

5 June 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States in the New
Global Order**

**Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Secretary-General of the ACP Group,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I am pleased to join you today for this important commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP).

The ACP, which brings together seventy-nine developing countries across three continents, is a unique organization. It continues to play an important role in fostering unity and solidarity amongst its members around its core values and objectives.

Indeed, over the past four decades much work has been done towards ensuring that the concerns, interests and needs of its Member States are addressed and initiatives taken in the areas of sustainable development and poverty eradication, peace and security as well as the promotion of human rights and good governance.

It is therefore fitting, as the ACP Group takes stock of achievements and challenges in the vital partnership between the ACP and the European Union (EU), to focus on how it can be strengthened in the new global order.

As I have said before, this is a truly momentous year. We are currently engaged in three interlinked processes that will define our collective development path for the next fifteen years and beyond.

We have to ensure that the post-2015 development agenda, to be adopted by world leaders in September is ambitious, transforms economies, improves livelihoods of all people and protects our planet.

To do so, we will need a successful outcome from the Third International Conference on Financing for Development to be held in July in Addis Ababa, with action-oriented deliverables to support the implementation of the new development agenda. Achieving success in Addis Ababa will also boost our chances of reaching a binding agreement on climate change in December in Paris.

In all these important processes, the core objective is eradication of poverty, promotion of growth and achievement of sustainable development in its social, economic and environmental dimensions. There is also increasing emphasis on renewing and strengthening the global partnership for development.

Most of these are issues on which the ACP States and the EU have been and will continue to be engaged.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,**

One of the main strengths of the ACP Group of States is its dynamism and commitment to improving trade and economic cooperation in order to transform their economies, improve competitiveness and increase their share of world trade.

While some progress has been registered in this regard, it is inadequate that a Group with a combined population of over 900 million people contributes less than 5% of world trade and only 1.9% of global GDP. By contrast the EU, with a population of about 500 million people, contributes over 16% of global trade and 17% of global GDP.

To be successful in the new global order, ACP countries will have to devise new and better strategies positioning the Group to be more competitive in the 21st century. It is encouraging that some work is being done to re-orient the Group with a view to making it fit-for-purpose in these rapidly changing and complex times. I would like to pay tribute to efforts of the ACP members to revitalize the activities of the Group, in terms of its legal status, functions and strategic role.

It is crucial to further enhance and deepen the level of cooperation and coordination amongst the membership of the Group, with the European Union and other partners.

Why is this so important? To answer that question, one has to look at the major trends and challenges facing the world today. There are still residual effects of the global economic and financial crisis that must be addressed, rising inequality, climate change, a resurgence of geopolitical competition, emerging threats like terrorism and violent extremism, among others.

To remain an influential actor in the new global order, the ACP States have to reposition the work of the Group, improve competitiveness, and strengthen representation in global governance structures. The need to diversify economies and reduce commodity dependence cannot be overemphasized.

Though ACP States may belong to different groups in intergovernmental negotiations, it is essential to support and coalesce around their common interests, and those of their members in special situations such as Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

Collectively, and with support of development partners, ACP countries need to address infrastructure deficits especially in energy and transport which constrain industrialization and value addition to their commodities and natural resources.

In this context, the upcoming Financing for Development Conference, should result in the adoption of measures or policies aimed at facilitating access by developing countries to affordable long-term funding for critical infrastructure projects.

It is also critical to address the enabling domestic and international environment for development, including on issues related to debt relief and trade as well as on systemic issues, including the reform of global governance and the international financial system.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The important role that the EU and its Member States play in development finance cooperation through the various ACP-EU agreements is commendable. This is good example of how South-South and North-South cooperation can be complementary.

As a mutually beneficial post-Cotonou partnership for 2020 and beyond is being envisaged, it will be important to build on this foundation. Taking into account the lessons learned and addressing persistent challenges, including those related to Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) will be crucial.

The ACP Group has worked to promote regional cooperation and integration as a main priority since its founding. Indeed, regional initiatives contribute to strengthening peace and security and addressing root causes of conflict.

The prospects of the ACP Group in the new global order are bright provided it optimizes its strengths and seizes opportunities. ACP countries should enhance economic power by boosting productive capacities and competitiveness in order to increase their share of global trade. They should also further strengthen intra-ACP cooperation, taking advantage of their combined population, diversity and different levels of development. Above all, we should all work together, developed and developing countries, to improve the livelihoods of all people and to protect our planet.

I thank you for your kind attention.