

ACP-EU COTONOU AGREEMENT

**AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN AND
PACIFIC GROUP OF STATES**

**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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Subject: ACP-EU Council of Ministers, Port Vila, 14-15 June 2012
– ACP-EU Joint Declaration on Rio+20

Joint Declaration

on

Rio+20

We the ACP-EU Council of Ministers meeting in Port Vila, Vanuatu 14-15 June 2012 and taking into consideration the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement.

1. **Strongly believe** that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, otherwise referred to as Rio+20, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 2012, is a unique opportunity to ensure a renewed political and international commitment for advancing the sustainable development agenda based on the assessment of progress, in the fulfilment of those commitments made to date as well as on new and emerging challenges.
2. **Reaffirm** our commitment to all principles, contained in the Río Declaration on Environment and Development that will continue to guide the international community in the achievement of sustainable development and the future we want. We remain committed to advance progress in implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, as well as other outcomes of major UN conferences and Summits in the economic, social and environmental fields.
3. **Welcome** the outcomes of Durban Conference on Climate Change, the Nagoya Conference on Biodiversity and the Changwon Conference on Desertification and strongly urges the Rio +20 Conference to adopt decisions coherent with the outcomes of these Conferences.
4. **Pledge** our commitment to working constructively during the Conference to ensure an ambitious and action oriented outcome that would advance the sustainable development agenda in a comprehensive manner, taking into account the three dimensions of sustainable development.

5. **Stress** that sustainable development cannot be achieved without respecting and promoting democracy, good governance, human rights, the rule of law, equity, education, the role of youth, gender equality and women's empowerment.
6. **Reaffirm** our strong support to regional integration and inter-regional cooperation as a resilience building measure.
7. **Recognise** that in order to achieve an ambitious outcome, the agreed themes of the Conference, namely the Green Economy in the context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication and the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development must be addressed in Rio with the understanding that each country is free to determine its own path to development.
8. **Acknowledge** that a global transition to an all inclusive green economy could contribute to achieving sustainable development through inter alia, poverty alleviation, increased employment, improved land management, forest conservation, enhanced food security, improved management of water resources, resource efficiency and increased access to sustainable energy, while integrating and building on the value of natural capital and thus sustaining environmental resources and ecological services essential for development.
9. Further **recognize** the importance of the blue economy - oceans and marine resources - to the survival of many ACP countries, especially those which are Small Island Developing States (SIDS).
10. **Note** that the development of policies and measures for a transition to the green economy has the potential to create win-win opportunities for all Member States of the ACP and the EU.
11. **Welcome** the United Nations Secretary General's (UNSG) "Sustainable Energy for All" initiative and its objectives of ensuring universal access to modern energy services by 2030; doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency by 2030; and doubling the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix by 2030.

12. **Emphasize** that the critical foundation for sustainable development is based on strong institutions that will be able to effectively respond to existing, new and emerging challenges and acknowledge the need to strengthen relevant measures within the context of the efforts to reform the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development.
13. **Reiterate** that there is need for an improved Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development that takes fully into account the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The improved framework should be more coordinated, effective and efficient in its implementation and have a robust system for monitoring and review to ensure that progress towards achieving sustainable development is measured periodically at the global level.
14. **Call** for the strengthening of the environmental dimension of the Institutional Framework, through the transformation of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), into an international specialized agency for the environment, based in Nairobi Kenya.
15. **Note** with great concern, that the adverse impacts of climate change, loss of biodiversity, increasing water scarcity and land degradation can have devastating consequences on progress towards sustainable development in many of our countries. We also note that Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked ACP States and countries affected by drought, desertification and floods, are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of those trends as well as to the impact of natural disasters and their increased frequency.

16. **Welcome** the proposal on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and believe that the development of such goals could be one of the means through which the monitoring of the implementation of sustainable development commitments can be enhanced; and **consider** that the process of elaborating these goals must be coordinated and coherent with the MDGs review process, recognising the importance of having an overarching framework for post 2015 that, in a holistic and coherent way, encompasses the three dimensions of sustainable development, without deviating from efforts to achieve the MDGs by 2015.
17. **Recognise** the importance of adequate means of implementation at all levels for the outcome of the Rio+20 conference.
18. **Underscore** the importance of resource mobilization both at domestic and international levels, without shifting responsibilities away from previously agreed international commitments, while noting the importance of public private partnership and the involvement of other stakeholders and non-traditional donors.
19. **Reaffirm** that the international community needs to deliver on its commitments, and recognise that development aid effectiveness is a key priority, to which non-traditional donors are encouraged to adhere.
20. **Emphasize** that diffusion of safe green technologies can help ACP countries exploit their rich natural resource base without undermining their sustainability and that trade is an important driver of sustainable development.
21. **Stress** that achieving sustainable development requires the participation of all relevant stakeholders including Local Authorities, Parliaments, the Civil Society Organizations and the private sector. Meaningful participation of all will promote ownership and contribute greatly to achieving economic development, eradicating poverty, protecting natural resources and improving sustainable livelihoods.
