

Global PFD Meeting 21-23 March 2017
The future partnership with the Africa Caribbean and Pacific Countries
Background for session

Since 2000, the [Cotonou Partnership Agreement \(CPA\)](#) shapes the relation between the EU and its 28 member states with the African, Caribbean and Pacific states. The agreement was designed to focus on poverty eradication and promote sustainable development, peace and security and democratic governance. In 2010, the CPA was revised to address as well issues such as climate change, food security, state fragility, and aid effectiveness. The agreement comes to an end in 2020 and its renewal is therefore being discussed. A special relationship, the CPA:

- is often hailed as a 'unique' agreement, taking into account its legally binding nature, holistic approach to development, comprehensive scope (covering the three pillars of aid, trade, and political cooperation), and joint management arrangements;
- guides the (intergovernmental) [European Development Fund \(EDF\)](#), providing predictable resources and accounting for a larger share of EU development aid than any other external instrument;
- provides the means (since the 2010 revision) for strengthened cooperation at international level, which has been successful in obtaining the Paris Agreement on climate change, but it is not used intensively; and
- over time regional organisations have increased their role and Economic Partnership agreements have been concluded, as foreseen by the CPA. It requires an additional effort for achieving harmonisation and policy coherence

On the 22nd of November 2016, the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for foreign affairs and security policy released a [Joint Communication on "A renewed partnership with the countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific"¹](#) and a related Impact Assessment². The Communication presents the ideas and the main building blocks for a renewed political partnership. It is the basis for discussion in view of preparing a Recommendation, including negotiating directives, to the Council, in the 3rd quarter of 2017.

¹ JOIN(2016) 52 final

² Joint staff working document Impact Assessment, accompanying the document Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council "A renewed partnership with the countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific". (SWD(2016) 380 final)

The Communication suggests that the future partnership should contain:

- A strategy based on 6 specific priorities:
 1. Promote peaceful and democratic societies, good governance, the rule of law and human rights for all
 2. Spur inclusive sustainable growth and decent jobs for all
 3. Turn mobility and migration into opportunities and address challenges together
 4. Promote human development and dignity
 5. Protect the environment and fight climate change
 6. Join forces in the global arena on areas of common interests

- An umbrella agreement including shared values and principles, complemented by tailored partnerships for Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific region;
- A multi-level, multi-stakeholder partnership as the guiding principle for future cooperation, in line with the principle of subsidiarity;
- Stronger focus on regionalisation processes and increased cooperation with regional organisations;
- Increased involvement of interested countries beyond ACP in order to ensure coherence in particular with respect to the pan-African dimension (e.g. between the ACP-EU Partnership and the Joint Africa-EU Strategy). The involvement of the non-ACP countries in North Africa, the few non-ACP members of the group of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and of the group of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) is particularly important.

The [Impact Assessment](#) accompanying the Joint Communication highlights that the Cotonou Partnership Agreement has provided a framework for a broad and inclusive relationship that goes beyond national governments, by recognising the role of parliaments, local authorities and non-state actors (civil society, private sector, trade unions) in development. It has formalised their role both in the conduct of political dialogue and in the programming and implementation of cooperation programmes. However, the level of participation has been too limited and varies largely from one country to another.

The Policy Forum discussion on this topic will allow representatives of CSOs and LAs to formulate recommendations on how to better involve these actors in the future cooperation framework – to make the ambition of ‘partnership’ true in a much broader sense.

The current discussions and upcoming negotiations will need to address a set of questions that have arisen from the past fifteen years of CPA implementation and from important changes in the international context. The process is led by the EU, its Member States and 79 national ACP governments, but should aim strategically and structurally to include parliamentarians, civil society, the private sector, and local authorities. This session will showcase their possible contributions.

Further background documents:

- [Joint Staff Working Document - Evaluation of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement](#)
- [European Parliament resolution of 4 October 2016 on the future of ACP-EU relations beyond 2020 \(2016/2053\(INI\)\)](#)
- European economic and social committee [Future of the EU's relations with the ACP Group of countries](#) (Green Paper)
- [Declaration of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly on the parliamentary dimension of the Post-Cotonou ACP-EU relations](#)
- ACP Group of States: [Waigani Communiqué](#) on the future perspectives of the ACP group of states
- [The future of ACP-EU relations: A political economy analysis](#), ECDPM
- [CONCORD Cotonou Working Group Briefing paper](#)
- PLATFORMA, "[Towards a new partnership between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries after 2020 – declaration](#) adopted by PLATFORMA Political Council," April 2016
- [UCLG Africa position paper on the future of EU-ACP relations](#)