



Brussels, 18 March 2010

BACKGROUND¹

Second revision of the Cotonou Agreement

Brussels, 19 March 2010

A ministerial meeting on the revision of the ACP-EU partnership agreement will take place on Friday 19 March in Brussels at 11.00, chaired by Ms. Soraya Rodríguez, Spanish secretary of state for international cooperation and by Mr. Paul Bunduku-Latha, deputy minister for economy, trade, industry and tourism of Gabon. Representatives of 27 EU member states and 78 ACP states are due to participate, alongside the European Commission and the secretariat of the ACP group.

The meeting will finalise the second revision of the Cotonou Agreement, launched on 29 May 2009. The accord constitutes the foundation for the special relationship between the EU and 78 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. The formal adoption of the revised accord is planned for the next ACP-EU ministerial Council in Ougadougou, Burkina Faso, in June.

The partnership agreement is aimed at reducing and eventually eradicating poverty as well as at sustainable development and the gradual integration of ACP countries into the world economy. The partnership is based on three pillars: development cooperation, economic and trade cooperation and the political dimension.

The European Development Fund (EDF) is the main instrument for development aid to ACP states, with the 10th EDF providing for EUR 22.7bn in the period 2008-2013. In addition, ACP countries benefit from interventions of the European Investment Bank and of the EU development cooperation instrument. The agreement also provides for a political dialogue between the EU and ACP states on the basis of human rights, democratic principles and respect for the rule of law.

The second revision of the Cotonou Agreement is due to reinforce provisions against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and against new security threats, such as organised crime and trafficking of people, drugs and weapons.

As part of the review, cooperation in the area of migration could be strengthened. This includes work on issues like remittances and brain drain as well as on legal and illegal migration, e.g. smuggling and trafficking of human beings, border management and readmission. Negotiations for a relevant appendix to the accord will continue and could be concluded in autumn.

¹ This note has been drawn up under the sole responsibility of the Press Office.

In addition, the review will:

- strengthen possibilities to support the development of aquaculture and fisheries sectors in ACP states;
- promote support to ACP countries for scaling up the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic;
- improve opportunities to assist ACP states in adapting to global warming and in integrating climate change into their development strategies;
- accelerate work towards mutual recognition of higher education qualifications;
- reinforce regional cooperation within the ACP group.

A joint declaration on development assistance after the expiry of the 10th EDF is also due to be adopted.

The ACP-EU partnership agreement was signed on 23 June 2000 in Cotonou, Benin. It was concluded for a period of 20 years and provides for reviews every five years; the first revision was signed in Luxembourg in 2005. The accord replaced four successive Lomé conventions that had constituted the basis of trade relations with and development aid to ACP states since 1975.

The ACP group comprises 48 countries from sub-Saharan Africa, 15 from the Caribbean and 15 from the Pacific:

Angola - Antigua and Barbuda - Belize - Cape Verde - Comoros - Bahamas - Barbados - Benin - Botswana - Burkina Faso - Burundi - Cameroon - Central African Republic - Chad - Congo (Brazzaville) - Congo (Kinshasa) - Cook Islands - Ivory Coast - Cuba - Djibouti - Dominica - Dominican Republic - Eritrea - Ethiopia - Fiji - Gabon - Gambia - Ghana - Grenada - Republic of Guinea - Guinea-Bissau - Equatorial Guinea - Guyana - Haiti - Jamaica - Kenya - Kiribati - Lesotho - Liberia - Madagascar - Malawi - Mali - Marshall Islands - Mauritania - Mauritius - Micronesia - Mozambique - Namibia - Nauru - Niger - Nigeria - Niue - Palau - Papua New Guinea - Rwanda - St. Kitts and Nevis - St. Lucia - St. Vincent and the Grenadines - Solomon Islands - Samoa - Sao Tome and Principe - Senegal - Seychelles - Sierra Leone - Somalia - South Africa - Sudan - Suriname - Swaziland - Tanzania - Timor Leste - Togo - Tonga - Trinidad and Tobago - Tuvalu - Uganda - Vanuatu - Zambia - Zimbabwe

* * *

Press conference: +/- 13.30

Initialling of the agreement (TV/Photo opportunity): +/- 12.45

Press conferences and public events can be followed by video streaming:

<http://video.consilium.europa.eu/>

Video coverage will be available for preview and download in broadcast quality (MPEG4):

<http://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu>