

Press release – ACP-EU Post-Cotonou: A Joint Parliamentary Assembly is non-negotiable



The negotiations on a new partnership agreement between the European Union and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries are entering the final stages. In line with the Sustainable Development Goals, the new agreement should be people-focused and this requires a strengthened parliamentary dimension with the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) at its centre, say Tomas Tobé (EPP, SE), Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Development, and the two JPA Co-Presidents Carlos Zorrinho (S&D, PT) and Faumuina Liuga (Samoa).

They stress that both the ACP negotiating mandate and the European Parliament position on the future agreement underline the essential role to be played by the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly. The resolution adopted in November 2019 by the European Parliament stresses that the institutional framework should include an ACP-EU JPA and clearly states that that this is "non-negotiable in terms of the European Parliament giving its consent to the future agreement".

They underline that the relations between the ACP countries and the European Union are strong and play a fundamental role in the multilateral global system and in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A new partnership agreement must address common challenges and be inclusive. A government-only driven partnership would not represent the interests of the ACP and European peoples affected by the agreement. It would be a step backwards in the ACP-EU relations and lack essential parliamentary scrutiny. It would send the wrong message that parliaments do not have a say on the future of the citizens and governments can just ignore them putting at risk the democratic accountability of the agreement and therefore the future of

the ACP-EU partnership.

There are key global issues to be tackled in the new agreement, from climate change to migration, to promoting growth as well as human rights, peace and stability, some of which still require intense negotiations between the two parties. A strengthened involvement of the parliaments is crucial, as democratic oversight is more needed than ever in order to build a strong and balanced partnership.