



05th September, 2018 **The Pacific leaders of the African, Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) Group met Monday afternoon in Nauru to discuss the preparations for the post Cotonou Agreement, trade related issues, current and future relations with the European Union and the European Development Fund (EDF11) among others.**

President of the Republic of Nauru H.E. Baron Divavesi Waqa said that the Pacific ACP Leaders Meeting is an important platform for an open political dialogue on issues that affects PACP states.

“As we approach these negotiations, it is important to reflect on our historic relations with the European Union in advancing our interests and mutual cooperation post-2020.”

“As we map out a path for the next 20 years through a post-Cotonou partnership with the 28 European Union countries, we should reflect also on the achievements and shortfalls encompassing the existing relations.”

“We need to be alert to the circumstances and the influence countries seek to have within our region. We need to ensure that we maintain the ability to exercise our will over our Blue Pacific, the resources within it, and the security of the region, whilst negotiating opportunities accorded through market access.”

According to President Waqa such challenges and opportunities require consideration in the context of the post-Cotonou negotiations and prospects of the future.

He noted that an integral part of the post-Cotonou agreement is the financial and development cooperation arrangements.

“The European Development Fund has provided support through the National and Regional Indicative Programmes, as well as the Intra-ACP and thematic programmes. The post-2020 arrangement requires vigilant analysis, crafting and meaningful negotiating to ensure that the ACP region is adequately supported.”

He said that Pacific leaders of the ACP need to “seek improvements to the joint decision and management of the funds” so that the partnership is fruitful and to ensure “minimal interruptions” to the existing programming.

Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat Dame Meg Taylor said, “The imminent launch of the post-Cotonou negotiations provides an opportunity for the region to reflect on the current Cotonou Agreement and see how best we can improve and strengthen our relations with the European Union and within the ACP group.”

She said that the post-Cotonou negotiations present an opportunity for the Pacific to emphasise its Blue Pacific identity which highlights the region’s collective strengths, opportunities and challenges.

She reported that the progress in the programming of the EDF11 had been positive.

She stated that trade had played a vital role in the Pacific’s relations with the EU under the Cotonou Partnership Agreement and its predecessor agreements and therefore appropriate for the gathering to “consider progress on trade-related initiatives in the Pacific including the status of the Pacific-European Union Economic Partnership Agreement and the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement.”

The ACP Group consists of 79 member states, where Tonga and 14 Pacific Island Countries are member countries.



**ENDS**

To access the Summary Decisions of the Pacific ACP Leaders Meeting click [here](#)

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