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**Keynote speech at the ACP special Post-COP21 to discuss the outcome of Paris and the way forward**

Dear Secretary General, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a real pleasure to be here today.

Let me start by thanking the ACP Secretariat for organising this meeting. We have had some time to reflect on the historic achievement of COP21. This is a good opportunity for us to share our thoughts on the outcome of Paris and the way forward.

As I look around the room I see many familiar faces from Paris and some good friends.

When I last saw Patrick we were walking together into the plenary session with our partners from the High Ambition Coalition, ready to adopt the Paris Agreement.

It was a historic moment: a milestone for multilateralism and for climate diplomacy. We succeeded in achieving an outcome that was far more ambitious than anyone expected going into Paris.

The ACP-EU alliance played a key role within the coalition.

It was our public announcement that started the ball rolling in Paris, got the media talking and got people joining. This was the key turning point in the negotiations: a real game changer.

As you might recall, Secretary General Patrick Gomes and I made a joint press point on 8 December with a few Ministers from our respective groups to highlight our joint expectations for the Paris Agreement. Together we represented the majority of countries in the world and our alliance came to be known as the "High Ambition Coalition".

Following our announcement, we were joined by other countries including the US, Canada, Australia, Mexico and Brazil.

As I said, this coalition and the attention it generated turned things around in Paris.

But of course it did not happen overnight. It was the result of the strong cooperation we have been building between developed and developing countries since Durban.

And like the best relationships, it is still going. This is good, because the hard work has just begun and we will need to rely on and support each other as we move to the next stage: implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Today I would like to focus on three points:

- 1. The EU's assessment of Paris;**
- 2. Post-Paris domestic and international priorities for the EU; and**
- 3. How the EU and ACP countries can work together in the run-up to COP 22.**

***(1. The EU's assessment of Paris)***

So let's start with the Paris Agreement itself.

Our joint objectives – on the long-term goal, the 5-yearly review cycles and transparency – are now part of the Paris Agreement.

The long-term goal to keep the global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees and pursue efforts to keep it to 1.5 degrees sends a clear signal to investors, businesses and policymakers.

It shows that the world is serious about making the transition to a climate-resilient, climate-neutral future.

I know how important this is for many African, Caribbean and Pacific countries that are among those most affected by the impacts of climate change. This is why the ACP and the EU have agreed, in our joint press release on 8 December 2015 at the COP, that the Paris Agreement must be legally binding, inclusive, fair, ambitious, durable and dynamic.

But, of course, goals alone are not enough. We also need to make sure we get on track towards achieving them.

Another major accomplishment of the Paris Agreement is that we now have national action plans from 189 countries, covering 98% of total global emissions – and all Parties have a legally binding obligation to pursue domestic measures to achieve these nationally determined contributions (NDCs). Tackling climate change has become a truly global effort.

The facilitative dialogue in 2018 will be the first opportunity to take stock of our collective ambition and progress in implementing our commitments, before the first global stocktake in 2023.

The special report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on the implications of the 1.5 degree goal will also be important in informing these discussions. The EU will provide input to this international work.

An essential feature of the Paris outcome is also ensuring that, in this global transition, no one is left behind.

Developed countries agreed to take the lead in continuing to provide support to climate action in developing countries. They will mobilise 100 billion US dollars in climate finance per year by 2025, and set a new and higher goal for after this period.

This commitment also includes support to adaptation to the effects of climate change. Moreover, the Paris Agreement establishes for the first time a global goal on adaptation, with the aim to enhance capacity and climate resilience, reduce climate vulnerability, and address the issue of loss and damage – a critical issue for the most vulnerable nations.

To sum up, what we agreed in Paris is a comprehensive package that brings together three essential building blocks of a strong global deal: ambition, commitments, and solidarity.

I would like to thank all of you for your efforts towards this successful outcome.

On this occasion, I would in particular like to extend my thanks to the ACP Secretariat for its hard work in the lead-up to the Paris conference.

The support that the Secretariat provided last year to the ACP group members to help them prepare their intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs), including the regional workshops, was crucial in increasing understanding and creating the right response for Paris.

The declaration of the ACP Council of Ministers and the climate change issue paper prepared by the sub-committee on sustainable development, which were published just before the conference, also helped to set the tone for the discussions.

I'm sure you agree that all of this hard work paid off in the final days of the conference, when the High Ambition Coalition moved the talks up a gear and showed the world what we can achieve by joining forces and pushing for ambition.

Now – three months after Paris – it is time to turn ambition into action, and this is what I will address next.

## ***(2. Post-Paris domestic and international priorities for the EU)***

In the follow-up to Paris, the EU is already taking action to implement our commitments at both domestic and international level.

The European Commission set out its initial reflections on this in our "Road from Paris" Communication adopted in early March.

Our message is clear: the EU needs to continue to show global leadership, and we have various tools to respond to this challenge.

The EU's emissions reduction target for 2030 is the most ambitious contribution to the Paris Agreement – as part of the global effort and in comparison to other Parties' contributions.

Importantly, we have already started to put in place the policies and legislation needed to achieve this target.

As a first step, last summer, the European Commission put forward its proposal to revise the EU emissions trading system for the period after 2020.

Before the summer recess, we will continue with a proposal for the EU Effort Sharing Decision, which governs emissions from the sectors not covered by emissions trading – including transport, buildings, agriculture.

Together with this proposal, the Commission will present a proposal to the Council for the ratification of the Paris Agreement. It is a priority for the EU to ratify it as early as possible.

The EU will also prepare, by 2020, a mid-century low-emissions development strategy that will enable us to continue progressive climate ambition over time.

We are well aware that this will not be an easy task.

The low-carbon transition will require time, investments and innovation. Our climate policies need to be aligned with science and with our efforts to address Europe's economic and energy challenges.

Addressing the investment and innovation challenges associated with the low-carbon transition is essential at the local and global level.

Very importantly, the Paris Agreement includes the aim for "making financial flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate resilient development".

The European Union will engage with other developed and developing countries to achieve this aim through both public and private finance.

The EU and its member countries are already making a major contribution to supporting developing countries in their efforts to tackle climate change and adapt to its effects.

In the context of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda agreed last year, we reconfirmed our commitment to increase official development assistance to 0.7% of our gross national income. Four of the five countries worldwide that have already reached this level are EU Member States.

EU countries are also major contributors to the Green Climate Fund, which approved its first projects last year.

This provides a good basis for scaling up support. The EU and its Member States are committed to delivering our share of the developed countries' 100 billion dollar climate finance commitment per year by 2025.

In delivering on our part of this pledge, we will focus on those countries most in need and with the largest financial capacity constraints, in particular the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

For example, the Commission launched last year at COP 21 an ambitious electrification financing initiative, **ElectriFI**, that will provide support to investment for improved access to reliable, affordable and sustainable electricity services in Africa. It will fund for example innovative small and medium-scale projects for electrification of rural areas. Its initial budget is 75 MEUR.

We will also encourage other Parties to contribute to international climate finance flows. Expanding the donor base and encouraging further cooperation between developing countries will be increasingly important.

It is clear, however, that support from public budgets is not enough to achieve the transformation needed at the global scale. We need to use public money to also help leverage further private investment.

To this end, the European Commission will continue to work with the European Investment Bank, development finance institutions in EU countries, and other international financial institutions to increase lending for climate action.

Between 2014 and 2020, the EU will mobilise at least EUR 2 billion for grants that will lead to total investments of up to EUR 50 billion. The European Investment Bank expects that 35% of their lending to developing countries will go to climate-related projects.

***(3. How the EU and ACP countries can work together in the run-up to COP 22)***

Let me now come to my third point today: how the EU and the ACP countries can work together to help make it all happen.

Last year, during my trips to our partner countries around the world in the lead-up to Paris, I saw how much we can achieve through dialogue and cooperation on climate issues.

This year, we will continue to ensure that climate change is integrated into everything we do – from concrete programmes and projects managed by EU delegations across the world to high-level political engagement.

In our climate diplomacy efforts, we will focus on three main strands:

- (1) First, we will maintain climate change advocacy as a strategic priority. This includes encouraging a quick ratification of the Paris Agreement.
- (2) Secondly, we will support the implementation of the Paris Agreement and continue to support our partner countries in implementing their nationally determined contributions.
- (3) And third, we will increase efforts to address the nexus of climate change, natural resources, prosperity, stability and migration.

The coming months will be crucial in ensuring that we maintain the positive momentum created in Paris and ensure that it is turned into concrete action on the ground.

This will require sustained political and diplomatic mobilisation at global level, including the upcoming G7 and G20 meetings.

The negotiations in the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the further talks on the Montreal Protocol will also be crucial. Both of these provide a good opportunity to scale up the level of ambition in the pre-2020 period.

I count on your support and cooperation to ensure we make tangible progress before we meet again in November at the COP22 in Marrakesh.

The challenge of the Marrakesh COP will be very significant as well. Together, we will need to address key issues such as how we define the ambition review processes and how we design the transparency and accountability system.

We also need to continue our support to the most vulnerable countries on issues such as loss and damage, finance, capacity building and pre-2020 ambition.

To achieve our common objectives, I see the way forward at three different levels:

- (1) At the global level, we will need to jointly mobilise our best political assets in order to maintain the Paris momentum. Let's carry forward the spirit of the High Ambition Coalition!
- (2) At regional levels, we can strive to develop programmes that respond to common regional problems, like we have done, for example, with the intra-ACP funds, or with the regional Euroclima programme for Latin America. If successful these programmes can be replicated in other regions in a cost efficient manner.

- (3) And finally, at the national level, we should make sure we integrate climate issues in national development plans and build appropriate capacities. This should go a long way towards putting us on the track to fulfil our INDCs. Being in the core of the High-Ambition Coalition, we should lead and set the example in this area.

My team and I remain fully committed to this journey – and it is a journey we want to make together with you.

I look forward to continuing working with you throughout 2016 on the implementation of the Paris Agreement and our joint ambitious climate goals! Thank you very much.