



PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

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EDITORIAL

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The holding of the very first ACP Business Summit on December 8, 2019, in Nairobi, marks a decisive and symbolic step in the strategic approach that the ACP States have to their development. Five years ago, almost to the day, the ACP Council of Ministers, recalling the crucial role played by the private sector in the economic and social development of ACP states and regions, had adopted the ACP Strategy for the Development of the Private Sector.

In pursuit of its ambitions, the ACP Group called on several partners to support it. The ACP-EU Joint Framework for Cooperation in support of Private Sector Development (PSD) in ACP countries has thus made it possible to mobilize 15% of intra-ACP resources from the 11th European Development Fund to support the actions envisaged in the ACP strategy.

For almost two years, Business ACP has provided technical and administrative support to the ACP Secretariat and the joint PSD platform, as well as to the implementation of the Intra-ACP Strategy of the 11th EDF for the Development of the Private Sector. Its role as a support platform and institution is set to evolve in the near future, in order to respond to the realities and expectations perceived during direct exchanges with the actors of private sector development in the ACP countries.

Representatives of the ACP private sector now have a platform through which, as they desired, can interact directly and with more regular frequency, with the leaders of our countries. In their view, this is the most appropriate framework to discuss ways of accelerating the structural economic transformation of the ACP States.

We are now entering a new era where our ingenuity must function without limits, the quest for knowledge and the sharing of information and knowledge be deliberate, our ambitions multiplied, even with limited means, with the sole objective ultimately of liberating the dreams of youth who sometimes feel constrained and neglected, but whose gaze still turns to their leaders awaiting an answer "how much longer?"

In this context we are pleased to share this special issue of the newsletter « ACP Private Sector Development ». It is up to all of us to materialize the true vocation of this newsletter, that of an information and exchange tool in the area of Private Sector Development in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

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Viwanou Gnassounou

NAIROBI HOSTS THE FIRST ACP BUSINESS SUMMIT!

The African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States in collaboration with a group of entrepreneurs and ACP captains of industry/ investors, has organized the first ever ACP Business Summit. This event was held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 6 to 10 December under the overarching theme “**Industrialization and Private Sector Engagement for Economic Transformation of ACP States**”, and was structured around the following two components:

1. A Presidential Dialogue (High-level dialogue) Between ACP Heads of State and Captains of Industry; and
2. The ACP Private Sector Development and Investment Village



Under the prestigious auspices of His Excellency, Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, this Summit “made it possible to have candid and frank discussions at Presidential Level and with Captains of Industry on how to support the ACP private sector to compete in the Global markets and meet the challenges of the 21st Century” the President of the Republic of Kenya commented.

The main objective of the event was to provide a framework for a high-level dialogue between ACP heads of states and ACP captains of industry to share information and practice on implementable decisions, investment plans and concrete projects. It was also a forum for the exchange of ideas on policy, legislative, institutional and capacity-building

measures in the area of industrial transformation, of/for ACP countries, including Blue and Green economies, entrepreneurship acceleration strategies and processes for ACP countries and intra-ACP investment, trade and development for ACP countries.

Improve the business environment to drive industrialization and wealth creation



Having addressed his sincere and warm thanks to President Kenyatta, H.E. Dr. Patrick Gomes, Secretary General of the ACP Group of States, noted the presence of a large number of representatives of ACP Private sector and Government representatives, a sign of the rightness of the ACP Secretariat’s decision to precede the 9th ACP Summit of Heads of State and Government with a Business Summit. “We have deliberately allocated 17% of the available resources, 600 million euros, to support the development of the ACP Private sector. Today, 6% of that resources have been committed and we are looking forward to finalize the commitment of the remaining part early next year.” Discussions are at the final stage to use part of that resource, to work together with the Tony Elumelu Foundation, whose founder was the keynote speaker of this ACP Business Summit. “We believe, together with the Tony Elumelu Foundation, that in our ACP countries, any enterprise created must be a mean to solve a problem and entrepreneurs should be accompanied to seize the opportunities or to create



From left to right: Hon. Mia Amor Mottley, T.E. Mr. Dany Faure, Mrs. Ifeyinwa Ugochukwu, Mr. Prakash Chand

them as necessary” stated the Secretary General.

It is in support of this movement and in acknowledgement of the central role of the private sector in jobs and wealth creation in ACP countries, that the 110th ACP Council of Ministers has agreed to recommend to Heads of State and Government the Launch of an ACP Endowment and Trust Fund (ETF): “We hope through this channel to offer proper opportunities to the ACP Private sector to invest in ACP Countries, and we look forward to successful cooperation in that respect”, said Dr. Patrick Gomes.



Intra-ACP funds to support private sector development benefited Kenya’s horticultural and agro-industry sector over the past 10 years, which has not only boosted exports to the EU, the Middle East and Asia, but has generated job creation and the inclusion of thousands of small scale producers in the value chains of local, regional and international markets. “Kenyan expertise is today the most exported between the agricultural and agri-food sectors of ACP countries, demonstrating the driving role that export sectors play in the modernisation of production systems for domestic markets. Today, our ambition must be to ensure that Kenya’s success becomes a reality for each country from the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States” concluded the Secretary General.

Share knowledge and expertise and involve the private sector, a key partner for the development of ACP countries.

Warmly applauded by the audience, Tony O. Elumelu, founder of the Tony Elumelu Foundation and Chairman, Heirs Holdings and United Bank for Africa Group, urged the ACP leaders to improve the business environment in their countries to drive industrialization and wealth creation in ACP member States.

Mr. Elumelu stated that industrialization will not be achieved without support for small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) and improved access to electricity. “We cannot hope to industrialize if we do not fix the issue of power, if our entrepreneurs spend so much of their resources to power their businesses, how then are they expected to make the investments necessary to upgrade and industrialize? If we do not tackle these pertinent issues, we will be unable to achieve industrialization, wealth creation and poverty reduction,” he said.

He further highlighted the importance of infrastructure development as a critical area needed to achieve sustainable development, highlighting the key role the United Bank for Africa Group plays in achieving this. “UBA is a force for development in Africa through infrastructure investment and leading the way in cross border payments and services, with the objective of encouraging trade across the continent,” he said.

In addition, Tony Elumelu asked: «How can the economy grow for all the ACP countries which have a well-connected youth and who want to offer solutions? We must encourage transformation to meet these challenges. I am a businessman and thanks to tenacity, I have been able to set up many businesses in Africa. But starting a business is not just a reward. We have created a foundation which implements economic philosophy in Africa.»

The Tony Elumelu Foundation, a private-sector-led philanthropy, is on a mission to

catalyse the economic transformation of the continent by empowering young African entrepreneurs – over 7,500 beneficiaries across 54 African countries thus far – through its Entrepreneurship Programme. Applications for the 2020 Programme of \$100 million, are open since January 2020 (<https://www.tonyelumelufoundation.org/press-releases/calling-startup-african-entrepreneurs-apply-for-the-2020-tony-elumelu-foundation-entrepreneurship-programme>)

Tony Elumelu also mentioned the success stories of TEF and its partners in the region: “To date, we have 497 beneficiaries in Kenya, 596 in Uganda, 187 in Tanzania and 194 in Rwanda. This brings the total number of TEF Entrepreneurs in East Africa so far to 1,474. Organisations such as the UNDP, African Development Bank, the ICRC, and GIZ have helped increase the number of young entrepreneurs we can support.”

In closing, Mr. Elumelu stressed the importance of including women in the development agenda of the ACP region, commending the European Investment Bank (EIB), for its initiative “She Invest”, which is focused on mobilising 1 billion Euros for women across Africa. “We at the Tony Elumelu Foundation strive to reach the same goals of uplifting women out of poverty and empowering them with knowledge and resources. This is an invitation to join forces as we have done with the UNDP to lift 100,000 young African boys and girls out of poverty, thereby stemming migration challenges,” he said.

President Kenyatta shared the same approach to development : “Our young people are tech-savvy and indeed with a huge entrepreneurial spirit. They are ready to embrace the digital revolution. We are experiencing a flourishing digital innovation ecosystem which can stimulate the rate of growth of ICT and technology innovations, and nurture vibrant tech startups and incubator hubs as Tony [Elumelu] has mentioned, of those young men and women



he has supported through his family and Foundation”.

H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta said he believes that «people are our most important resource. The ACP are more than a billion; most of them very dynamic young people. They will become the engine of the transformation we are looking for.” He also shared initiatives taken by the Kenyan government: «Kenya has made efforts to make primary education free. We have invested heavily in the digital economy. It is promoting the integration of young people in digital technologies. There are also projects to support entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises which account for between 80 and 90% of jobs in Kenya. « In addition, H.E. Mr. Kenyatta, highlighted his country’s private-sector-focused plan which has propelled the country’s ease of doing business rank from 129th position out of 190 economies in 2013 to 56th position in 2019.



The opening ceremony of the ACP Business Summit was followed by two high-level dialogue sessions where representatives of the ACP private sector conveyed key messages to decision-makers, Heads of State and Government who also took an active part in the discussions. Mr. Richard Ngatia, of the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KNCCI) opened the discussion by remarking that “The private sector provides

an essential framework for the ACP economic development programmes as well as promoting productivity, by bringing down barriers to doing business and investing in human resources and economic development,” He also emphasized the need to build capacities to produce goods and services to support ACP intra-trade and for export to improve global competitiveness. “Our priority should be to grow trade and create opportunities for the many SMEs in the ACP nations to grow their businesses and be part of the global value chains through Intra ACP trade,” He added.

Support of Youth and Women Entrepreneurship is essential to build a strong and sustainable economic fabric: “What we need is to build up SMEs, what we need is to create a strong middle class and they will create the jobs. So entrepreneurs across the developing nations need three things: 1) they need access to training; 2) access to funding and 3) access to markets,” summed up Mrs. Ifeyinwa Ugochukwu, CEO of the Tony Elumelu Foundation.

Ms. Litia Kirwin, founder of Loving Islands, a social enterprise in Fiji making organic and natural goods that provide sustainable income & education to communities, continued to support the need to promote and invest in Youth entrepreneurship, by pointing out that “over 60 per cent of Fiji’s population is under 40 years of age, with the large majority having never travelled overseas. As a result, fostering in-country innovation and entrepreneurialism with the expectation of youth to effectively engage in global markets is extremely demanding and practically unrealistic with the absence of global experience. On the other-hand, young diaspora communities present a unique opportunity for the ACP countries to engage a specialized and skilled cohort of entrepreneurs that bring with them international exposure, global networks, access to finance and patriotism” she said. Diaspora investment and other initiatives targeted at industrial, entrepreneurial and human capital development should be offered priority support. Every ACP nation should establish a dynamic database of its Diaspora resources active in Industry, Entrepreneurship, Technology, R&D and Human Capital Development and proactively engage with them to realize the above.

Another sector with high growth potential

in ACP countries and regions is the Blue Economy, highlighted by H.E. Danny Faure, President of the Republic of Seychelles, who focused his speech on the flagship initiatives put in place by this archipelago in the western Indian Ocean and intended to strengthen policies and improve the business environment. «This year I have launched a Blue Economy Council at the national level to promote coordination between Ministries, departmental agencies and other government organizations in order to strengthen the Seychelles ocean governance mechanism. A high-level forum bringing together several stakeholders has also been set up with the participation of civil society and the private sector” he announced. While encouraging investors of the region to invest in the promising sector of the Blue Economy, President Faure also mentioned investment in which Seychelles has secured innovating financing, including the \$15 million Blue Bonds proceeds and the \$800,000 grant under the African Development Bank Fund for Africa private sector assistance.



During a remarkable intervention, the Prime Minister of Barbados, H.E. Mrs. Mia Amor Mottley called on ACP member countries to tap into the potential of local investments by managing migration and creating a strong sense of local ownership. The PM gave the example of Kenya’s Equity Bank saying the financial institution has created employment and investment opportunities in Kenya where «international banks have not been able to fully respond to local market needs».

Mottley told the panel, whose members included not only the President of Seychelles, but also Mr. Nicolas Nesbitt, chair of the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA), Mr. Prakash Chand, entrepreneur from the Pacific



Jutta Urpilainen,
new EU Commissioner for International Partnerships

From left to right:
Martin Abega, Maureen Duru, Komi Agbokou, Maximin Emagna, Cherif Touré

and Mr. Ambroise Fayolle, vice-president of the European Investment Bank (EIB), that, “For us, this is a unique moment because it signals our intention to really try to claim our destiny. We have an opportunity that, however, must be premised on not getting to *know about each other but on getting to know each other*,” she said. Mottley added that there is a big difference between the two. “*Knowing about each other means that we are likely to continue our habits to trade North. Knowing each other means that we are likely to take down the walls and to begin to understand the*

values and the challenges that confront each of us and by extension, to see the entrepreneurial opportunities that may be available to build prosperity among our people.”

As indicated by the Secretary General at the opening of the ACP Business Summit, ACP countries have a lot to share and learn from each other. The importance of knowledge sharing and networking was also cited by H.E. Andrew Holness, Prime Minister of Jamaica. Mr. Holness challenged ACP nations to encourage more people-to-people

engagements to create linkages and an atmosphere of trust needed to spur trade and cross-border investments.

Whether coming from Africa, the Caribbean or the Pacific, the testimonials of entrepreneurs and captains of industries or representatives of international organizations present at the ACP Business Summit consensed on the need to strengthen public-private dialogue and create the conditions and environment conducive to job creation and growth in the ACP countries.

On the lead up to the Summit, private sector representatives had discussion panels where they shared their experiences around a series of themes and agreed on the following key recommendations

- Intensification of investments in energy, air transport, port and rail transport, transport corridors, border crossing infrastructure and related logistics systems. These infrastructures are critical to industrial transformation, entrepreneurial initiatives and intra-ACP trade.
- Establish Partnership and co-working processes with Diaspora; leverage Diaspora networks for increased access to market, technology and finance, namely, in the context of industrial transformation, entrepreneurship and trade.
- ACP captains of industry and investors are encouraged to expand and improve ACP angel investors’ networks and increase supply of seed capital and venture capital to young entrepreneurs and women entrepreneurs. ACP policy makers, must be committed to providing the regulatory, legal and institutional framework to support such financing vehicles.
- Enhance youth and women entrepreneurship and replicate, across the ACP region, successful entrepreneurship

support models such as the Tony Elumelu Foundation’s entrepreneurship programme “, or selection-training-seed capital-mentorship and catalytic event models such as South Africa’s Innovation Summit”. Likewise, The Summit invites ACP countries to identify and support the replication across the ACP regions, of initiatives such as My African Start Up, which supports the development of credible/rankings of investment-ready projects.

- Embrace industry 4.0, artificial intelligence (Ai) and digital entrepreneurship: ACP countries should: develop a roadmap and guidelines for industry 4.0, artificial intelligence (Ai) and a data culture to embrace Ai; undertake investment in high speed and high capacity digital infrastructure as Ai runs on data; adopt a strategy of national and regional content development to develop/control its high potential content industry; suggest a digital barometer to monitor progress of ACP regions and countries; and adopt a result-oriented innovation strategy and mission-oriented R&D programmes around targeted digital technologies such as Ai,

block chain and edge computing, as they apply to traditional sectors (education, health, manufacturing, engineering, infrastructures, cities, media, etc.) and new sectors or markets.

- Provide support to inclusive production and commercial alliances in agriculture: ACP countries are invited to commit to providing relevant policy and budgetary support to production and commercial cooperatives and other forms of alliances targeted at integrating small-holder farmers into national, regional and international value chains.
- Crucial role of ACP captains of industries in the industrialization of ACP agriculture: captains of industries are to engage in production and commercial alliances with small scale farmers by combining industrial transformation and socio-economic inclusion objectives in the agribusiness sector.
- Management of the Oil, Gas and Mining (OGM) sector: countries should adopt a holistic approach to local content and OGM sector development to include: local MSME linkages with Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) firms;



government and local private sector's financial stake in OGM firms operating in the country (including the establishment of competent local OGM state-owned company;) and, more importantly, the development of upstream and downstream industries with significant national stake in the capital structure of such industries.



Hon. Peggy Serame and Mrs Onambele Anchang

- Knowledge sharing and transfer of know-how and technologies in the OGM sector: a review of success stories in local content development and overall OGM sector management from ACP countries should be useful for several countries. The ACP Secretariat is encouraged to build a database of ACP experts and set-up a platform for systematic experience, knowledge and technical skills sharing and transfer.

- Creative and Cultural Industries: ACP countries should consider the full spectrum of the orange economy's sub-sectors (media, television and content; film, movies and documentaries; fashion, textile and garment; music and entertainment; art and culture) and undertake, in collaboration with the ACP Secretariat, the documentation and popularization of successful models of creative entrepreneurship promotion for

such sub-sectors.

- Exploitation of ACP intellectual property (IP) assets: ACP countries are invited to leverage the Madrid Protocol on Trade Mark protection; embark on the documentation, registration and leveraging of the economic value of ACP IP in all relevant sectors (culture, tourism, manufacturing, health, etc.); and train pools of local experts and staff of financial institutions on IP management (identification, registration and monetization).



James Husbands and H.E. Dr. Patrick Gomes

ACP PSD & Investment Village

Within the margins of the 9th Summit of Heads of State and Government, an ACP Private Sector Development & Investment Village opened its doors with the main objective to offer ACP private sector stakeholders a space to network, share knowledge, best practices, innovative solutions and results. The ACP Village served as a crossroad between direct interactivity, innovation and networking. It show-cased innovations and products in Agricultural value chains; advances in Mineral and Extractive value chains; and examples of success stories in Green and Blue economy, the Digital Economy and Artificial intelligence (Ai) or Creative and Cultural industries. The Investment Village was depicted by Secretary General H.E. Dr. Patrick Gomes as a “landmark” that must be built on: “Those who come along with you and come after you must see your achievements and even carry them to greater heights. That is what we are about.”

SEE MORE ABOUT:

- **The first ACP Business Summit**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twnyQQhQC70E&t=14s>

- **ACP Village**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1nx-hTxGpY>

- **ACP fashion Show:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0AppE5h-Gg4>



From left to right: H.E. Mr. Amadou Diop, Mr. Viwanou Gnassounou, H. E. Mr. Amadou Hott, H.E. Ms. Irène Mingasson, H.E Dr. Ibrahim Sylla

UPDATE ON BUSINESS ACP ACTIVITIES

Collaboration, dialogue, peer to-peer learning and sharing of good practices

Collaboration, dialogue and the sharing of experiences and good practices are a key focus of the Joint Private Sector Development Platform. **After Mauritius (May 2019) and the Dominican Republic (June 2019), it was Senegal's turn to host the third regional event, for Information, Knowledge Sharing and Networking, for West and Central Africa Regions, from November 6 to 8, 2019,**

In his welcome address to the regional representatives of the private sector as well as to the implementing partners of the intra-ACP programs dedicated to Private Sector Development, Mr. Viwanou Gnassounou, Assistant Secretary General of the ACP Group noticed that *«the development of our countries can only be done if those who have control over job creation are seated at the same table as those who decide.»* The private sector support envelope of the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) is endowed with 600 million euros around four areas of intervention which are listed in the box hereafter.

- **Support national and regional business-friendly and inclusive policies** and strengthen production capacities and value chains

- **Strengthen financial inclusion**

- **Improving access to financing for businesses, especially SMEs**

- **Promote ACP-EU knowledge management in private sector development**

Speaking on behalf of the Committee of ACP Ambassadors, H.E. Dr. Ousmane Sylla, Ambassador of the Republic of Guinea and current Chair of the Investment & Private Sector Sub-Committee, recalled that 2020 will mark the end of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (APC), signed on June 23, 2000 to succeed the first Lomé agreement in 1975. This framework was the cornerstone of cooperation and dialogue on politics, the economy, trade and development assistance. *“Since 28 September 2018, the Group of ACP States and the EU have started negotiations with a view to concluding an agreement succeeding the Cotonou Agreement. There is no doubt that an agreement conducive to the sustainable socio-economic transformation of the ACP countries and the pursuit of trade, investment and,*

ultimately, the creation of sustainable jobs is achievable. To achieve the above, Private Sector Development is one of the central platforms on which the ACP Group of States and the EU intend to rely, «stressed H.E Dr. Sylla.

Prominent guest of the opening ceremony, H.E. Mr. Amadou Hott, Senegal's Minister of Economy, Planning and Cooperation declared that Senegal will continue the reforms to improve business climate in order to consolidate the *“strong and valuable results achieved”*. Mr. Hott remarked that in a context of trade liberalization, *«the private sector must improve its performance, its productivity and its competitiveness to face the*





new challenges of now open borders which has been brought about by free trade agreements». The Minister announced that for the next five years, the Senegalese government intends to strengthen the technical and financial support system for the national private sector to enable it to access suitable financial services in order to participate in the creation of wealth and jobs.

structural transformation of our economies in preparation for the entry into force of the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA)».

Taking the floor, H. E. Ms. Irène Mingasson, EU Ambassador to Senegal, welcomed the organization of such a regional event, because it is more than ever necessary to

to the European Commission, for the period 2017-2020, 4.5 billion euros have been allocated to this instrument in order to raise more than 44 billion euros. However, it is not about supporting every or any type of investments: *«We are targeting niches that are difficult to access for the private sector but essential for sustainable development,»* said Ambassador Mingasson. *These include micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, renewable energy, food and urban infrastructure, with a preference for women and youth. «*

Following the opening ceremony, the Information, Knowledge Sharing and networking event for West and Central Africa proceeded and was structured in three parts:

- The first day was dedicated to provide participants with detailed information on the way the ACP private sector can benefit from intra-ACP/EDF and EU-funded financing facilities and Private Sector Development programmes.



He also welcomed the EU's support for the private sector, which is devoting significant resources to strengthening market access for small and medium-sized enterprises. In an environment where traditional financing institutions are generally cautious in taking risks, so-called «blending» instruments are guarantee instruments which allow «mixing» intra-ACP funds with private funding to help «de-risk» projects in ACP countries, so that the national and international private sector can invest more. Resources which, according to H.E. Amadou Hott, *«should be used to support the*

«create a space for dialogue to establish this positive, inclusive, sustainable dynamic, in which we all have a part to play. Both parties, public and private are therefore essential. «

In addition, while traditional aid has shown its limits, it is urgent for the EU to adapt its position in terms of partnership and instruments, explained the head of the EU Delegation to Senegal. It is in this context that the EU External Investment Plan (EIP) was launched, *«as a mechanism adapted to use public funds to leverage private investment, especially in Africa»*. According





Parc Industriel Intégré de Diamniadio (P2ID) - This platform was inaugurated by the President of the Republic in 2018. The site covers 13 ha. Set up as a Special Economic Zone, the platform will potentially accommodate more than 23,000 jobs by 2023. Today, it counts around 1,000 employees of industrial companies or service companies



- During the second day, our thematic knowledge sharing sessions availed participants with the opportunity to learn from peers and experts and to discuss African development opportunities and challenges in areas as critical as Innovative Financing

models for entrepreneurship & Private Sector Development; the potential of Africa's Creative and Cultural Industries; Developing agro-industries, agriculture value chains and intra-African trade in agriculture products; Digital entrepreneurship development and Industry 4.0.

- The third and final day featured a field visit to the "Plateforme Industrielle Internationale de Diamniadio" as well as two special "Peer-to-Peer Learning" sessions, including one specifically focused on Investment Promotion which was hosted by WAIPA (World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies).

In addition to the information provided by the ACP Secretariat, European Commission, and implementing partners, the event allowed the representatives of the private sector as well as regional organizations (ECOWAS, UEMOA and CEEAC) to exchange their expertise, compare their visions and start a constructive dialogue in order to

find solutions to the challenges facing their countries in the area of private sector development.

After three days of intense discussions between stakeholders, the Dakar event was closed in the presence of Mrs. Assome Aminata Diatta, Senegal's Minister of Trade and SMEs, who welcomed the organization of such a meeting in the Senegalese capital: "To develop SMEs in our countries, we need an attractive business environment. Yet, our SMEs, are often faced with many challenges when crossing borders, despite all the efforts put by our States in terms of infrastructure, governance and incentives" she said. According to Mrs. Diatta, there is a need to develop coherent and better coordinated global strategies at intra-ACP, regional and local level «which take into account the specific needs of SMEs, in terms of strengthening productive capacities and upgrading, access to local, regional and international markets and access to finance.»

Main recommendations of the regional meeting for West and Central Africa

- **Involve ACP financial institutions** in setting up intra-ACP financing and technical assistance facilities and other EU facilities.
- **Identify high-potential Creative and Cultural Industries for the region**, implement relevant promotion programs and ecosystems, upscale intra ACP and EU initiatives by learning from good practices inside and outside of ACP.
- **Enhance Africa and ACP agri-business value addition and value chain and increasing intra-African trade** through the combination of policies and investments that support the industrialization of the input market, production system and commodity markets
- **Upscale and implement successful digital entrepreneurship program models** such as the "South Africa Innovation Summit", which links investors and start-ups; the RDAR Nigeria Hub, an industrial / entrepreneurial innovation support service within a science park; and the integrated Tony Elumelu Foundation capacity building, mentorship and seed funding for youth and women entrepreneurs.
- Support efforts targeted at promoting mission-oriented and results-based innovation policies and strategies; facilitate initiatives that support **education, technical training and the transfer of knowledge and expertise in the field of artificial intelligence and other relevant digital technologies** through the Public-Private Partnership involving regional associations of ICT industry associations.



From left to right: Mr. **Zarak Khan**, H.E. Mr. **Sujiro Seam**, Hon. Dr. **Mahendra Reddy**, Mr. **Viwanou Gnassounou**, H.E. Mr. **John Licht**, H.E. **Deo Saran**

PACIFIC PRIVATE SECTOR MEETS IN NADI

2019 was certainly a year full of exchanges and networking opportunities on the occasion of regional Information, Knowledge Sharing and Networking events. The final event of this type for the year was held in Nadi Fiji, from December 16 to 18, 2019. The ACP Secretariat met with the private sector of the Pacific Region, with the support and in close collaboration with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS).

- The Blue Pacific and Future 2050
- Transformative Climate Change Financing in Risk Reduction and Adaption - Vulnerability and Fragility
- Connectivity: E-Commerce and the digital economy, transformational changes to support MSME
- Transformative Triggers to support established and emerging Growth Sectors: Agriculture, Fisheries including aquaculture
- Access to Finance: Financing models and financial products that respond to private sector needs in the Pacific

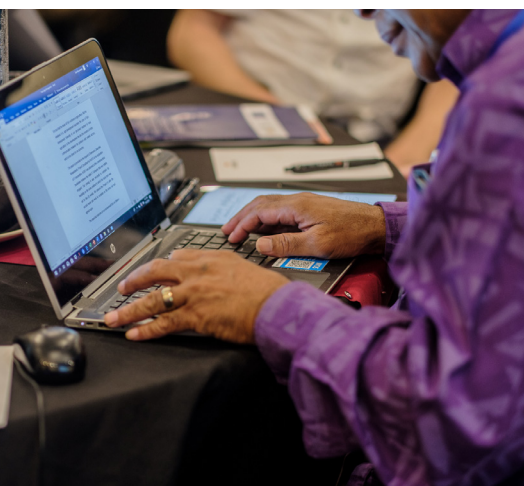
During the opening ceremony, Mr. Viwanou Gnassounou, Assistant Secretary General of the ACP Group, considered that the involvement of the private sector implies a degree of ownership by the country, the transfer of technology, knowledge and decent work for local populations. «The public and private sectors should work in partnership: the role of government is to be a facilitator, to create an enabling environment, while investment and job creation should come from the private sector. «

Focusing his intervention on a crucial sector for all the countries of the region, Mr. Zarak Khan, Director, Programs & Initiative of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) said that “the long-term viability of the Pacific Blue Continent calls for innovation, connectivity and the ability to sustainably exploit our traditional areas of economic



power, while seeking to identify new growth sectors, in particular in the light of the urgent climate change that awaits us. The private sector remains an essential partner in these efforts. « The Pacific Ocean connects all countries of the region, recalled the experts of PIFS, therefore the management and responsibility of each other for the well-being of the ocean are directly linked to the problems that affect the economic viability of the region, its aspirations in terms of sustainable development, health, culture and Pacific lifestyle.

H.E. Mr. Sujiro Seam, EU Ambassador for the Pacific recalled that the EU is originally an economic project, designed as a common market to ensure prosperity, growth, jobs and



In Nadi, representatives of the private sector from countries from across the region as well as public bodies were informed about intra-ACP programs and facilities dedicated to private sector development. They also had the opportunity to share their experiences and good practices, and exchange views around the following key themes:

income in Europe. “With the ACP Group of States too, the most recent trend is not to rely solely on development aid, but to recognize that the development of the private sector should be the engine of growth that generate jobs and wealth”, said the Head of the EU Delegation, before listing the various instruments made available by the EU to support development cooperation in the Pacific Region

In his opening address, the Honorable Dr. Mahendra Reddy, Acting Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Fiji said that the private sector should be encouraged, supported and welcomed. “The private sector is the engine of economic growth and job creation. We the Government provide the infrastructure, we provide an enabling environment but at the end of the day it’s the

private sector that must lead development for the growth and development to be sustainable.” Minister Reddy also called on participants to shift their focus towards the micro, small and medium enterprises and give them the necessary tools and business enabling platforms to build capacities that might help them to gainfully participate in economic activities.

During a «Talanoa session”, the stakeholders were also able to discuss one of the key concerns of this region of the world: sustainability and the so called «Blue Pacific». Talanoa is a traditional word used in Fiji and the Pacific for the purpose of establishing and describing an open, participatory and transparent dialogue. The purpose of Talanoa is to share stories, develop empathy and make wise decisions for the common good. In this case, sustainability, a top priority of the

Small-Islands Developing countries of the Pacific, which have adopted the elaboration of a 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, defined priorities for securing



the future of countries through enhanced resilience to climate change and disasters. <https://sdg.iisd.org/news/pacific-islands-forum-issues-strongest-ever-statement-on-climate-cites-security-threat/>

Discussions in thematic sessions were extended by field visits to 4 companies: Nadi Bay Herbs, Essence of Fiji, Jack’s Garment Fiji and Vanua Chocolate. These SMEs are involved in agro-industry, textile or cosmetic industry and focusing on the implementation of commercial strategies based on value-addition generation, women’s empowerment or community development.



Key recommendations and highlights from the Pacific regional event

- **“Blue Pacific: (Re)Framing Pacific Regionalism”.** Priorities to be addressed include: sustainable harnessing of the region’s resources through implementable Blue economy/industry strategy; Blue Continent digital framework and overcoming labour mobility issues, including the need for upskilling and capacity development in the ICT sector.
- Narrow the gaps and challenges faced in **accessing climate change financing, resilience and adaptation resources** including the green climate fund, namely through technical capacitation and project development support that are linked to funding targeted, evidential data, and mapping risks of private sector.
- **Connectivity, E-commerce and digital economy in support of MSME and transformational change,** the Region is to prioritize: A Blue Digital Continent Framework encompassing the three policy zones of digital infrastructure; digital skills and digital systems including shared infrastructure, payment gateway through an outcome-based PPP perspective
- Noting the future prospects 2050, education, capacity building and skills training in the **growth sectors of agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture** are to be considered based on the combination of regional skills assessment and the adopted blue economy vision and regional industry development targets.
- **Successful access to finance models for the region’s MSME and private sector,** a combination of supply-side challenges (ill-matched funds and financial instruments available to the profile of the region’s MSME, risk aversion of local financial institution to the region’s MSMEs and limited understanding on how to deal with sectors such as ICT and orange economy) and demand-side ones (MSME capacity and risk).



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