the rule of law and the respect for human rights. In view of creating sustainable development, our common objectives should be to foster sustainable growth and decent jobs for all, ensure human development, tackling climate change, turn migration and mobility into opportunities as well as speak with one voice on key global and common challenges on the international scene. On top of that, a renewed partnership would strengthen the political dialogue and consolidate our trade agreements.

What should this partnership look like?

The preferred scenario, laid out in the Joint Communication by the Commission and the High Representative, would be to agree with the ACP partner countries on an umbrella agreement with common values and interests and facilitating increased cooperation at international level. It should go together with regional tailored partnerships for Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, to allow better addressing specific regional opportunities and challenges faced.

What are the priorities proposed towards the African region?

Africa is a continent of huge opportunities, but still faces a number of conflict situations and challenges, as poverty, unemployment and inequality remain high. The priorities proposed by the European Commission and the High Representative for the EU Africa partnership are to focus on achieving peace and stability, consolidating democracy and good governance, unleashing economic opportunities, managing migration and mobility as well as reaching human development standards.

What are the priorities proposed for the Caribbean region?

Caribbean countries face a number of challenges which the EU has an interest in addressing: climate change, vulnerability, citizen security, good governance and human rights, environmental preservation and energy sustainability. Deepening regional integration, fostering inclusive sustainable growth, trade and job creation, fighting inequalities and reducing natural disasters effects are also high on the agenda.

What are the priorities proposed for the EU-Pacific region?

The large number of island nations and their huge maritime territories make the Pacific countries an important player for the EU in tackling global challenges, particularly with respect to their vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change. Other priorities should focus on good governance, human rights, gender issues and inclusive sustainable growth.

This is only a proposal by the EU. What are the next steps towards a new Partnership Agreement after 2020?

The adoption of this Communication is an important milestone that will foster the debate with all stakeholders. The intention of the European Commission and the High Representative (HR) is to use this input for the establishment of a Recommendation including negotiating directives addressed to the Council in the course of 2017. Following agreement with the Council on the negotiating directives, this will allow to launch the negotiations for a new partnership with the partner countries.

Steps already carried out

Public consultation: In order to launch a broad reflection on the future relations with ACP countries, the Commission and the High Representative initiated a public consultation. Many discussions were held in parallel with key stakeholders.

Evaluation carried out in 2016: An evaluation of the first 15 years of the Cotonou Agreement was released by the European Commission and the HR in July 2016. It was used to draw lessons from the past and to provide inputs to the reflection process on how to govern relations with ACP countries after 2020.

Today's Joint Communication: This Joint Communication sets out the ideas and proposed building blocks for a political partnership with the ACP countries. It builds on the internationally agreed UN 2030 Agenda, which provides a universal set of common objectives and on the Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy, which provides strategic guidance on the EU's external interests and ambitions. The Communication is also coherent with the Commission proposal to revise the European Consensus on Development. The Impact Assessment accompanying this Communication details and assesses the different options ahead.

Upcoming steps

Outreach: A period of outreach activities which will run likely till mid-2017 where exchanges will take place with all stakeholders to best define our upcoming proposal for negotiating directives.

Stakeholders to be consulted will comprise: Member States, European Parliament, ACP countries, non-State actors (civil society, economic and social partners and private sector), regional organisations, local authorities, non-ACP countries.

Beginning of the negotiations between ACP countries and the EU: As foreseen in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (article 95), negotiations between the parties of the Agreement should enter into negotiation in order to examine what provisions shall subsequently govern their relations' post 2020. These negotiations are mandated to start eighteen months before the end of the total period of the agreement. They are expected to start earlier, in order to secure sufficient time for the conclusion of a new partnership.

Discussions regarding the future of the partnership after 2020 are therefore ongoing, both on the

European and the ACP side.

What has been achieved so far under the existing Cotonou Partnership Agreement?

Political dialogue has fostered better mutual understanding of views as a sound and flexible process for continuous, comprehensive and broad engagement at all levels on all issues of common interest. Mutually agreed commitments have contributed to progress in rule of law and governance. The CPA has contributed to increased peace and security on the African continent. The set-up of the African Peace Facility has played an important part in this.

Development cooperation has made a significant contribution to the eradication of poverty, improved food security and provided more equitable access to basic services for the most vulnerable communities, and has been key in raising awareness on environment and climate issues.

Trade policies have influenced the increase in trade flows to and from ACP countries. The increase in World Trade Organisation membership accompanied with the groups' increasing role in international trade negotiations, and the conclusion of several Economic Partnership Agreements between the EU and ACP countries has supported the integration of ACP States into the world economy.

What is the History of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement?

The European Union's relationship with the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) has been governed by a number of agreements, dating back to the Lomé convention signed in 1975, aiming to support the ACP States' efforts to move towards self-sustained development.

At the end of the Lomé Conventions (Lomé I - Lomé IV) important developments on the international stage, as well as socio-economic and political changes in the ACP countries highlighted the need for a re-thinking of ACP-EU cooperation.

Following an intensive public debate, negotiations started in 1998 for a revision of the ACP-EU relations. They were successfully achieved in early 2000 and led to the conclusion of the Cotonou Agreement.

The Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA) was signed in 2000 for a 20-year period and will expire on 29 February 2020. It is a wide-ranging agreement with underlying values and principles that covers many policy areas under three pillars: the political dimension, economic and trade cooperation, and development cooperation.

For more information

[Synopsis Report summarising the main results of the consultation on the new European Consensus on Development](#)

[The ACP-EU Partnership after 2020](#)

[Communication on a renewed partnership with African, Caribbean and Pacific \(ACP\) countries](#)

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