

ACP 3D

Future Perspectives of the ACP Group

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Final Report

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Acronyms

AAMS	Associated African and Malagasy States
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
ACP PA	ACP Parliamentary Assembly
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
AU	African Union
BSC	Balanced Score Card
CARIFORUM	Caribbean Forum of ACP States
CBD	Convention on Bio-Diversity
CDE	Centre for the Development of Enterprise
CEMAC	Commission Economique et Monetaire de l'Afrique Centrale
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CTA	Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation
EAC	East Africa Community
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDF	European Development Fund
EEC	European Economic Community
EEPA	Europe External Policy Advisors
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
IDA	International Development Association

IOM	International Organization on Migration
ITC	International Trade Centre
LDC	Least Developed Country
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEPAD	The New Partnership for Africa's Development
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OIF	Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie
PACER	Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations
PICTA	Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PMU	Program Management Unit
RTA	Regional Trade Agreement
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPARTECA	South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
UNCC	United Nations Climate Change Convention
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNCTAD	United Nations' Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UN Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
WCO	World Customs Organisation

WEAMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
WTO	World Trade Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organisations
WMO	World Meteorological Office

Executive summary

This study concludes that a fast changing context is crucial in the range of options that can be considered for the future perspectives of the ACP group.

Extensive interviews with over 60 representatives, government ministers, ambassadors and other resource people from ACP countries and beyond provide the empirical material for this study.

The study finds that interviewees of the ACP have a clear appreciation of the changing global context, including of the EU's challenges in terms of financial and economic terms and its growing internal concerns with poverty relating to the financial crisis, the inclusion of new members and the growing global competition.

It is also recognized by the majority of respondents that the relationship between the ACP and the EU has provided historic opportunities and that a stable extensive network of reliable structures, relations, working procedures and valuable networks have been created.

The study also emphasizes that it will take time to establish the relevance of the EU Lisbon Treaty for the EU's positioning in the world and that it is too early to draw definite conclusions; it is also argued that the ACP – EU relationship is multidimensional and has strong historic roots, and the continuation of the relationship is a more likely scenario than one of a complete break-up, given the ACP and EU shared interests in a strategic relationship.

The ACP group itself has changed, with a new generation of leaders and representatives which are more than ever conscious of the potential of their countries to contribute to development and the need of their countries to have their voices heard in the international structures that govern modern globalization.

There also is a keen interest to avoid unnecessary overlap or duplication and to make sure that any future perspective of the ACP Group will make a distinct and precise contribution to the international representation of the members of the group, defined in terms of additionality to other international groupings.

Almost all interviewees recognize the number of the countries in the ACP group as a strength, as well as its historic long term structures and ability to negotiate with a strong industrialized regional group such as the EU.

The diversity in the group is considered both a weakness and a strength, a weakness in that the group represents a broad range of interests and a strength in that the group represents a multidimensional and inclusive perspective of poverty, representing larger economies such as South Africa and Nigeria, with still pressing problems of domestic poverty, alongside small island states, land-locked countries and the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). The group is also bound together by their historic relations with the EU, which determine a range of structural economic realities.

The interviewees recognize the importance of globalization, and by extension of global governance, and the role of the emerging economies, such as the BRICS and Gulf countries, both in terms of their

impact in domestic economic and finance investments as well as in terms of their role in global governance, such as in the UN, WTO and the G-20. This provides on the one hand possibilities for diversification of relations and opportunities to attract alternative investment, while on the other hand it increases the challenge of the Group to create voice and representation in global governance. This is seen as an opportunity for the future perspective of the ACP Group.

The study notes that three groups of countries can now be identified in global governance fora: industrialized countries, BRICS and poor countries. While the first two groups are organized in the G7 and G20 and the industrialized countries are supported by the OECD, the group of poor countries is not organized for negotiations as a group at the international level. The ACP with its composition, history, structure and secretariat could play a role to represent the group of poor countries in key areas of economy, trade, finance and sustainable development.

Economy, finance and sustainable development, including climate change and food, are increasingly interlinked and the G77 proposal for Sustainable Development Goals to follow up on the Millennium Development Goals, are a constructive set of proposals to ensure equitable access to resources as a central issue for the future global agenda. The ACP could add voice and strength to the G77 in its effort to negotiate an alternative economic model based on the idea of justice and inclusion of all.

The threat to the ACP Group is identified in the international context: volatile food and fuel prices, climate change and the financial crisis create an increasingly insecure environment in which the management of uncertainty and crisis-characterized developments take over the earlier paradigm of ever-advancing development. Given that these crises particularly impact on the ACP Group, its role in the management of these crises is a potential perspective it could further explore.

The expertise of the ACP Group in a broad multidimensional approach to poverty eradication, with specific expertise in trade and finance is well recognized by the respondents, as well as is potential role in the issue of the management of poverty-related aspects of climate change and sustainable development.

South – South cooperation seems of particular importance to strengthen the economic and finance base of the group, which in turn will help build greater political strength and the creation of added value to the natural resource exporting economies is of primary importance to allow an ACP market to develop. A long-term perspective on an ACP Free Trade Area should therefore remain part of the wider agenda of the group.

Global governance is not organized on the basis of purely logical criteria and no regional group, including the EU itself, can escape from historical anomalies; the ACP group is open to expansion of the members, but a priority is seen in consolidating the current group and concretizing the short term steps of a new future perspective, in the medium and longer term expansion and association of other member countries in the three continents should be considered.

The majority finds the three continental nature of the group, and its association to the EU an important asset, the group is seen to be able to cover and spread into the continents of Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe and in this way it can tap into political support to expand on its voice of 79 (soon 80) members.

The track record build in the management of the extensive cooperation programs of the ACP group is another asset, which adds value in addition to any other bilateral or regional programs development partners may feel they want to pursue. The group has proven ability to handle and account for programs that in financial size are larger than many other funds.

It has been emphasized that the future perspective should centre around a clear vision and mission, linked to the multidimensional aspect of poverty that characterizes the group's member countries, its commitment to approaches of development based on respect for human rights, good governance and democracy, a technical competence in dealing with large development partners and an aspiration to have the interests of the group of poorest countries better represented in global governance fora.

The respondents interviewed from the ACP group also espouse a clear awareness of the need or internal changes and the relatively short time-window for this change to be realized, in order to build respect for the group's ability in the new current context. As part of the recommendations ofr change are mentioned: (i) the need for political guidance from ACP Heads of State; (ii) the need for a more political orientation of the ACP group, its meetings, the preparation of these and the outcomes of these meetings; (iii) greater visibility and presence in internationally relevant fora; (iv) expansion of political cooperation with the EU on the basis of the collaboration between the 2 regional groups; (v) expansion of cooperation with other development partners and BRICS countries.

The structures of the ACP group will need to be streamlined with these priorities, including the effective use of the secretariat and the Geneva office; expansion of expertise in key areas, including in climate change, creating greater long term continuity of the leadership of the ACP group and secretariat; creating clear mandates for political representation of the Group's interests by its leadership and executives; and potential expansion with an antenna in New York and setting up of a committee of ACP ambassadors in NY.

The Secretariat should be strengthened and made into a 'development organization' with a renewed mandate to serve as an executing agency as well as knowledge institution on trade and regional development matters. Doing this will also require an enhanced status for the Secretary General, to enable him or her speak on ACP wide matters and to represent the group on the world stage.

The outcomes related to the Terms of Reference are the following:

- *examine the continued relevance and achievements of the ACP as a group and the functioning of its organs in the new and evolving global environment;*

A significant majority of representatives (cabinet Ministers and Ambassadors) expressed the view that the ACP Group's perspective on the future was relevant and that its relevance was heightened by the current global context. The future perspective of the ACP Group was seen as relevant independent from the EU's position; while many felt that a continued relation with the EU was commonsensical and consistent with the historic ties developed. Openness to new relations and cooperation with new development actors was seen as imperative of the future perspective as a reflection of the changed global order.

It was further suggested by the majority of respondents that the ACP secretariat's mandate should evolve more clearly around the servicing of the interests of the ACP members and hence its core functions should be financed by the members, while other functions, such as the servicing of cooperation agreements could be shared jointly with developing partners.

It was also felt that the mandate of the Committee of Ambassadors had evolved and should evolve further to a more political role and that the Georgetown Agreement should be adapted accordingly.

- *review the ACP's privileged relationship and cooperation with the European Union taking into account the Second Revised Cotonou Partnership Agreement, Economic Partnership Agreements and the Lisbon Treaty, as well as its relationships with other development partners;*

The establishment of the ACP group in 1972 was the product of a clear vision on international cooperation emanating from the need to strengthen the former colonies and help establish these countries as independent economic and political actors. Nevertheless there was some frustration expressed in interviews that the economic relations have not fundamentally changed and that therefore the political significance of the ACP Group is still marginal. The negotiations of EPAs have in some individual circumstances aggravated the feeling of being dictated to, but have also sharpened the ACP group's negotiation awareness, its capacity to conduct negotiations as a group and in terms of cooperation between subregions. It is also felt that this process has contributed to the Group's expertise in and ability of negotiating trade and finance matters, which is seen as an asset for the future.

The majority of the ACP Groups is aware of the possibility of establishing a more equal relation between the ACP and the EU, which the Cotonou Agreement aspires to and especially feels that the Cotonou Agreement has given space to the development of the economic and political cooperation dimensions between the regions. The holistic nature of the agreements between the two regions remains a point of celebration, in which the values of human rights, good governance and democracy that form the basis of the agreement have been internalized as essential for future cooperation.

The ACP Group appears very aware of the challenges the EU faces after the Lisbon Treaty in terms of dealing with a certain amount of fragmentation between institutions and in terms of defining the terms of its strategic policy objectives. More important developments pointed to are the enlargement and the diversity of histories and policy priorities of different EU member states as well as the economic crisis and the pressure of the latter on the European economies resulting in stringent austerity measures affecting development relations. The ACP Group should realism and acceptance of these realities but did not see these as necessary block to further cooperation between the regions.

The ACP Group demonstrated a strong desire for the future relations with the EU and other development partners to be based on mutual respect and equality.

The respondents of the ACP group show strong interest in further exploring the relations with emerging economies and enhancing partnerships in this regard, without losing sight of the Groups primary objective, to combat poverty in its countries and pursue its interests in this regard.

- *identify the comparative advantages that the ACP Group possesses and the relevance of these advantages for the future, as well as the Group's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis);*

The comparative advantage of the ACP group was identified in its presence on three continents and its ability to reach out to the Americas and Asia, as well as its historic ties with Europe. The Groups was therefore seen as strategically placed to defend the interests of the group of poorest and vulnerable countries, because of its composition (LDCs, small island states, land-locked countries) and diversity (small and larger poor economies, geography).

Further strength was identified in its sophisticated level of organization, its ability to bring together representatives of countries in regular meetings and its support system of experts. With reference to the Geneva office the view was that its mandate should be expanded, the committee of ambassadors in Geneva could be structured to support it and similarly a potential antenna in NY, supported by a committee of ambassadors should be considered.

In terms of weaknesses the respondents cited lack of dynamism as a major issue, the lack of political orientation of the meetings and the lack of political space for decision-making processes at the political level – issues that most hastened to say, should be dealt with quickly. Also the exclusive orientation on the EU and on EU aid, at the expense of an orientation on other development partners and on political and economic cooperation rather than aid, was cited as a weakness by some respondents. Furthermore the lack of continuity in political leadership in the secretariat were mentioned as a potential weakness, with strong confidence expressed in the current leadership and a wish for a process that would allow greater certainty and confidence in terms of continued competent leadership.

As a threat was identified the position that the ACP Group could be over-reliant on the EU and that the issue of potential losing interest of the EU and its interest to deal with ACP members simply on the basis of bilateral or subregional relations, and it potentially dictating the future composition and direction of the ACP Group. It was also pointed out that a negative interpretation of the consequences of the Lisbon Treaty could drive the ACP away from the EU, without a proper joint reflection on the potential benefits of continued cooperation between the two groups. This was particularly a threat in the aftermath of the EPA negotiations that according to many were not understood in terms of their joint benefit and created inflexibility which was not a good basis for political or economic cooperation.

As an opportunity it was argued that the group of poorest countries is not adequately represented in global governance, while industrialized countries and BRICS are. The G77 has created a new orientation in the need for a paradigm shift to a development-orientation that would allow inclusive growth in ACP countries. The poorer countries in the G77, organized in the ACP, could more actively

contribute to realize positions in this regard and give voice to the interests of the group of poor countries within the G77 and within for a such as the G20. This could help bring about a sustainable economic perspective. The natural resources available in the ACP countries are an asset in this regard, which, if properly used, can increase the economic weight and political relevance of the group. In this paradigm shift a greater emphasis on the management of crisis and the technical experience of the ACP Group to deal with mechanism of risk insurance systems could be exploited in terms of charting out its future relevance along concrete implementable measures.

The discussions in preparation of Rio + 20 further show that the agendas of economic development sustainability and climate change and poverty eradication are becoming one agenda; that of a paradigm that provides opportunity to all rather than a model that simply protects the achieved status of the group of industrialized countries organized in the OECD. In that regard it is the group of poorest countries that has the opportunity, if organized, to realize a shift of paradigm in economic model that serves the world population as a whole. The ACP's close historic relation with Europe, its relation with emerging economies and its traditional position within the G77 places it in a strong position to help facilitate this process in close collaboration with other countries and groups of countries. The ACP has already worked with the EU to agree common positions on world development agendas, prime examples being the joint positions on Busan and Rio+20, which demonstrate that this is possible and much more could be achieved.

It was also felt that the opportunity of educated youth and students in ACP countries would provide a potential for future engagement and would help in terms of defining the mission of the ACP and create visibility domestically in member countries.

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of member countries • diversity • geographic spread • historic connection • historic mandate based on independence • built on ethics of solidarity and justice • based on universal values of human rights, accountability and democracy • long-term operational experience and track record • shared ideas on multidimensional face of poverty • cohesive group of countries in terms of poverty, including LDCs, Small island States and Land-locked countries • cooperation based on exchange between different regions and realities – creating understanding • structured way of ACP cooperation, regular meetings between ambassadors, parliamentarians and ministers as well as heads of state • strong secretariat and supporting offices, such as Geneva office • demonstrated capacity in negating with industrialized regions on economy, trade, finance • Expertise and common interest in climate change and its intrinsic connection to economy and crisis management • Track record on management of cooperation with developing partners • Availability of raw materials and natural resources • Historic link with EU and mutual commitment to the Cotonou Agreement • Experience in South- South cooperation • Demographics and youth populations • Cooperation with emerging economies • Links with three continents (Africa, Asia, LA) and Europe • Fostering political cooperation • Fostering economic cooperation, helping strengthening of the regions and cooperation between the regions 	<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased importance of global governance • Split between industrialized countries, BRICS and poorest countries – but the latter not separately represented in global governance • G77 composed of emerging and poor countries, but while BRICS are organized, the poor countries are not • Consensus emerging in the G77 around an alternative paradigm of sustainable, economic and finance development • Cotonou Agreement still relevant but objectives need to be achieved and some aspects of the agreement must be enhanced (political cooperation in particular) • Expansion of cooperation with EU possible in a number of areas due to the historic connection between the ACP and the EU and shared visions • EU will need (young) people for employment due to ageing • Paradigm shift to a greater emphasis on the management of crisis and the technical experience of the ACP Group is valuable in developing mechanisms to deal with risk such as risk insurance systems • Strengthening of regional cooperation and fostering greater cohesion and cross learning in regional trade and finance • Interest of the BRICS and other development partners in ACP countries • Interest of educated youth and students to help create new perspectives on development in ACP countries • Increasing importance of political cooperation and stability for economic development • Increasing competition over natural resources and raw materials in ACP countries • Increasing evidence that the management of natural resources and raw materials is key to sustainability and climate change and their economic relevance • Cooperation on people’s movements, employment, migration and visa.
<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of member states and diversity can make it difficult to reach joint positions • Solidarity between countries could/should be stronger • The work of the ACP is not sufficiently visible • People in ACP member countries no longer know about the ACP • The working structures should be more dynamic and political • The core of the ACP secretariat should be centered around defending the interests of the members and should be financed independently by the members • The political cooperation with the EU (set out in Cotonou) could be strengthened • Orientation of ACP too much focused on the EU • Too little focus on cooperation with other developing partners and BRICS • Not enough focus on important global political areas, such as economy, finance and climate change • Lack of continuity in political leadership • The group could be stronger if it had a strong political mandate by Heads of State and Ministers • Political leadership should represent the group and receive a strong mandate for executing the external functions of the group. 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over-reliance and dependence on the EU • Too early conclusions drawn on the consequences of the Lisbon Treaty for EU – ACP cooperation • Lack of visibility of achievement of ACP – EU cooperation in the ACP and EU countries • Lack of financial commitment to realize a future perspective • Hang-over of EPA negotiations on ACP – EU cooperation • Further polarization between industrialized countries and BRICS and trampling of interests of poorest countries • Lack of global interest in an alternative development agenda, based on sustainability, justice and opportunity for all • Lack of interest from youth in the ACP development agenda • Lack of access to the ACP group by other groups, such as G77, BRICS, industrialized countries • Competition with regional bodies in the same areas: for instance AU to coordinate trade

- *examine the ACP Group's relationship with ACP regional organizations and others including the Organization Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), Commonwealth Secretariat and others;*

While the OIF and the Commonwealth Secretariat are groups of industrialized and developing countries jointly, the ACP group is homogeneous in terms of it representing the poorest developing countries. In this sense it has a clear common interest around poverty and sustainable development. It also allows the ACP group to develop a very real dimension of South – South cooperation.

Its relation with the EU is also seen as an important asset, in that it allows the EU to have a partnership with a group of countries that relates to it as region, rather than the composite parts of relations and exclusive relations of EU Member States.

In this regard the ACP Group, organized in relation to the Cotonou Agreement, has the advantage of relating to real policy, policy areas such as trade, investment, agriculture and energy that are now exclusive powers of the EU and not of its member states. This gives the ACP a priority channel that is not available through the exclusive relations with EU member states.

- *examine prospects for the integration of the ACP Group through an effective Intra-ACP Cooperation Programme on the basis of the ACP Summit Declaration 1982 and 1985 Intra-ACP Plan of Action;*

Intra ACP cooperation was highly valued, both in political terms as in terms of economic cooperation and technical cooperation, but many respondents made the point that much more was needed and that the ACP should really invest in this area.

The proposal for an ACP investment bank received a lot of support, provided that it would not have any political links and would be entirely financial investment focused (and not overlap with development banks). It should be financed with ACP capital and focusing on supporting SMEs and intra-regional investments. It could extract other finance once established.

- *assess the feasibility of opening the ACP Group to include other developing countries, least developed countries (LDCs) and islands or countries with similar characteristics;*

There was a strong view that the composition of the ACP Group should be entirely a matter of the ACP group itself.

There was a focus on changing the direction and scope of the Group before changing the composition. However, there was much openness to admitting new members, especially LDC's and association of partners in Asia and Latin America on the basis of political or economic cooperation in certain areas.

There was no respondent who favored the idea that the ACP Group should be reduced to LDCs and small island states only. It was felt that the bigger countries were important to give the group economic and political diversity, necessary for a meaningful existence.

- *examine various options and scenarios for post-2020 when the Cotonou Agreement expires, while taking into account the privileged relations between the ACP and European Union.*

The following range of scenarios was proposed:

Status Quo

Respondents feel that this scenario will lead to the marginalization and eventual abolition of the ACP Group. They fear that the EU will lose its interest in the group, and that the ACP Group itself will implode, with no relevance or perspective within the changed global relationships. None of the respondents felt that an exclusive focus of the ACP on the EU would be a practical way forward in the changed global relations and the range of options with newly emerging actors and therefore all respondents felt that change was inevitable.

Closing down

This scenario can be entertained, but the research clearly shows commitment from the respondents to engage with scenarios of change.

Regionalization

While a regional approach could be considered none of the respondents really seriously developed a case for this scenario. What a number of respondents did suggest is that regional cooperation in a number of areas could be useful, none of the respondents believed that a scenario based purely on regions would serve a purpose or have a future. It is especially felt that regionalization does not contradict the future of the ACP group as a whole.

Decrease the membership to LDCs

The main idea of this scenario is that the ACP Group will be an EU aid partner focused on LDCs. There is hardly if any support for this scenario at present.

Independent ACP with multiple sets of relations

This scenario follows logically from the quantitative results of the interviews, with a significant majority of ambassadors and Ministers favoring an independent ACP. There is also a significant majority in favor of a secretariat core that is financed by the ACP countries themselves and reflects the political commitment to the ACP Group. It is also believed that this will give it independence in political position that reflects the shared interests of the ACP. While a small number argues that the relationship with the EU should remain the priority of the group, the vast majority is in favor of expanding the relations to newly emerging actors, and these two positions are not seen as mutually exclusive. Within this scenario there are a range of subsets of options which are set out below. This scenario, which carries the support of the majority, has been elaborated in the report in the following dimensions:

1. Mandate: political; economic; technical
2. Core business

3. Substantive mandate: trade, finance, aid, climate change
4. Global Governance focus: WTO, UN, G-20
5. Organization: institutional considerations
6. Composition: expansion, graduation or status quo
7. Cooperation: Intra-Regional cooperation, South– South cooperation
8. Visibility
9. Pace of change: short term versus long term

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Introduction: A three-dimensional perspective on the future perspectives of the ACP

This study assesses the future perspectives of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) from three dimensions:

- the internal evolution of the ACP group;
- the external changes that impact on the group; and
- future scenarios for harmonizing these internal and external challenges.

The research questions and methodology are presented first, followed by a short historical overview. The report then introduces the ACP and examines its relationship with its strongest partner, the European Union. The empirical findings are then presented in the form of an analysis of the internal strengths and weaknesses of the group, and its external opportunities and threats. From this, various scenarios of future perspectives for the ACP group are outlined and discussed, and final conclusions drawn.

Research questions

This study was undertaken to assist the ACP Group to prepare for the expiry of the Cotonou Agreement in 2020 and its future in the post-2020 era. More specifically, the study supports the work of the Working Group on the Future Perspectives of the ACP Group by examining options and delineating scenarios on the basis of a comprehensive review of the essence and value of the ACP Group. The study considers the work already done by the previous working groups on the Future Perspectives of the ACP Group and the decisions of the current Working Group. In the process of the study, consultations were held with ACP member states and regional bodies. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations are outlined for various options and scenarios on the future perspectives of the ACP Group, which will serve as the basis for the Working Group's report to the ACP Heads of State Summit in 2013. The study also adds to the examination of the Group with regards to "the organizational and institutional structures of the ACP Group" to "ensure that the Group's orientation and alignment continue to remain relevant for its member states, regions and international community." (ACP, 2010: 5).

The specific objectives of the research were to:

- examine the continued relevance and achievements of the ACP as a group and the functioning of its organs in the new and evolving global environment;
- review the ACP's privileged relationship and cooperation with the European Union taking into account the Second Revised Cotonou Partnership Agreement, Economic Partnership Agreements and the Lisbon Treaty, as well as its relationships with other development partners;

- identify the comparative advantages that the ACP Group possesses and the relevance of these advantages for the future, as well as the Group’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis);
- examine the ACP Group’s relationship with ACP regional organizations and others including the Organization Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), Commonwealth Secretariat and others;
- examine prospects for the integration of the ACP Group through an effective Intra-ACP Cooperation Programme on the basis of the ACP Summit Declaration 1982 and 1985 Intra-ACP Plan of Action;
- assess the feasibility of opening the ACP Group to include other developing countries, least developed countries (LDCs) and islands or countries with similar characteristics; and
- examine various options and scenarios for post-2020 when the Cotonou Agreement expires, while taking into account the privileged relations between the ACP and European Union.

Methodology

The methodology for this study follows a traditional SWOT analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This framework is appropriate for assessing the internal and external factors determining the future of an organization and distinguishes between those factors that are favorable and those that are unfavorable to a particular objective. SWOT analysis is often used as a model for assessing potential change scenarios for companies or organizations as it provides a clear action-oriented framework, as well as an analytical model, for identifying in a systematic way what factors impact on the objectives of the organization and whether or not these are in the control of the organization. In making these distinctions, the SWOT analysis looks at whether the favorable factors outweigh the unfavorable ones in relation to a particular objective, and whether these factors are within the internal control of the organization. It, therefore, is a tool that is often used to “attain a systematic approach and support for decision situations” (Ghazinoory et al. 2011).

This study refers to favorable and unfavorable factors and distinguishes between those that are within the control of the ACP and those in the external environment. The basic framework of a SWOT analysis is given in the following matrix.

Objectives	Internal factors	External factors
Favorable factors	strengths	opportunities
Unfavorable factors	weaknesses	threats

Critical reflections on the methodological weaknesses of SWOT analysis used alone (Ghazinoory et al. 2011) have shown the need for:

1. triangulation of data from different sources to avoid bias due to the over optimism or over pessimism of respondents;
2. checks on whether or not all factors are included, open-ended frame; and
3. cross-checking of the weight given to particular factors.

In this study, the political nature of the operational environment required a specific appreciation with regards to the third element, the crosschecking the weight given to various factors. Accordingly, questions in the interviews were often repeated in different ways to allow a better appreciation of the relative weight given to the various factors by the respondent.

While the SWOT matrix can identify critical success factors in changing scenarios, its contribution to change processes is maximized if the SWOT analysis is integrated into a series of reflections and communications that prepare decision making. A model developed by Ishino and Kijima (2005) shows SWOT analysis as particularly useful when combined with a multi-methodological analysis in which different SWOT analyses are implemented in parallel with strategic maps (called Balance Score Cards or BSC).

The methodology developed for this study draws on the multi-methodological framework of Ishino and Kijima (2005), which explicitly acknowledges the researchers' task in a well-defined framework that includes:

1. SWOT analysis to describe the internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and strengths;
2. development of potential future scenarios: integration of (a) organizational objectives; (b) internal strategies; (c) finances and (d) learning and growth; and
3. comparison of SWOT and future scenarios for strategic thinking and decisions on future perspectives.

Based on the framework for cooperation of the ACP group provided in the Georgetown Agreement, a semi-structured questionnaire was developed and piloted (described in detail in the Inception Report 2012). The questionnaire included questions relating to the three methodologies with the possibility of crosschecking. A face-to-face setting was chosen for the questionnaire to allow the researcher the opportunity to check interpretations. In a few limited instances, the questionnaire was filled out or answered by phone because of time or resource constraints. The questionnaire was specifically drafted to address questions relevant to the ambassadors of the ACP in Brussels (Annex 1). Questionnaires and interviews were conducted in French and English. The semi-structured questionnaires allowed for probing to get full sense of views and their verification in order to reinforce validity. Triangulation of data was further developed in follow up exchange meetings with ambassadors that had been interviewed at an earlier stage to cross-check the findings of the interviews and develop the scenarios derived from these.

In addition to the semi-structured interviews, open-ended interviews were carried out with other resource persons, and given the differentiated nature of their relationship with the ACP, these

interviews were conducted with a more flexible way than the semi-structured interviews. In these open-ended interviews, questions were posed in relation to the SWOT analysis and to possible future scenarios for the ACP, and in relation to how the SWOT and these scenarios compared. The respondents to the open-ended interviews were a combination of ACP and related stakeholders including:

- ACP ministers;
- staff of the Secretariat of the ACP;
- European Commission officials and staff of other European institutions;
- civil society representatives; and
- resources persons from other international organizations.

All interviews were carried out on the basis of anonymity. Interviews, except for the ones held during the Ministerial, were recorded and summaries and transcripts made, which formed the basis of counts for the quantitative analysis. The purpose of the interviews was explained to the respondents, and assurances were given that no personal quotes would be included in the report. Over 90% of respondents agreed to the interview being recorded.

Ministers of the following countries were interviewed for the inception report: Haiti Kenya; Uganda (foreign affairs and trade); Zimbabwe; Mozambique (Dep Minister For Affairs and Coop) ; Minister Zambia (trade) and the Minister of Vanuatu.

There are 66 embassies of ACP members in Brussels, who were all invited to participate in the research. Of these, interviews with 50 representations were held (or filled out the questionnaire), representing 54 countries (as some are jointly represented by one ambassador). A few representations declined for practical reasons, and some could not be reached during the interview period. However the overall impression was that there was a high interest in the research and the ambassadors made an effort to free time in their heavy duty schedules to be available for the interview, often involving other staff as well in the interview. Ambassadors took time to speak at length with the interviewers and expressed their interest in the study.

European Commission officials and staff from other institutions were interviewed with a view of incorporating views from different perspectives, including development, trade, finance and investment, agriculture, environment and climate change.

Civil Society organizations were approached through CONCORD, Eurostep and Social Watch, all three networks also referred to their cooperation with civil society in ACP countries.

Resource people from international organizations (on personal title) advised the research, including from OIF, Commonwealth Secretariat, AU and UN.

A desk study was undertaken to assess the areas in which the ACP Group has engaged as a basis for generating potential scenarios. The researcher also participated as an observer in the Ministerial

meeting of December 2011 and as an observer in the hearing of the Working Group on the Future Relations of the ACP, including its hearings.

The past and present: the strategic and ethical base of the ACP Group

The ACP Group was established in 1975 by the Georgetown Agreement on the organization of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (see Annex 1). This agreement ended the European strategy of dividing up colonial territories and brought together in one group those countries that had earlier been colonized by European powers. European powers, united in the EEC, decided to arrange their cooperation jointly in the framework of the ACP group, which had come together under the Georgetown Agreement. The Georgetown Agreement marks the end of colonial 'divide and rule' by European powers (Dyett 1998). The drive for the Georgetown Agreement came from negotiators from different former colonized countries (Dyett 1998; van Reisen 2009).

The establishment of the ACP group was not just a global geo-political repositioning, but an ethical reorientation, guided by the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, in which all humans and, by extension, all countries are equal under international law. The ACP group was set up in response to global shifts, which included the establishment of the EEC after the end of World War II. The allied forces, especially France and the United Kingdom, depending on the support provided by the colonies, had to adjust to a rapid and sudden decolonization process as their colonies no longer accepted foreign rule. The ACP relationship was negotiated as an integral and fundamental part of the establishment of the EEC itself, with France threatening its negotiating partners (particularly Germany and the Netherlands) that it would not enter into the EEC if a fund for the association of former colonies was not established. The European Development Fund (EDF) was established in response to this, and, as part of the Rome Treaties, the associated countries received special status in the Associated African and Malagasy States (AAMS) and Yaoundé Conventions.

The Georgetown Agreement laid the foundation for a fundamental rearrangement of the previous colonial relationship. This was expressed by the former Ambassador of Guyana to the EC, Harry Dyett, who was negotiator at the time of the establishment of the Georgetown Agreement and during the ongoing negotiations with the EEC on the future of the relationship between the ex-colonies and their former masters (Dyett 1998, p. 49):

As the time for negotiations approached, the ACP faced an uphill struggle. The nub of the debate would not only be the rightness of the cause, but the call to a higher philosophy which recognised the equal treatment of unequals as inherently contradictory in economic as much as in social and moral terms.

Despite a real philosophical reorientation towards equality, European self interest remained very much part of the new relationship, as illustrated by the statement of former President of the Commission François-Xavier Ortoli (Commission of the European Communities, 1975):

Europe, for its part must, even more than other industrial areas, remain in a position to import energy and raw materials in order to keep up its expansion. It therefore needs to

export more than in the past, with a different market partner giving more prominence to new emerging markets.

It was, therefore, almost inevitable that tensions would arise as the new international ethos of equality was not always aligned with Europe's desire to remain a global player. Therefore, the ideal of an equal relationship between the EEC and the ACP was often mortgaged by negotiations to further other interests, as well as by patronizing attitudes that had deep historic roots. This is illustrated by the lament of the former Ambassador to the EEC, Lawrence E 'Bonnie' Mann (Dyett 1998, p.45):

The Community was at one stage demanding the right to be consulted by any ACP State which contemplated taking measures in the trade field which would affect the interests of any EEC Member State. This in effect [...] could have the result of requiring ACP Finance Ministers trotting up to Brussels to discuss, in advanced, their proposed annual Budgets with the Commission – a departure from sanity of altogether intolerable proportions.

Despite these sometimes tense negotiations on the relationship, the economic and political benefits of cooperation bound the ACP and the European Union; similarly, the ethical dimensions have been essential in rooting the relationship and steering it, not just in terms of the ACP-EU relationship, but also as a reflection of the European Union's own internal development and its role in the world. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guyana, Mr. Shridath 'Sonny' Ramphal, made the following comments on the future of the relationship between Europe and its former colonies in 1973 (Dyett: 42 – 43):

As we face the future we are conscious that a Europe that builds Community by bringing economic disasters to developing countries sacrifices values that are themselves essential to the strength and permanence of that Community – eroding those concepts of care and concern and of responsibility for the future of our planet which lie at its very heart. [...] For many outside Europe the questions is not whether the Community is going to be a 'rich man's club'. It is a society of rich states whose association will grow increasingly more intimate. The question rather is whether, being rich and highly developed, the enlarged Community will adopt these values and elevate themselves to the level of ethos.

Within its long-term cooperation agreement with the ACP, the enlarged European Union is testing the values of solidarity and equality, which are at the core of its foundation. Through its relationship with the ACP, the European Union seeks also still to secure its access to raw materials and energy sources and to expand its export potential in newly emerging markets. At the same time, the ACP countries are looking at how they can gain economic and political benefit and strength from the many resources that they hold through a continued relationship with the European Union. The questions is, therefore, not whether the European Union and the countries of the ACP need each other, but rather, what ethical foundation and which political and economic understandings underpin their cooperation, and how this understanding takes account of the new global multipolar reality. In this new reality, new opportunities are opening up for the ACP. But there is also a realization that the critical mass of the ACP Group has not been utilized to its potential, raising the crucial question of how to

The energy of a new generation of ACP leaders and diplomats is contagious. The original spirit of the ACP for a world that is just and responsible is very much alive.

The ACP in 2012

With a history of over 60 years of cooperation, dating back from the colonial independence, The ACP can be seen as one of the most successful multilateral groupings existing today. Covering three continents, the ACP Group originally evolved from the Associated African and Malagasy States (AAMS) established under the Yaoundé Convention, a pioneer agreement with the European Economic Community (EEC) signed in 1963. It is currently comprised of 79 members, with South Sudan expected to enter as the 80th member (Annex 1). The ACP Group spans six regions and covers 48 countries in Africa, 16 countries in the Caribbean and 15 countries in the Pacific, with a total population of 980 million people. Its size and geographic diversity imparts the group with authority as a persuasive voice speaking on universal interests.

Over half of the members (55 countries) are categorized as LDCs. Only 9 LDCs (Afghanistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos, Maldives, Myanmar, and Yemen) are not members of the ACP. The ACP includes 15 landlocked countries and 28 small island states. It is the largest group of vulnerable countries. It is also the largest multilateral group after the G77, which has 132 countries, and the United Nations, with a membership of 193 countries.

In 2005, the collective GDP of the ACP had reached 564 billion Euros. Total ACP trade accounted for €550 billion in 2010. Its total exports in 2010 had a value of €258.9 billion, and imports had a value of €291.1 billion. The ACP is increasingly of interest as a location for foreign direct investment (FDI), not to its original partners in the European Union (especially France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom), but also to South Africa, the United States and increasingly Asia.

The ACP Group has been progressively recognized as an intergovernmental organization under international law. It has the observer status in the UN (since 1981) and in other international and regional bodies: UN Habitat, WTO, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), United Nations' Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Agence Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

The ACP Group has technical agreements with the World Customs Organization (WCO), UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the World Bank.

The ACP secretariat proposed the consideration of cooperation with the following organizations in its 2011-2014 management plan: African Union, World Meteorological Office, Climate Change Convention, Bio-Diversity Convention and Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) (ACP, 2010: 11).

The Georgetown Agreement

The Georgetown Agreement establishing the ACP Group was signed in 1975 and strongly reflected the spirit of that period. The evolution of the Georgetown Agreement through its subsequent amendments (Annex 9) shows a progression from the ACP's dependence on the European Union to

self-awareness and the formulation of specific objectives for the group's development. The Georgetown Agreement, as amended in 2003, lists a range of objectives that pertain to the development of the group:

- to promote and strengthen unity and solidarity among the ACP States, as well as understanding between ACP peoples;
- to consolidate, strengthen and maintain peace and stability as a precondition for improving the well-being of ACP peoples in a democratic and free environment;
- to contribute to the development of greater and closer economic, political social and cultural relations among developing countries and, to that end, cooperation between the ACP States mainly in the fields of trade, science and technology, industry, transport and communications, education, training and research, information and communication, the environment, demography and human resources;
- to promote policies, especially in the areas of the environment and the rational management of natural resources, in pursuit of sustainable development;
- to promote and reinforce intra-ACP regional integration so as to enable ACP States to increase their competitiveness and to meet the challenges of globalization;
- to aim for the promotion of a fairer and more equitable new world order;
- to strengthen the political identity of the ACP Group to enable it to act as a coherent political force in international bodies and to ensure that due regard is accorded its specific interests;
- to promote and reinforce political dialogue within the ACP Group so as to consolidate ACP unity and solidarity;
- to contribute to strengthening regional mechanisms for the prevention, management and peaceful settlement of conflicts and by pursuing and developing cooperation between ACP States and third States; and
- to establish contacts and relations with other States and groups of States.

The latest amendments to the Georgetown Agreement further strengthen the overall aims of the group, referencing respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law in the preamble.

Significant are the provisions that form the basis of a strengthening of the political identity of the group with a view to greater coherence of its political influence in international bodies. The objectives point specifically towards greater political cooperation, while economic cooperation is referred to in terms of the management of natural resources in the context of sustainable development and the environment and measures to promote intra-regional integration to increase

RECOGNISING the importance of solidarity and unity in cooperation among the ACP States;
DESIROUS of enhancing the political identity of the ACP *Group* to enable them to act and speak with a single voice in all international fora and organisations, and
RESOLVED to establish the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States to achieve common objectives so as to contribute towards the realization of a new, fairer and more equitable world order...

Preamble to the Georgetown Agreement, as amended in 2003

competitiveness. An objective was also inserted to establish relations with other States and Groups of States.

Institutional set up

The ACP has a well-defined institutional set up, which streamlines the decision-making and functioning of the group, as set out in the Georgetown Agreement (see Annex 9). Its institutional set up allows for political guidance at the level of Heads of State and Council of Ministers and continuity of implementation, with the Committee of Ambassadors and its presence in Brussels. The decision-making bodies of the ACP Group are:

- the Summit of Heads of State and Government (hereinafter referred to as the ‘Summit’), which is the supreme organ;
- the Council of Ministers; and
- the Committee of Ambassadors.

The ACP group is assisted by a secretariat based in Brussels, which is headed by a Secretary General, vested with executive powers.

Heads of State Summit

Heads of State Summits of the ACP Group

- Libreville, Gabon, November 1997
- Santo Domingo, The Dominican Republic, November 1999
- Nadi, Fiji, June 2002
- Maputo, Mozambique, June 2004
- Khartoum, Sudan, December 2006
- Equatorial Guinea, December 2012 (planned)

The highest organ of the ACP Group, the Summit of Heads of State, has been meeting regularly since 1997, presided over by the Head of State of the host country. The Summit lays down the general policy of the ACP Group. It issues the Council of Ministers with the directives related to the implementation of the policies it has agreed. In the inter-sessional periods it is coordinated by a Bureau composed of the president-in-office, the out-going president and the in-coming president if already designated.

Council of Ministers

The Council of Ministers meets every six months. The acts of the Council of Ministers may take the form of a ‘decision’, ‘resolution’ or ‘recommendation’. The Council of Ministers determines the organizational structure of the ACP Secretariat and lays down its staff regulations, on the proposal of the Committee of Ambassadors. The Council of Ministers appoints the Secretary-General of the ACP Group on the basis of merit, qualifications, professional competence and integrity. The Council of Ministers establishes the financial regulations and the budget of the ACP Secretariat. Each ACP State contributes to the Secretariat’s budget in accordance with the provisions established by the Council of Ministers.

The Council of Ministers convenes meetings of Ministers responsible for different areas included among the Group’s objectives. The ACP website provides the following, not exhaustive, list (source: <http://www.acp.int/content/council-ministers>, March 12, 2012):

- **Council of Trade Ministers:** The Council of Trade Ministers comprises a representative from each Member State and is responsible for conducting negotiations on behalf of the Group.

The Council of Trade Ministers is playing an increasingly important role both in the trade negotiations between the ACP Group and the European Union, as well as within the framework of multilateral relations at the World Trade Organization (WTO).

- **Ministerial Trade Committee:** The Ministerial Trade Committee (MTC) is a task force of 18 trade ministers (3 per region) responsible for conducting, coordinating and monitoring certain trade negotiations.
- **Meeting of Ministers of Culture:** The 1st meeting of ACP Ministers of Culture took place in Dakar (Senegal) in May 2003. At the end of the meeting, a declaration and plan of action were adopted with the primary aim of implementing a development strategy based on culture and cultural industries, as expressed by the Summit of ACP Heads of State and Government. The process of setting up an ACP Cultural Foundation was also begun and Haiti selected as the venue for the 1st ACP Cultural Festival scheduled for summer 2004.
- **Meeting of National and Regional Authorizing Officers:** These meetings are attended mainly by ministers in charge of cooperation with the European Union.

Committee of Ambassadors

The Committee of Ambassadors, based in Brussels, assists the Council of Ministers in the performance of its functions, and carries out any mandate entrusted to it by the latter. According to the Georgetown Agreement, the Committee of Ambassadors is especially charged with monitoring the implementation of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement (see below). In Geneva, the ACP office coordinates representatives of the ACP Member States (see below).

ACP Parliamentary Assembly (ACP PA)

Established in 2005 in Bamako, Mali, this institution represents an affirmation of the representative political structure of the group at all levels. There is opportunity to strengthen the ACP PA in relation to the other structures of the ACP and further define the role it can play in ensuring that the aspirations of the ACP citizens in terms of ACP cooperation are met. (ACP, 2010: 11)

ACP Secretariat

The Georgetown Agreement stipulates that appointments to the most senior positions relating to the ACP Secretariat be made according to merit, qualifications, professional competence and integrity. In addition, the Georgetown Agreement stipulates that staff of the Secretariat will, to the fullest extent possible, be an equitable and balanced representation of the Member States of the ACP. The principle of rotation applies to all these appointments to ensure an equitable and balanced representation of the regions (see Annex 9)

Geneva Office

The ACP Group has been assisted by an office in Geneva since 2001. There is no reference to it in the Georgetown Agreement. The mandate of the ACP Geneva Office is to (<http://www.acp.int/content/acp-geneva-office>, March 12, 2012):

- represent the Secretary General of ACP Group at meetings organized by the Geneva-based United Nations agencies, WTO and other institutions;
- facilitate coordination among the representatives of ACP countries in Geneva and, through the Secretariat, act as an intermediary between ACP counterparts in Brussels;

- provide technical assistance to ACP States with regard to issues dealt with in Geneva, particularly those relating to Doha negotiations under the WTO; and
- perform duties relating to administration and finances in connection with the functions of the ACP Geneva Office.

ACP in the regions

The ACP is divided into six geographical regions: Central Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa, West Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (see Annex 2). In addition, the ACP comprises a range of regional trade groups as well as EPA negotiating groups of countries (see below). In Africa, there are about 30 Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs), the harmonization of which would potentially accelerate FDI and intraregional trade in the ACP. For this purpose, the three regional groupings COMESA, East Africa Community (EAC) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) started in 2008 to enhance integration among their members in order to develop a more harmonized sub-region in terms of trade and investment. South Africa is a member of the ACP Group and signatory to the Cotonou Agreement (and member of the BRICS group) but its aid and trade programme with the EU are governed under cooperation programs separate to those of the other ACP countries (except Cuba, see below)

In the Caribbean the regional structure is also complex: CARICOM is the regional integration organization but for the ACP Group and the Cotonou Agreement it is not as the Caribbean regional entity, as this is CARIFORUM (CF) which is composed of the CARICOM countries, the Dominican Republic and Cuba. The Organization of Eastern Caribbean is not part of the ACP, but some individual countries are member; 4 of the OECS have joint representation by one Ambassador: Dominica, Saint Lucia, St Kitts-Nevis and St. Vincent & the Grenadines. Grenada has its own Ambassador while Antigua & Barbuda are covered from London (Anguilla & Montserrat as OCTs are in OECS but not in ACP). This illustrates the complexity of regionalism in the ACP Group due to various historic and geographic realities. With regards to Cuba it should be noted that it is part of the ACP Group but not a signatory to the Cotonou Agreement. Cuba is not in the Caribbean-EU EPA while the Dominican Republic is.

Regional Groupings in the ACP:

African Union (AU)
Caribbean Forum of ACP States (CARIFORUM)
Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)
Southern African Development Community (SADC)
Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
West African Economic and Monetary Union (WEAMU)
Southern African Customs Union (SACU)
Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)
Commission Economique et Monetaire de l'Afrique Centrale (CEMAC)
Caribbean Community (CARICOM)
The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)
Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS)
Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER)
Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA)
South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement (SPARTECA)

Meanwhile, closer working relations have been created between the ACP Secretariat and the regions by the creation of the ACP Inter-Regional Organizations Coordination Committee (ACP-IROCC), of which the Secretary General of the ACP, Dr Chambas, is currently co-president.

Cooperation with external partners

The ACP has a long-standing cooperation agreement with the European Union (see below), which is the biggest financial sponsor of the group. In addition, a range of cooperation agreements with other partners have been realized, including cooperation agreements with UNDP, UNIDO, ITC, IOM, International Monetary Fund and the World Customs Organization and a memorandum of understanding with Brazil. The open-ended Memorandum of Understanding with Brazil focuses on opportunities for training and scholarships. Longstanding relations have also been enhanced with bodies such as the OIF, the Commonwealth and the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM). (<http://www.acp.int/content/secretary-general>, accessed March 12, 2012).

Despite the above listed achievements, there is a strong realization in the Group that it should 'reinvent' itself in order to remain relevant in the changing international context.

The ACP-EU relationship

Together the EU and ACP account for 1.35 billion people, and 20.1% of the world's total landmass and a total trade of € 94 billion in 2010. In 2010 trade with the ACP comprised 4.3% of its imports from the ACP and 5.1% of exports with a total trade of 4.7%. For the ACP the EU comprised of 12.7% with an even distribution of imports and exports. The EU imports from the ACP consist almost exclusively of primary products.

The Georgetown Agreement assigns great importance to the ACP cooperation with the EU, as is shown by the following objectives specifically set out in the agreement:

a) ensure the realisation of the objectives of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreements in particular, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and the smooth and gradual integration of ACP States into the world economy;

b) co-ordinate the activities of the ACP Group in the implementation of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreements;

h) strengthen relations with the European Union with the aim of speeding up the development of ACP States;

i) define a common stand for the ACP vis-à-vis the European Union on matters covered by the ACP-EC Partnership Agreements and on the issues tackled by international bodies likely to affect the implementation of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreements;

m) engage in effective and meaningful political dialogue at the appropriate levels with the European Union in order to strengthen ACP-EC Partnership; (see annex 9)

The ACP-EU relationship has been heralded as an innovative and predictable set of cooperation agreements between an industrialized group of countries and developing countries, enshrined in a legal agreement, predictable, and based on negotiation and mutually contractual obligations. The agreements, which have been enduring and consistent partnerships, take the character of a convention to which both groups and their members are party and, therefore, provide a real sense of joint ownership. This is further enhanced by the governance structure of the agreements, which allows joint institutions at different levels to engage with the partnership and for an ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee to give oversight. The cooperation program established through these agreements is complete in terms of covering the political level of Heads of State, the Ministerial level for negotiations, the parliamentary level for democratic scrutiny, and the implementation level through an established network of authorizing officers responsible for budget implementation. These officers are usually located in the finance and/or planning ministries of the ACP countries.

The ACP-EU relationship is also heralded for its substantive and comprehensive nature, covering topics ranging from poverty eradication and the promotion of the Millennium Development Goals, to trade, agriculture, rural development, and investment. Political cooperation is well structured and political dialogue has become an increasingly important component.

The relationship between the ACP and its principle partner, the European Union, has been supported by the financial mechanism of the EDF. An approximate estimate of a cumulative total of over €113 billion (in current prices) has been allocated through EDF 1 to EDF 11 to fund an ever increasing number of countries and populations (the final allocation for EDF 11 has yet to be approved). The evolution of financial aid allocations is summarized in Table 1. The European Development Fund has provided a predictable source of support and underpinned the steady and reliable basis to support the ACP – EU relationship. Predictability remains a central element of the EU's objectives to shape its aid with developing countries. An open question is how the EU will

position itself as the end of the Cotonou Agreement in 2020 is coming in sight. Prior to this a decision will need to be taken on the five-yearly review of the Cotonou Agreement, which is coming up in 2015.

The EDF always remained a voluntary contribution by Member States, in parallel to the EU budget. At several occasions, since 1973, attempts have been made to integrate the EDF into the budget. The first attempts originate from the European Parliament, to get greater oversight, but its concerns have largely been addressed and in the latest Multi-Annual budget negotiation the European Parliament opted to keep the EDF separate. In the most recent discussion Member States are at the forefront, possibly with budgetary considerations, but this would not be without costs, as argued by Simon Maxwell (2012) from the ODI:

... there are reasons why the EDF has been kept separate, and why bringing the EDF into the budget is not without cost. The Cotonou Agreement establishes principles and criteria governing aid, and also dispute resolution mechanisms which have been agreed with the ACP countries. It also provides a role for a joint EU-ACP Council of Ministers and a joint EU-ACP Parliamentary Assembly. In that sense, it exemplifies a model of joint ownership and mutual accountability which does not apply to the EU budget, nor to the aid of other donors.

Maxwell in effect points out that the EDF model exemplifies the criteria of Aid Effectiveness, by emphasizing ownership and responsibility.

The success of the EDF is represented in an ever growing budget, for an ever growing number of countries, recognized now also by other donors as a potential interesting framework to reach the large group of vulnerable countries through a single mechanism. Despite the growth it is worthwhile to note that the actual contribution per capita has gone down.

Table 1: EDF in million € (current prices)

	Rome Treaty	Yaoundé I	Yaoundé II	Lomé I	Lomé II	Lomé III	Lomé IV	Lomé IV bis	Cotonou	Cotonou	Cotonou
	1957	1963-1969	1969-75	1975	1979	1984	1990-1995	1995-2000	2003-2008	2008-2013	2014-2020
	EDF 1	EDF2	EDF3	EDF4	EDF5	EDF6	EDF7	EDF8	EDF9	EDF 10	EDF 11*
Year	1957	1963	1969	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2006	2011
EDF	569	730	887	3,053	4,207	7,882	11,583	13,151	14,300	22,000	34,275*
# ACP Countries		18	18	46	58	65	68	70	77	77	79
# EU Countries		6	6	9	9	10	12	15	15	25	27
EDF/per capita current prices	10.5	9.7	10.5	12.3	13.5	17.9	21.9	21.3	20.7		10.6*

**This is the negotiation offer which has not yet been agreed to date.*

From the interviews it emerges that the ACP – EU relationship is seen as fundamentally changing. This change could not be illustrated in a better way than that Portugal is now receiving financial aid from Angola. Portuguese people, such as nurses, engineers and architects, are now seeking employment possibilities in oil rich Angola and Mozambique as well as Brazil.

ACP countries recognize the change, recognize the increased poverty in Europe and observe the financial crisis in Europe, knowing that this will affect the future relationship and this relationship will therefore undoubtedly need to change. The ACP Group has also noticed that the ACP – EU relationship is no longer a certainty. However others argue that “the EU will need the ACP more than that the ACP will need Europe” (interview), referring to the EUs need for raw materials and energy sources.

The Georgetown Agreement allows a strong and specific place in the overall objectives for ACP – EU cooperation. Some believe that this remains at the essence. However most respondents believe an independent ACP will serve the interests of the Group. This can be pursued together with a renewed cooperation with the EU that is based on mutual respect, alongside collaboration with other partners.

This illustrates a strong undercurrent that the historic ties between the EU and the ACP are deeply rooted and that these remain very relevant for the future. But most see change as inevitable, and a more independent ACP should emerge from the repositioning. In addition, there is a strong feeling that an independent ACP will be a more interesting potential partner to the EU. As one respondent put it: “we are no longer begging. We want a mature mutual relationship.” (interview)

The evolution in EU – ACP Trade cooperation

EU – ACP trade has been an area of ACP – EU cooperation since its inception, with preferential trade arrangements being major characteristics. While these preferential trade arrangements have eroded, due to the expansion of trading partners, and the multilateral trading system has enforced negotiations to move towards more uniform regimes, the negotiations on European Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with ACP countries have progressed very slowly.

The EPAs have suffered from the beginning from the regional division for EPAs unilaterally proposed by the European Commission in 1998, a division that was incoherent with the existing and emerging regional trade arrangements in the ACP, particularly Africa. This division has led to countries negotiating under different regional regimes, created overlaps and caused incoherencies, which until today cause major problems. For instance Tanzania is included in: SADC, SADC EPA Group, Comesa, IGAD, EAC, Comesa Egypt and ESA. The major issue at this point is the danger of EPAs undermining regional ACP trade and the incoherence within and between regional trade agreements. This problem has led to a new initiative of tripartite cooperation between SADC, COMESA and ESA, a group of 26 countries, to form an economic FTA.

A major point in the current situation is the perceived inflexibility of the EU in its negotiating position and its failure to comprehend and deal with the variety of realities that determine positions of ACP countries on trade, in ways that appropriately recognize such differences. The lack of space to deal with the different interests of countries and regions in an appropriate way created the danger of division in the ACP as well as failure of the negotiations. Discomfort has also been expressed with the position unilaterally adopted by the EU on 30 September 2011, to withdraw 18 countries from the list of beneficiaries of preferences under Regulation 1528/2007 as of 1 January 2014. This is perceived as intimidation by a number of ACP countries.

Although the EU have not said so in many words, it is clear that failure to finalize the EPAs is one of the sore points in its relations with the ACP, and the ongoing uncertainty is perceived a strong threat by many of the ACP representatives.

One can point to the policy of the US towards Africa. The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) signed in 2000 as Title 1 of The Trade and Development Act of 2000 offers tangible incentives for African countries to continue their efforts to open their economies and build free markets and amendments signed in 2002 substantially expanded preferential access for imports from beneficiary Sub-Saharan African countries. The 2004 amendments accelerated preferential access for imports from beneficiary Sub Saharan African countries until September 30, 2015. As the USA under AGOA is not insisting in complete reciprocity in trade in spite of WTO, the ACP are asking why the EU are insisting on their inflexible position, especially given that the EU provide the most powerful members in WTO and the organization is headed by Pascal Lamy, a Frenchman.

While the EPA negotiations are part of the Cotonou Agreement, the ‘development’ components seems no longer a basis for and component of the negotiations. AGOA recognizes the development agenda of the trade policy.

Another issue strongly remaining and returning in many of the interviews is the EU’s inflexibility with customs revenues. A case in point is ECOWAS, one of the most successful regional trade

organizations which rely for the bulk of its budget from direct appropriations of 10% of regional customs revenues. Outright liberalization will probably wipe off this source. Liberalization of trade as required by EPAs will undermine a major source of its financing. While this is a problem for the regional organizations and would undermine them, the insistence on abandoning customs revenues is also an issue for a number of governments. The position of the ACP, that the EU should take seriously the concerns raised in this respect and negotiate specific terms and in accordance with different realities in ACP countries in how they are affected by such measures should be the basis for further trade negotiations.

Some of the ACP countries which rely on raw materials do certainly not agree with the EU's refusal to compromise on export taxes, which they feel serves the EU to get access to cheap materials, but undermines the capacity of the ACP countries to raise adequate fiscal means from the natural resources they export. The bottom line for the ACP Group is that no country should be worse off because of EPAs. This position was effectively taken by the ACP Group in its latest negotiations with the EU on trade in December 2011, including in a position of solidarity those ACP countries that have already signed an EPA with the EU, such as the Caribbean. Meanwhile ACP countries are conscious that they need to look at which markets give the best return, and how jobs are created by investing in industries closest to the areas of production of raw materials through downstream investment.

An issue that was mentioned in a number of interviews is the young population in the ACP countries as well as the issue of European ageing and the potential need of Europe for migrant workers from outside Europe. Some countries wished that arrangements in these areas would be included in the EPAs.

A key word on future thinking of the economic potential of the ACP is in the slogan: "the ACP needs to understand its own capacities." In an increased South – South cooperation the ACP should recognize its comparative advantage. An important innovation is seen in increased intra-ACP economic cooperation and trade was seen as desirable in a number of ways with a view of the creation of greater interregional connectivity of supply and demand:

- trade in sugar, cotton, bananas, fish
- investment in regional trade and industrial cooperation
- Creation of economic clusters in rural areas

The challenge for ACP – EU cooperation is in finding the mutual benefits from an economic model that will provide greater added value for the primary products of the ACP in the ACP, and building an economy that will become an interesting market for the EU. Respondents recognize that this is a long-term perspective.

The ACP's largest trading partner remains EU, but it is clear that if no agreement is reached, the unilateral deadline imposed by the EU is likely to take effect with devastating consequences.

It will be important for the EU to understand the economic and political cost of a fall out with the ACP on the EPAs and its loss of international prestige, particularly given its leadership in the WTO. It is also crucial that the ACP group negotiates in solidarity and as a group and does make sure that basic development requirements of all its members are realized in this process. As a minimum it

must insist on EU's flexibility and a case by case approach in terms of custom's revenues so that progress can be made step by step to integrate ACP countries into the world economy. The ACP must also as a group insist on differentiation must remaining of a development agenda on trade and ensure this principle is not eroded in the WTO, the UN or the G20.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Most respondents were happy to discuss strengths of the ACP Group, although some emphasized the need to recognize and address weaknesses of the ACP Group as a necessary means to chart out future perspectives.

An important observation is that 95% of respondents from the ACP Group believed in the future of the ACP, and posed the question more in terms of 'how' than in 'if'.

At the same time it was noticeable that there was a strong self-critical attitude and the weaknesses of the ACP group were addressed at length.

The emphasis given to strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats was as follows:

Most respondents felt the group had important strengths, but that weaknesses should be addressed in order to build on those strengths. The challenge of overcoming the weaknesses was stressed in interviews, with the expectation that these weaknesses could be overcome.

Many respondents felt that political leadership at this juncture was crucial.

With regards to external factors impacting on the potential prospects of the ACP Group, there was a strong sense that opportunities were more relevant than the threats.

There was a strong sense of optimism, and there was no interviewee from the ACP who felt that the ACP had not future. The shape, form and specific prospects of course differed. The lists of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are provided in annex xx.

Strengths

The strengths are those identified as being internal to the ACP group. The strengths identified by the respondents can be clustered in a number of groups. Generally respondents did not find it difficult to identify strengths and did so with a sense of pride and belonging.

In terms of listing the strengths, respondents often had a similar order, which usually started with the number of countries from which another series of strengths followed.

1. Number of countries

The number of ACP members is by all respondents seen as a strength, and many respondents mentioned it as a first one. A few respondents contemplated whether this was both a weakness and a strength, as the number of countries also related to the diversity of the group. The number was seen as a strength as it related to the political voice the ACP countries can make together in the multilateral and global governance system. The number of countries is therefore seen as an

expression of potential bargaining power and can concretely be expressed in voting power. It also relates to its potential as an economic force.

Within this context it was felt that the diversity of the ACP was a strength, in reference to the ACP's potential to represent the most vulnerable countries from different perspectives and bridge different poverty realities, as well as approach poverty from the point of view of most vulnerable countries as well as bigger and more powerful countries. This was seen as helpful to the ACP group representing a multidimensional understanding of poverty. Respondents also saw this as an important mechanism to the ability to give voice to the positions of the most vulnerable countries.

The sense of solidarity, unity and inclusion that the ACP group represents was seen as a strength. The similar cultures and historic origins with the EU was recognized by many as a strong binding factor; also leading to recognition of similar kind of problems that countries face.

While sometimes geographic distance and dispersion were referred to as weaknesses (see below) generally the geographic spread was seen as an advantage, with some explicitly referring to the transcontinental presence, allowing the Caribbean the possibility to bridge with Latin America and the Pacific with Australia and Asia, pointing to the potential reach of the group. The multilingual and multicultural aspect of the ACP was also reported as a strength, so that it could easily reach out to different audiences and contribute to different partnerships.

The coherent composition of the group around poverty, including most of the LDCs, the landlocked countries and small island states also speaks to the strength of the group, according to the respondents. The strength of the group to represent each voice, which individually would not otherwise be heard, was seen as a big plus. Solidarity was therefore seen as one of the key elements of the ACP to build on its internal strength.

Many responded to the size of the population and the proportional number of young people as a strength, both for political and for economic reasons, including as a potential interesting market and economic potential.

It was also expressed that the ACP group at times was instrumental for positions in the international arena, which were then carried by the G77, but which did not receive adequate visibility. The most important strength of the ACP Group was seen in its ability to give voice to the South, as a group of countries that is not sufficiently well represented in global governance and in global negotiations to date.

2. Resources

The respondents included a range of resources in their listing of strengths. These included first and foremost the natural resources, which the ACP holds in abundance. This also included the raw materials the ACP produces for the world market and which are in equally high demand.

Most, if not all, respondents are convinced that these resources are in high demand and are aware of competition between BRICS and industrialized countries to access these. They feel that this should give the ACP a certain leverage.

The respondents feel generally that the economic potential is underutilized (see weaknesses). The economic and market potential was often mentioned as a strength or potential strength.

The view was also expressed that ACP countries are more affluent and that it can be self-sustainable.

3. Structure

The institutional structure of the ACP Group was identified as a major asset. The organizational structure of the ACP Group was identified as a major asset, while its experience in dealing with political, technical and managerial processes was seen as the Group's capital. Many respondents referred to the structure of the ACP as being very useful, including the experience of the group deal with complex negotiations, to manage the relationship with another regional bloc and to manage an annual € 300 million in development cooperation funds.

In this light it should be explained that potential partners come to meet with the secretariat, such as Brazil, or organizations such as GAVI, as they see the potential for channeling support and strengthening the relationship with developing countries.

Many respondents expressed the view that the ACP provides an excellent structure at multilateral level with comparative advantages. The comparative advantage was described in a variety of ways:

- Strong structure
- Comparative advantage on substantive and technical understanding on trade
- Expertise in areas such as finance, climate change trade and finance related aspects could easily be expanded to a very good level
- Expertise on agriculture
- Expertise on investment and industry development
- Good structural arrangements with ministries finance, planning, economic development and cooperation
- Good structure for Research and Development
- The secretariat could be the 'brains' of the organization

It was felt that the structural capacity of the ACP could be used better and that it offered a multilayered approach in multilateralism so as "not to put all the eggs in one basket." The aim should be for the ACP to create alternatives routes in addition to the existing ones in areas where it has comparative advantage.

4. The Secretariat

The role of the Secretariat, which is also a principal organ of the ACP, is a major asset of the ACP Group that distinguishes itself from almost any other multilateral group. The secretariat effectively coordinates the group with just 100 people servicing 79 member countries. While staff was commended for their expertise and commitment, concern was expressed over the salaries available being comparatively poor to recruit top expertise.

5. Political dialogue

The main strength which the ACP has developed is in political dialogue, at global level but also internally and also in relation to sensitive political situations, such as for instance in Madagascar or Togo, where the ACP played an important role. The ACP has built real strength as a group to engage both internally and with third parties, especially the EU, in such processes. This will be an important asset for the group to expand its mandate and give political voice to advocate for its political and economic interests at global level.

The intra-ACP cooperation aspect of political dialogue has been mentioned as a new development of latter years which has been useful. In this context it was also noted that the positioning in relation to political developments have been a step forward, such as recently the press releases to congratulate Senegal on the successful elections or to denounce the military coup in Mali.

6. Potential for economic cooperation

An area where the ACP has untapped potential is in intra ACP trade, economic cooperation and investment. Building up markets, diversify production, expanding intra-ACP trade and liberalization within ACP sub-regions and between them should offer the economic potential for growth, creation of jobs and provide a stable basis for social policy. A stronger economic position would also help build the ACP's political position globally and help defend its key economic interests.

Weaknesses

If the number of countries was perceived as a strength, the inability of the ACP to use this strength was perceived as a weakness.

The size of the ACP Group, and its diversity, was also seen as a weakness, in that it was not always easy to organize the group, or to achieve at consensus. In this regards it should be noted that the Georgetown Agreement defines some of the tasks of the ACP Group structures specifically in relation to the ACP – EU Cotonou Agreement. For instance the Committee of Ambassadors does not have any formal mandate outside the scope of the Agreement. It can therefore be understood that evolving political ambitions have not matched with the ACP structures and that this is now perceived as a weakness. In the same line the criticism can be understood which was directed at the formality of ACP meetings, the lack of imagination and real progress on the creation of joint political positions. This also relates to complaints regarding the 'bureaucracy': "there is too much talking and too little action." It seems that the ambitions have outgrown the actual mandate and the official functions of the Group's structures. The ambitions and structures need to be urgently aligned.

Related to this is the point that the secretariat is using much of its time and energy in servicing the Committee of Ambassadors, and as a result little of the real substantive work does not get done. This all the more problematic in that the actual mandate of the Committee of Ambassadors at present in the Georgetown Agreement is singularly related to servicing the Cotonou Agreement. From the interviews it appears that the ambassadors are very keenly aware of the weakness that this situation has created and advocate with urgency that the Georgetown Agreement must be brought in alignment with the actual need of the ACP group so that the ACP secretariat can

concentrate efforts on providing substantive, political and strategic guidance to positioning the Group in the international arena.

A point that was raised spontaneously and repeatedly was the need for independence, both in terms of mindset, in terms of the actual mandate of the ACP group and its structures, in terms of its principle objectives and in terms of financial underpinning of the Group. The lack of solidarity was seen as a weakness, but most commentaries suggested that greater solidarity was possible. This point was relating to the observation that the ACP Group needed to be treated with respect and that relations with development partners should be based on mutual commitment and understanding and that negotiations with third parties should be based on the objective of mutual interest and gain.

Related to this point, that the ambitions of the ACP Group have outgrown its structures, is the criticism on the lack of visibility, which was perhaps more an expression of desire. It was an expression of the need for the ACP Group to demonstrate its potential to show that it can give voice to the number of ACP countries and give it relevant political voice, and hence give it a visibility that is relevant in the world of today.

It is in this light also that the weakness should be understood that the ACP Group lacks strategy; if there is a strategy it is not felt to be reflective of the new ambitions that the individuals of the Group aspire to. The respondents are asking for political flair and ambition and strategies that reflect this.

In this spirit the weakness was identified of expertise; while there was praise for the competencies in the secretariat, it was felt that the expertise should be expanded to match new ambitions.

In this regard it was also mentioned that long-term confidence was needed in terms of the leadership of the ACP Group; expressing confidence in the current leadership, concern was expressed with the radical changes after a term and it was asked if measures could be identified to create greater continuity of leadership to create long-term stability.

Opportunities

Opportunity is probably the key word of this study. The ACP group members have ambitions because they feel there is opportunity and need. This opportunity can perhaps best be summarized in the actual identity of the ACP group carries real value in the current global context. One of the respondents put it as follows: "we need to rediscover the fundamentals of our group." Someone else put it as follows "our forefathers formulated the ACP. Our struggles are related. We need to maintain our group."

Most respondents feel that disintegration of the ACP is not an option as the current economic, financial, food and climate crises affects the poor countries, and that more avenues are needed to get a voice or bargaining in unison. In order to identify the strategy that will expand the scope of the ACP to deal with this crisis, respondents feel that an ACP Summit is needed to decide the strategy forward. The ACP group can provide a pluri-continental avenue for global governance in key areas of its expertise.

While the EU is dealing with its own crisis and is reformulating its relation with the ACP, and it is unclear what the situation is in terms of the next EDF, the negotiations in the EPAs and the successor of the ACP – EU Cotonou Agreement and this provides the opportunity to address the future of the ACP ahead of 2020 and to take it into the ACPs own hands.

As a group the ACP feels inspired by the emerging economies and feel there is economic and political opportunity for the South. The multipolar world has also created new space for decisions and choices for the ACP Group. It is felt that the competition over ACP resources will allow the ACP to get better value for these. The ACP members also feel that the ACP must fight for a better deal and that the Group provides it with a unique group of countries that could negotiate in unison. The negotiations with the EU on EPAs and its experience in defending its rights in the WTO have prepared the ACP for such an advocacy role.

The ACP Group has also built the management capacity that can now be brought to use in channeling South – South or trilateral cooperation programs and the secretariat is placed uniquely to deliver in this regard. The engagement of the BRICS countries with the ACP creates an opportunity to add value to the ACPs raw materials. The ACP group can therefore begin to look at markets that give it the best economic return.

Globalization requires increasingly real participation and negotiation in various circles of like-minded group in order to successfully advocate Member countries' interests. The engagement of the ACP in a first few attempts has shown the opportunity that has been illustrated with the following examples relating to 2011 of the ACP widening its mandate:

- ACP partnered with the EU in the UNGA to realize EU representation (following from Lisbon Treaty)
- ACP showed its presence and gave voice to development issues pertaining to climate change in Durban COP 17 conference
- ACP has collaborated with various partners on South – South cooperation, in preparation of Busan conference on aid effectiveness
- ACP participated in the LDC conference in Turkey
- ACP Ministers negotiated collective position vis a vis the EU proposal on trade

Also the MoU with Brazil has shown the potential opportunity for collaboration with new development partners. The opportunities in collaboration between universities, research centered will allow real innovation. There is an abundance of innovation in Africa, such as in the area of ICT.

It has been noted that the dynamic in the G-77 has fundamentally changed after the establishment of the G-20, which is representing its own interests, and there is a need for a strong collective voice from the poorest countries. In the UN there is nothing else than the G-77 representing the South and therefore there is need for a grouping of non G-20 countries of the G-77 group; the ACP group comes close to this and is the only alternative around to potentially play this role. In this role there is an opportunity to have a strong focus on the protection of global public goods as the main common direction.

The G77 is recognizing the need for a much stronger framework for inclusive governance and stated in a recent position in preparation of Rio + 20 the following official position: "The G77 (...) called for the reform of the "international financial system, including through an ambitious and expeditious reform of the Bretton Woods institutions, particularly their governance structures, based on the full and fair representation of developing countries, in order to address the democratic deficit in those institutions and improve their legitimacy; and ...support developing countries in the implementation of activities for sustainable development including through the provision of resources, without conditionalities. (Raman 2012)

With the G77 calling for an inclusive governance system it is clear that also the G20 needs to be reformed towards inclusive participation. It is also clear the specific needs of poorest countries and their lack of representation in global governance is recognized as a problem. It is an opportunity for the ACP Group to put this issue on the international governance agenda.

The need for a group of poorest countries to engage as group politically in the global governance system is also clear from the statement by UNCTAD Director article Panitchpakdi, when he analyzed In his report for the next 2012 UNCTAD meeting taking place in Doha, the joint results from the recent range of crises resulting from the current path of globalization (Hormeku 2012):

the combination of macroeconomic austerity, rapid liberalisation, privatisation, and deregulation not only failed to produce a supply-side revolution but, instead, set the region (Africa) back economically; productivity growth stalled in most sectors, and the informal economy had grown rapidly since the onset of the international debt crisis in the early 1980s.

Looking at Rio + 20 there is hope that poverty eradication can become explicitly part of a sustainable economic model, in which the three group, industrialized, emerging and poorest countries will come to a consensus:

I believe that Rio+20 will deliver the instruments to make sustainable development a paradigm for the economy, not just for the environment. I believe that we can have a convergence among the emerging, poorest and developed countries" with respect to this objective. (Andre Correa do Lago, Brazil - the host country's pointman for the June 20-22 summit, in an interview with Marull 2012).

The Rio + 20 conference is showing the new world order in its new reality, with distinct three group of countries: industrialized countries, emerging economies and poorest countries, of which the first two groups are represented in the G20. While the G77 remains an important frame for driving an agenda for an economic paradigm that gives economic and social opportunity and inclusion of all globally, it is apparent that the group of poorest countries is not strongly organized within this G77 frame, an opportunity that the ACP Group could grasp given its history, composition and geographic distribution, and which could give further strength and impetus to the G77. The ACP group forms the largest subgroup in the G77, providing 79 members of the 132 G77 countries – and with the benefit of a secretariat and structure that even the G77 has not.

The discussions in preparation of Rio + 20 further show that the agendas of economic development sustainability and climate change and poverty eradication are becoming one agenda; that of a paradigm that provides opportunity to all rather than a model that simply protects the achieved status of the group of industrialized countries organized in the OECD. In that regard it is the group of poorest countries that has the opportunity, if organized, to realize a shift of paradigm towards an economic model that serves the world population as a whole. The ACP's close historic relation with Europe, its relation with emerging economies and its traditional position within the G77 places it in a strong position to help facilitate this process in close collaboration with other countries and groups of countries.

Threats

The observation that a value-based cooperation by the EU is replaced by a policy that is entirely focused on its own EU interests is perceived as a threat by the ACP.

It was also felt that the future of the ACP Group would be threatened if the EU would define its composition or its future scenarios.

The one single threat that is exposed in the research is the potential lack of interest from the EU in a continuation of the ACP – EU relationship, although others define that as an opportunity for the ACP to define its own strategy. Another threat is seen in the EU's ongoing attempts to regionalize the ACP. The question that is asked is whether the ACP can build the political commitment to develop the ACP Group on its own terms. The status quo is perceived as a strong threat; the majority of respondents feel that if the ACP does not change, it will not have future. But the change envisaged is one that brings the Group together with greater clarity of purpose.

A threat for the ACP is the increasing unpredictability of development, which needs therefore a new paradigm, as the crises create constant volatility. There is a fear that different interests from outside will fragment the ACP and undermine its solidarity.

There is also a fear of a proliferation of international organizations and multiplication of actors, and that therefore the comparative advantage of the ACP group and what it would add should be clearly defined.

Main empirical findings

The quantitative findings are based on the questionnaires with the representatives of ACP member countries.

in %	Yes	No
1. Can the ACP exist as an independent group?	> 90%	< 10%
2. Does the ACP contribute to the area of trade?	> 80%	< 20%
3. Can the ACP make a contribution on climate Change?	> 80%	<20%
4. Can the ACP make a contribution in relation to the G20?	> 80%	<20%

> = more than, < = less than

An equally significant consensus exists on the question whether or not the ACP secretariat should be financially independent. This question was not in the questionnaire, but many respondents wanted to comment on this question, and it was included as a standard question in a majority of the interviews. The vast majority of respondents felt that the core-business of the ACP secretariat, to defend the interests of the ACP Group, should be financed by its members; with possible extensions of financial cooperation agreements with development partners in particular areas.

The affirmative response to the question 'Can the ACP exist as an independent group' should be interpreted as a desire that the ACP should operate to first and foremost advocate for the common interests of the group. A few respondents mentioned explicitly that the EU was part of the core of the ACP mandate, but a large majority suggested that the EU was an important but not an exclusive potential partner of the ACP Group.

Responses to the question 1 were also a commentary on the undercurrent of the question, whether or not the ACP had a future or whether its days have gone. If in doubt respondents were asked if they perhaps felt that the ACP no longer fit in the changed world order, or whether it was outdated. If the question was put in this way, not one respondent agreed. Hence the conclusion was that those respondents believe that the ACP group has a future, with qualification of a number of issues that need to change.

The response to this question was often accompanied by a number of qualifications relating to weaknesses or threats, but was also often substantiated with series of strengths and opportunities. Many respondents called for a change of mindset, associated with self-confidence, asking that the ACP recognizes its own strengths and does not feel it is dependent on support from outside.

The table further shows a convincing support for the ACPs engagement in trade, climate change and the G20. There were some respondents which felt that the ACP should choose and focus, but many respondents felt generally that the ACP was well-placed to cover these jointly and offered added value and comparative advantage in these areas.

There was clearly some regional distribution in relation to some of the question. The Pacific and Small Island States in general are specifically keen on ACP's engagement in climate change, while African countries are the drivers of ACP engagement on trade. The Caribbean was especially interested in issues of intra ACP trade, migration, and development cooperation.

Options and scenarios for the ACP

A study in 2008 set out a number of scenarios for the future of the ACP, with one of the scenarios strongly favored. At present based on the current study the following range of scenarios can be refined.

1. Status Quo

The scenario of a status quo was not considered by any of the respondents as a serious option. Respondents feel that this scenario will lead to the marginalization and eventual abolition of the ACP Group. They fear that the EU will lose its interest in the group, and that the ACP Group itself will

implode, with no relevance or perspective within the changed global relationships. None of the respondents felt that an exclusive focus of the ACP on the EU would be a practical way forward in the changed global relations and the range of options with newly emerging actors.

2. Closing down

This scenario can be entertained, but the research clearly shows commitment from the respondents to engage with scenarios of change, as set out below. Respondents did feel that the window of opportunity for change was time-limited and that the Group should demonstrate its potential in the short term, receive political backing and support from its leadership in order to show it was ready for a future perspective in the changed global context. The ACP should urgently reach out to the EU to start looking at the post 2020 priorities for cooperation. The ACP should also urgently reform its structures and make them more politically relevant. There was also a need for the ACP to expand its partnership and visibility in international fora around core aspects of its mission. Failing success in these areas, closing down might still be considered.

If the ACP group was to close down it could consider a process forward in scenario 3 or 4, in which it would either build on coordination of a regional approach or refocus on being an aid processing vehicle for LDC's only. In this scenario, the ACP Group would no longer aim to have a political mission of the group of poorest and vulnerable countries as a whole but would give added values to either regional groups' coordination processes or aid management for the LDC group (see scenarios below).

3. Regionalization

While a regional approach could be considered none of the respondents really seriously developed a case for this scenario. When asked respondents pointed to the complexity to regionalism in the ACP due to a combination of historic and geographic reasons.

Much emphasis is placed on the need of regionalism to develop from within the regions and not from outside and for cross-cooperation between regions to be developed and strengthened, again by placing the gravity of the process within the region and not outside.

The confusing created around the EC's initial decision of specific regions with which it proposed EPAs has allowed the ACP and the EU to learn that regional processes can in fact be damaged if imposed from outside.

In the latest period more work has been done on cross-learning from regional processes in other places and converging regional processes in geographic proximities, to resolve particular problems. The experience with the drive for such cooperation coming from within the regions has been positive and has strengthened regionalization.

What a number of respondents did commend the effort to achieve greater convergence and cross-learning between regions, and it is clear that regional cooperation in a number of areas is useful and necessary, none of the respondents believed that a scenario for the future perspective of the ACP Group should be based purely on regions. It is especially felt that regionalization does not contradict the future of the ACP group as a whole.

In this sense the initiative to coordinate work of subregions in the ACP on economic issues is seen as a welcome development that allows the subregional specificity with the addition of strength provided through the ACP Group in intra-regional cooperation. In this way capacity development learning and South – South cooperation in building up of technical expertise can serve the members. In addition it allows for solidarity between regions providing strength to countries that are vulnerable in particular areas (but have potential strengths in other areas).

In the mean time regional cooperation (cooperation between regions) has developed in regions, with a view of trying to create greater homogeneity and coherence of policy in trade between regions, and to facilitate membership of countries in different regions. The ACP Group provides a unique platform for such cooperation between subregions, with the ultimate view in the long term of moving towards the creation of a larger liberalized market.

4. Decrease the membership to LDCs

This scenario focuses on the ACP to remain the EU aid partners focused on LDCs. Over half of the members (55 countries) of the ACP group are currently categorized as LDCs. Only 9 LDCs are currently not member of the ACP Group, these are all Asian countries: Afghanistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos, Maldives, Myanmar, Yemen. The ACP includes 15 landlocked countries and 28 small island states. It is the largest group of vulnerable countries.

There is little if any support in the ACP Group for this scenario. The respondents of the ACP Group are clear that it is their right to determine the composition of the ACP Group. Many respondents emphasized the need for the Group to determine its own destiny and to make its own assessment of the composition that would serve its interests. In this regard strong emphasis was placed on the large number of countries in the ACP Group being a strength and an economic and political asset, without which the group would not be able to operate meaningfully.

If the ACP Group's membership was decreased to LDCs only it would become essentially a vehicle for distributing aid, and would emphasize a process of aid being focused only on LDCs. It would no longer be building on the historic strength of linkages of the groups' members on countries with close geographic proximity or on historic political and economic connections. In this scenario the ACP group would no longer exist, but would provide its structure and experience to build an aid vehicle to the group of LDC's.

With regards to the membership of the ACP there was more enthusiasm for expansion, to generate more political clout so that the poorest countries, including the LDCs would benefit from voice in the global governance fora. The LDCs in Asia which are currently not in the ACP Group could help extend relations into Asia generally and south Asia in particular.

There was also positive response to the possibility of LDCs eventually being admitted in the ACP Group, as it was generally felt that would fit within the homogeneity of the group, with similar historic experiences and problems of poverty and development. This could help create a stronger sense of representing the poorest countries, which in any event is and should remain the main mission of the ACP Group. Such a scenario of admitting the LDC countries eventually into the Group could be aligned with scenario 5.

The general feeling was that the review of the composition of the group should not be an immediate concern, but should be a medium to long term objective.

5. Independent ACP with multiple sets of relations

This scenario follows logically from the quantitative results of the interviews, with a significant majority of Ministers and ambassadors favoring an independent ACP. There is also a significant majority in favor of a secretariat core that is financed by the ACP countries themselves and which will reflect the political commitment of ACP countries to the ACP Group. It is also believed that this will give it independence in political position that reflects the shared interests of the ACP. While a small number argues that the relationship with the EU should remain the priority of the group, the vast majority is in favor of combining a relationship with the EU with an expansion of relations with newly emerging actors, so as to reflect changed global realities. Within this scenario there are a range of subsets of options which are set out below. These options can be classified in the following dimensions:

10. Mandate: political; economic; technical
11. Core business
12. Substantive mandate: trade, finance, aid, climate change
13. Global Governance focus: WTO, UN, G-20
14. Organization: institutional considerations
15. Composition: expansion, graduation or status quo
16. Cooperation: Intra-Regional cooperation, South– South cooperation
17. Visibility
18. Pace of change: short term versus long term

Mandate

With regards to the mandate, the majority of respondents felt that the ACP Group should play a greater political role, consistent with its size, and to make a difference for the group of countries it represents from the point of view of sustainable development. While some real possibilities might arise to do this together with the EU, the respondents felt that the ACP should advocate first of all the joint interests of the group, while pointing out that the ambitions of the Cotonou Agreement in the ACPs collaboration with the EU have not yet been realized and need continued effort and attention for their realization from both regional partners.

With regards to the economic interests, opinions were more diverse. Many feel that the ACP is well placed and has comparative advantage vis a vis other intergovernmental organizations in trade and development. A number of respondents were focused on the interaction between political strength and economic strength, arguing that these were mutually dependent upon each other. Some respondents favored a political role strongly over an economic one, and a few vice versa. There is consensus on the observation that trade is a core business for the ACP (there was only one exception to this view) and that political voice is needed to help advance the economic interests of the group. There was also consensus that the economic potential of the group is under-utilized and that its strength should be played out better in international negotiations. This potential includes among others: raw materials and natural resources, agriculture and land and Renewable Energy.

The ACP group also unites among an aspiration to foster intra ACP economic cooperation and move towards an FTA, with ACP subregions taking the lead in regional liberalization and enhancing cooperation between the regions.

As part of this debate respondents also considered a more purely political approach versus a technical approach. In the interviews with ACP respondents the vast majority was clearly focused on a combined political and economic approach, rather than a narrow technical approach. Some interesting suggestions were made to create added value in the ACPs technical capacity on the interface between economy, trade and climate change. These are worthwhile investigating and pursuing further. There were also warnings of a too narrow technical approach, which would fail to inspire and to create a stable long-term perspective. So in general a more political approach seemed to have more support, although the attractiveness of making real gains with technical proposals that will make a real difference in ACP countries should be seriously considered.

Core Business

There was much consensus among respondents with regards to the core business of the ACP. This also shows that the ACP Group does have an identity that is understood by its representatives. The core business centers on development and poverty eradication and a mission to improve the lives of all its citizens. A strong sense of solidarity and mutual responsibility is part of the approach that is central to the ACP Group. Sustainability and the fight against and mitigation of the effects of climate change are perceived as an important part of the core business, alongside generating economic opportunity, employment and social development. Many respondents referred to the universal values of protection of human rights, governance accountability and encouraging civil society organizations as part of strengthening democracy as part of its core business.

Globally a new consensus in the G77 is developing in the lead up to the Rio+20 conference based on the conviction that “sustained and widespread prosperity will require major reforms in global economic governance, including the reform of the global financial system and architecture, along with the renewed commitment to sustainable development to balance material wealth improvements with the protection of the natural resources and ecosystems and to ensure equity and justice.” (G77 quoted by Raman 2012) It sets out the following framework for a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which would include the following objectives (Raman 2012) as a next generation to follow up on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):

- achieve poverty eradication;
- integrate in a balanced manner the three dimensions of sustainable development;
- respect the sovereignty of States over their natural resources in accordance with the UN Charter and principles of international law, without causing damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction;
- be consistent with the Rio principles particularly the principle of CBDR;
- ensure the implementation of Agenda 21 and JPOI, and the outcomes of all UN major summits in economic, social and environmental field;

- build upon and complement the MDGs and renew and strengthen commitment towards their achievement;
- take into account different national realities, capacities and development priorities;
- rely on government driven implementation with involvement of all relevant stakeholders;
- contribute to the monitoring of fulfillment of developed countries' international commitments especially those related to financial resources, technology transfer and capacity building;
- shall include means of implementation for developing countries, including under each goal;
- give special attention to the countries in special situation and to disadvantaged and vulnerable people;
- not place additional restrictions or burdens on developing countries or dilute responsibilities of developed countries;
- contribute to fulfill the right to development and achieving equity at all levels;
- should respect policy space and national development priorities of each country, in particular avoiding the establishment of mechanism for monitoring national policies;
- applicable to all countries consistent with the principle of CBDR.
- SDGs shall be voluntary in nature.

Substantive Mandate

All but one respondents mentioned trade as an ongoing key area for the ACP Group. It is felt that the ACP group represents a group with shared interests in multilateral negotiations, that it has considerable experience in negotiating trade as a group and that structures exist that can help the Group deliver on this. With greater regional emphasis in trade, intra-regional trade policy will become increasingly relevant and as a group the ACP can contribute to negotiation of shared regional interests.

A majority of respondents felt that climate change should be high on the agenda. Not only is this a topic that is high on the international agenda, it is a challenge that unites the ACP Group from the angles of small island states and the danger of sea rise, desertification and drought; but also in the shared interest to deal with climate change, while keeping an economic development perspective. It was felt that the ACP group in the future could progressively contribute, that it should ensure it has the expertise and that it could help find common positions between different interest groups. Also potential collaboration with the EU in this area was seen as a potential prospect to explore.

With regards to the issue of finance, it was felt by a significant group that finance governance was governed by the industrialized countries and BRICS in the G20 and that the ACP Group could add a cross continental view of vulnerable countries that could provide useful contributions to make finance governance more responsive to them. It was felt that the ACP has the connections into

finance Ministries to carry comparative advantage in this area. It was also felt that in this area there was little if any competition from other intergovernmental groups.

While there was less interest in discussing aid, some countries urged that aid remained vital and that solidarity of the group was needed to make sure the most vulnerable continued to receive support. While a few countries strongly prioritized the aid relationship with the EU, a larger number emphasized the potential of the ACP Group to channel aid from a range of potential interested development partners, due to its reliable structures and long-term experience.

With regards to collaboration with the EU, interest was focused on areas such as visa and migration related measures and deportation.

Global Governance focus

The political for a most explored were: UN, WTO and G20. With just a few exceptions, the majority of respondents feels that the ACP Group could and should be used to improve avenues to participate in global governance.

Within the context of the UN, this means a possibility to strengthen the visibility of the ACP Group in the G77, and making the voice of the vulnerable countries heard. In concrete terms there are some proposals for greater ACP coordination in New York and Geneva, and to bring ACP diplomats together in preparation of relevant dossiers that are the core business of the ACP. Through its Presidency the ACP should give a voice in the UN GA. Cooperation of ACP diplomats between New York, Geneva and Brussels could give tangible results. ACP- G77 or ACP – EU joint positions could carry a majority and therefore the ACP could be negotiating for the best deal. The ACP Group should especially focus on climate change related negotiations.

In the WTO the ACP is a player but there is mixed opinion as to whether as a Group it is sufficiently effective. From the inter views it appears that many think there is more potential for cooperation and joint positioning and that the use of this space could and should be improved. A more active role of the office in Geneva would be expected.

Engagement with the G-20 is appreciated as an area where the three-continental ACP Group could have added value, with its orientation on economy and trade, its development expertise, its connection to finance ministries, its relationship with the economic regions and the expertise in the ACP Secretariat. There is also a perception that the G20 takes decisions that affect the countries of the ACP Group without taking the positions of poor countries into consideration. The legitimacy of the G20 would be much enhanced with a structural engagement of the ACP Group. The ACP group could be the channel to bring voice to the table of the poor countries.

Organization: institutional issues

meetings

The experience of the ACP group organizing itself and its structured set up has been valued by respondents as an asset. However, there has been strong criticism of the stilted and prescribed exchanges governed by convention and procedure, which do not allow for adequate political debate. There is a clear demand for more political, open and visionary exchanges.

A major issue that was repeated in the interviews is the perception that the outcomes of Ministerial meetings are predetermined by decisions already taken with the EU. The absence of 'real' decisions on the agenda was seen as the cause of a declining interest of the top political level. This is compounded by the agendas lacking political relevance and being too focused on the collaboration with the EU only.

The declining interest for the Ministerial and Summits were seen as a major problem and weakness of the group, with the optimistic observation that 17 (check) Ministers participated in the last Ministerial. It is also noticeable that there is commitment of ambassadors to re-engage the Heads of State level in addition to the Ministerial level, but it is felt that this cannot be done unless there are clear political issues on the table. There is no appetite for 'ceremonial' gathering.

These issues were often seen as the single one most significant obstacle to ensuring the future of the ACP Group as a valuable and effective political grouping.

Expertise and representation in the ACP secretariat

There is consensus on the need for the ACP secretariat to be financed by the ACP Group members, with specific contributions from development partners including the EU for areas of joint collaboration.

If the Secretariat were made a 'development organization' it could be one of executing agencies for the EDF, especially with regard to intra-ACP resources. For instance all the PMUs could be folded up and their role added on to what the Secretariat does. The EDF is a contribution from EU member states which the Commission manages and charges 1% service charge. In line with best practice the Secretariat should also charge at least 1% for its management of intra-ACP resources and for the overall management of the Cotonou Agreement. The same logic should be applied to management of cooperation with other development partners.

The solidarity of the group and its commitment would be tested but there is confidence that the financial support from the ACP is feasible, desirable and necessary. One of the LDCs was reported to have supported the contribution from another LDC, an example of such solidarity and commitment to secure the participation of the most vulnerable countries.

The representation of different regions remains an issue. There is also mention that specific expertise from particular regions can be brought to better use.

This scenario would require the ACP secretariat to ensure that it can attract top experts on conditions that are competitive with the objective of creating a strong knowledge centre that can position the group strategically in the international fora.

There is also some concern with regards to continuity and a feeling that the period of leadership is too short and the change of a whole team does not allow for continuity; this should be addressed as a matter of urgency. It relates to the long-term confidence in the organization and can decide decision with regards to long-term political and financial investment.

In line with the need to use resources effectively and in support of a future direction focused on external representation the secretariat should be released from an exaggerated function of

internally servicing of the Committee of Ambassadors and so be released to prioritise positioning of the group externally.

Committee of Ambassadors

Most respondents feel that the Committee of Ambassadors is a useful place for coordination, although some feel it is unnecessarily formal and therefore ineffective. A greater political role for the ACP Group would require a dynamic Committee of Ambassadors which also works with colleagues in other centers of the world.

At present, the Georgetown Agreement formally limits the task of the Committee of Ambassadors in Brussels to overseeing the implementation of the ACP – EU Agreement. This should be amended to allow for the Committee to play a more political role and to expand ACP cooperation in Committee of Ambassadors in New York.

Composition: expansion, graduation or status quo

The Georgetown Agreement stipulates that The Members of the ACP Group shall be the African, Caribbean and Pacific States party to this Agreement or to the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement. There are no legal obstacles to changing the composition of the group.

Respondents do generally not feel that this is the most important issue, and see it in any case, only relevant for the medium or long term. Respondents feel that the ACP Group in its present composition reflects a logic of historical and cultural dimensions and point out that intergovernmental are never based on purely rationalized parameters. Respondents also feel that the mix of poorer countries and bigger stronger economies is beneficial and gives the ACP group more legitimacy and strength. There was no support for a rationalization of the ACP Group, but a call for solidarity in all aspects within the existing group.

The respondents did feel that expansion of the group could be considered in a longer-term time span. There was a general sense the idea of including all LDCs could be examined further. It was also felt that the possibility available under the Georgetown Agreement of countries associating them with the ACP Group could be used more by Latin American, Asian or African countries invited to associate with the ACP Group in certain areas of mutual interest. An Amendment of the Georgetown Agreement could create a category that upgrades the status of ‘observer’ already recognized in the agreement.

Cooperation: Intra-Regional cooperation, South– South cooperation

Respondents were in consensus with regards to the potential of South - South cooperation and felt that the ACP should pursue this further, at intra- ACP level, with emerging countries and trilaterally with involvement of the EU.

With regards to an inter-continental ACP Investment Bank a decision was taken to examine this further in Jamaica. The idea is to create recapitalization as the principle basis for South – South cooperation. Respondents expressed the view that this could contribute to the desired independence and greater ownership of the ACP Group to build domestic productive capacity and diversify, which would stimulate intra ACP trade, and create alternatives to the EU’s market. However it was felt that this was no realistic in the short-term. There was some fear expressed that

this could give way to political positioning and that this could damage the ACP. It was stated that such a mechanism should be entirely independent and disconnected from any political or institutional interference with profitability of projects being the principle assessment criteria.

The potential of a financial mechanism adapted to the needs of the ACP was considered, with a focus on support to SMEs, industrial development and interregional development. High commercial interest rates remain a crucial obstacle to invest in economic activity in many of the ACP countries and the ACP investment bank should aim to create availability of affordable commercial loans for economic activity. It was also pointed that there is financial capital in the ACP as well as investment interest from emerging countries and that an ACP investment bank could help canalize such investment in a profitable and responsible way and help attract additional capital for productive investment.

Some comments were made that the ACP lent itself better than some other intergovernmental institutions to manage an independent investment bank and that its structure focused on management and related to finance ministers put in a comparative better position to realize such a project.

Visibility

The visibility of the ACP in global or regional analysis has dwindled and this could be reason for some concern. The Eurostat analysis reports quarterly on EU – ACP trade with detailed information of the ACP's trade with different parts of the world.

Statistical data on the ACP's performance in areas other than trade is lacking. Also data of how citizens appreciate the ACP are missing. For instance the Afrobarometer asks respondents how they feel about intergovernmental organizations but the ACP is not mentioned among those. The area of strengthening the ACP Group with statistical analysis will enhance its visibility and can also help define the common denominators of the group.

The comments with regards to visibility concentrated on the need for substantive results as a basis for communication. There was a view that in different ways youth and students could be more involved in understanding the ACP and its ambitions, write about and research it and contribute to its future. An idea was given of students invited to write a short essay on the future of the ACP with the 3 winners being invited to present the essay at the ACP 2012 Summit. There was also an idea of involving creative and cultural expressions, such as fashion schools with the organization of a cat walk of ACP fashion during the Summit, a photography and painting exhibition to accompany the Summit and give visibility to the ACP as a vibrant cultural community that involves youth. These could also travel to other places where the ACP's visibility is valuable.

Pace of Change

Many respondents asked for adequate pace of change with short-term, medium-term and long-term goals to be identified. The following conclusions can be drawn:

Short-term

- Enhance the political decision making processes in the ACP structures at all levels;
- Create a political ACP agenda that is outward looking, visionary, relevant ;

- Ensure Ministerial and Heads of State interest in the ACP Group and political commitment;
- Strengthen the expertise in the key areas, and most urgently on climate change;
- Ensure resource-effectiveness in the ACP secretariat;
- Enhance regional representation and use of regional expertise in the secretariat and enhance trust in the ACP's secretariat's ability to serve the members;
- Assess how more continuity of leadership in the ACP secretariat can be achieved;
- Strengthen connections with key ACP representations in New York, Geneva, Addis, Rio de Janeiro, Beijing;
- Listening desk at G20
- Attend international conferences, including DAVOS World Economic Forum
- Enhance new partnerships and strengthen South – South cooperation;
- Continue to explore the options for constructive collaboration with the EU;
- ACP to focus on positioning itself on a few occasions irrespective of the EU;
- Amend the Georgetown Agreement;
- Focus on visibility of a substantive ACP positions in a few key areas that can make a difference to demonstrate that it can be effective in this new direction.

Medium-term

- Focus on in-depth institutional change that can support the new direction;
- Down-size Brussels office and increase secretariat support in New York and potentially other places;
- Mandate Georgetown Agreement;
- Adapt financial basis of the ACP Group to ensure ACP ownership;
- Explore issues relating to the composition of the ACP Group;
- Create new ways of working to represent the ACP position in key areas in global fora;
- Realize a high-level political commitment with the EU on future collaboration;
- Negotiate a new predictable cooperation agreement with the EU;
- Expand the ACP Group's collaboration with other development partners;
- Interest new members;
- Define new criteria for membership;
- Strengthen presence in key international fora such as G20 and Davos.

Long-term

- Strengthen political participation in key global fora;
- Strengthen financial viability of the Group to support itself;
- Identify what other institutional mechanisms are needed to support intra ACP development and trade such as an ACP investment Bank;
- Strengthen predictable mechanisms of collaboration with other development partners;
- Strengthen internal economic and political cooperation;
- Negotiations on ACP regions FTAs and ACP-wide economic liberalization.

Conclusions

This study finds that respondents (ACP representatives - Ministers and Ambassadors) are convinced that the future perspectives of the ACP Group should be developed in the awareness of the changed global context and that the ACP group has an opportunity to establish itself solidly in this new global context to represent the group of poorest countries.

Within this context the ACP Group is aware of how its historic partner, the EU, is affected by these changes, dealing with the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, the priority changes due to the subsequent enlargement processes and the impact of the economic crisis and austerity policies in EU member states. The final stage of negotiation on EPAs will impact on the future relationship between the ACP and the EU. It will be important for the EU to understand the economic and political cost of a fall out with the ACP on the EPAs and its loss of international prestige, particularly given its leadership in the WTO. It is also crucial that the ACP group negotiates in solidarity and as a group and does make sure that basic development requirements of all its members are realized in this process. As a minimum it must insist on EU's flexibility and a case by case approach in terms of custom's revenues so that progress can be made step by step to integrate ACP countries into the world economy. It is also important that the ACP as a group will insist on differentiation as part of a development agenda on trade and ensures this principle is not eroded in the WTO, the UN or the G20.

ACP Group representatives are conscious that these are developments in its relationship with the EU that will have an effect on the relationship; representatives remain fully confident that the strength of the relationship based on a long term experience in cooperation will carry the cooperation between the ACP and EU regions into the future.

The emphasis of the ACP Group is on the need for the group to be clear of its potential and aspirations and to move to a future agenda that has the interests of the group at its hearts. Interests are defined in terms of common interests but also in terms of solidarity in which particular interests of vulnerable countries are defended by the group. The number of members, its long-term shown ability to negotiate with a bloc of industrialized countries and its competence in cooperation, trade, finance and investment, poverty eradication and the poverty related aspects of climate change are strengths that can form the basis for a future perspective.

Within the current phase of globalization and the growing importance of emerging economies the ACP Group is focused on how to create voice and defined the interests of the group of poorest countries in global governance institutions and how to expand alliances to new emerging actors. In this context the geographic spread of the group is seen as a key asset with a reach into the Americas as well as Asia and into Europe through its historic partner.

The group represents poverty in a multidimensional way, with Least Developed Countries, land-locked countries and small island states, as well as larger economies with poverty and is therefore well placed to continue to take sustainable poverty eradication at the heart of its mandate and mission.

The Rio + 20 conference is showing the world order in its new reality, with distinct three group of countries: industrialized countries, emerging economies and poorest countries, of which the first two groups are represented in the G20. While the G77 remains an important frame for driving an agenda for an economic paradigm that gives economic and social opportunity and inclusion of all, it is apparent that the group of poorest countries is not organized, an opportunity that the ACP Group could grasp given its history, composition and geographic distribution.

The discussions in preparation of Rio + 20 further show that the agendas of economic development sustainability and climate change and poverty eradication are becoming one agenda; that of a paradigm that provides opportunity to all rather than a model that simply protects the achieved status of the group of industrialized countries organized in the OECD. In that regard it is the group of poorest countries that has the opportunity, if organized, to realize a shift of paradigm in economic model that serves the world population as a whole. The ACP's close historic relation with Europe, its relation with emerging economies and its traditional position within the G77 places it in a strong position to help facilitate this process in close collaboration with other countries and groups of countries. The ACP has already worked with the EU to agree common positions on world development agendas, prime examples being the joint positions on Busan and Rio+20, which demonstrate that this is possible and much more could be achieved.

The study concludes that the ACP could play a role in defending the interests of poorest countries in the WTO, the UN and the G-20. Within the G-77, the ACP Group represents a distinct grouping that can usefully ensure that the political voice of the poorest countries remains visible alongside other specific needs and interests of BRICS countries. Within the G-20 the ACP Group will provide legitimacy as, without it, it will remain a forum purely based on countries with economic and political clout lacking representation and lacking the voice of poorest countries. The ACP Group could represent the interests of its members related to finance, food prices and food security, and development. In the WTO the ACP is already present but a better coordinated and strategic role of the ACP Group is advocated.

The short term; medium and long-term steps have been identified, with an urgency identified to tackle some of the weaknesses of the group, such as the rigid structures that require more flexibility and political decision-making; confidence in the long-term continuity of competent leadership of the Group, a strong political backing of the considered future perspectives by Heads of State, self-financing of the core business of the ACP secretariat so that it can represent the interests of the members. If the Secretariat were made a 'development organization' it could be one of executing agencies for the EDF, especially with regard to intra-ACP resources. For instance all the PMUs could be folded up and their role added on to what the Secretariat does. The EDF is a contribution from EU member states which the Commission manages and charges 1% service charge. In line with best practice the Secretariat should charge at least 1% for its management of intra-ACP resources. Expansion of the mandate of the Committee of Ambassadors must include a broader political agenda and speeding up the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement to achieve its main objectives.

The structures of the ACP group will need to be adapted to support these needs, and the executive and representational role of the leadership will become a strong asset of the group to give it more

dynamic. It will help to gain international respect for the group. An antenna in New York could help the political expansion of the group and give it greater global relevance, potentially supported by a committee of ACP ambassadors to the UN. The role of the Geneva office must be expanded to supporting a coordinated and strategic long term objective to represent the joint interests of the members. Finally the parliamentary body and the involvement of ACP scholars, students and youth will be important to give spirit to a vision that is carried by the civil societies and intellectuals of the ACP countries.

The Secretariat should be strengthened and made into a 'development organization' with a renewed mandate to serve as an executing agency as well as knowledge institution on trade and regional development matters. Doing this will also require an enhanced status for the Secretary General, to enable him or her speak on ACP wide matters and to represent the group on the world stage.

Annex 1: List of Members of the ACP Group

Country	Year of entry	Country	Year of entry
Angola	1984	Malawi	1975
Antigua and Barbuda	1984	Mali	1963
Commonwealth of the Bahamas	1975	Republic of Marshall Islands	2000
Barbados	1975	Mauritania	1963
Belize	1984	Mauritius	1975
Bénin	1963	Federated States of Micronesia	2000
Botswana	1975	République de Mozambique	1984
Burkina Faso	1963	Namibia	1995
Burundi	1963	Republic of Nauru	2000
Cameroun	1963	Niger	1963
Cape Verde	1979	Nigeria	1975
République centrafricaine	1963	Republic of Palau	2000
Chad	1963	Papua New Guinea	1979
Union des Comores	1979	Rwanda	1963
République du Congo	1963	St. Kitts and Nevis	1984
République Démocratique du Congo	1963	St. Lucia	1979
Cook Islands (Government of the)	2000	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	1984
Côte d'Ivoire	1963	Samoa	1975
Cuba	2000	Sao Tome and Principe	1979
Djibouti	1979	Sénégal	1963
Dominican Republic	1984	Seychelles	1979
Dominica	1979	Sierra Leone	1975
Eritrea	1995	Solomon Islands	1979
Ethiopia	1975	Somalia	1963
Fiji	1975	South Africa	1995
Gabon	1963	Sudan	1975
Gambia Republic	1975	Suriname	1979
Ghana	1975	Swaziland	1975
Grenada	1975	Tanzania	1969
Guinea	1975	Timor Leste	2006
Guinea-Bissau	1975	Togo	1963
Equatorial Guinea	1990	Tonga	1975
Guyana	1975	Trinidad and Tobago	1975
Haïti	1990	Tuvalu	1979
Jamaica	1975	Uganda	1969
Kenya	1969	Vanuatu	1984
Kiribati	1979	Western Samoa	2000
Lesotho	1975	Zambia	1975
Liberia	1975	Zimbabwe	1984

Annex 2: List of ACP Small Island States

Antigua and Barbuda	Mauritius
Bahamas	Papua New Guinea
Barbados	Saint Kitts and Nevis
Belize	Saint Lucia
Cape Verde	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Comoros	Samoa
Cook Islands	São Tomé and Príncipe
Cuba	Seychelles
Dominica	Solomon Islands
Dominican Republic	Surinam
Fiji	Timor Leste
Grenada	Tonga
Guinea Bissau	Trinidad and Tobago
Haiti	Tuvalu
Jamaica	Vanuatu
Kiribati	

Annex 3: List of ACP land-locked countries

Botswana	Ethiopia	Rwanda
Burkina Faso	Lesotho	Swaziland
Burundi	Malawi	Uganda
Central African Republic	Mali	Zambia
Chad	Niger	Zimbabwe

Annex 4: List of LDCs

Angola	Liberia	Zambia
Benin	Madagascar	Afghanistan
Burkina Faso	Malawi	Bangladesh
Burundi	Mali	Bhutan
Central African Republic	Mauritania	Cambodia
Chad	Mozambique	East Timor
Comoros	Niger	Laos
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Rwanda	Myanmar
Djibouti	São Tomé and Príncipe	Nepal
Equatorial Guinea	Senegal	Yemen
Eritrea	Sierra Leone	Kiribati
Ethiopia	Somalia	Samoa
Gambia	Sudan	Solomon Islands
Guinea	Togo	Tuvalu
Guinea-Bissau	Tanzania	Vanuatu
Lesotho	Uganda	Haiti

Annex 5: List of BRICS countries

Brazil

Russia

India

China

South Africa

Annex 6: List of the G20 members

Argentina	India	South Africa
Australia	Indonesia	Republic of Korea
Brazil	Italy	Turkey
Canada	Japan	United Kingdom
China	Mexico	United States of America
France	Russia	
Germany	Saudi Arabia	

The European Union, who is represented by the rotating Council presidency and the European Central Bank, is the 20th member of the G-20.

Annex 7: List of EU Member States countries

Country	Date of entry	Country	Date of entry
Germany	1957	Sweden	1995
France	1957	Malta	2004
Luxembourg	1957	Cyprus	2004
Belgium	1957	Estonia	2004
Netherlands	1957	Lithuania	2004
Italy	1957	Latvia	2004
United Kingdom	1973	Poland	2004
Denmark	1973	Hungary	2004
Ireland	1973	Slovenia	2004
Greece	1981	Slovakia	2004
Portugal	1986	Czech Republic	2004
Spain	1986	Romania	2007
Austria	1995	Bulgaria	2007
Finland	1995		

Croatia: 2013 (expected)

Annex 8: Group of G-77

Afghanistan	Gabon	Palestine
Algeria	Gambia	Panama
Angola	Ghana	Papua New Guinea
Antigua and Barbuda	Grenada	Paraguay
Argentina	Guatemala	Peru
Bahamas	Guinea	Philippines
Bahrain	Guinea-Bissau	Qatar
Bangladesh	Guyana	Rwanda
Barbados	Haiti	Saint Kitts and Nevis
Belize	Honduras	Saint Lucia
Benin	India	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Bhutan	Indonesia	Samoa
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Sao Tome and Principe
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Iraq	Saudi Arabia
Botswana	Jamaica	Senegal
Brazil	Jordan	Seychelles
Brunei Darussalam	Kenya	Sierra Leone
Burkina Faso	Kuwait	Singapore
Burundi	Lao People's Democratic Republic	Solomon Islands
Cambodia	Lebanon	Somalia
Cameroon	Lesotho	South Africa
Cape Verde	Liberia	Sri Lanka
Central African Republic	Libya	Sudan
Chad	Madagascar	Suriname
Chile	Malawi	Swaziland
China	Malaysia	Syrian Arab Republic
Colombia	Maldives	Tajikistan
Comoros	Mali	Thailand
Congo	Marshall Islands	Timor-Leste
Costa Rica	Mauritania	Togo
Côte d'Ivoire	Mauritius	Tonga
Cuba	Micronesia (Federated States of)	Trinidad and Tobago
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Mongolia	Tunisia
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Morocco	Turkmenistan
Djibouti	Mozambique	Uganda
Dominica	Myanmar	United Arab Emirates
Dominican Republic	Namibia	United Republic of Tanzania
Ecuador	Nauru	Uruguay
Egypt	Nepal	Vanuatu
El Salvador	Nicaragua	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Equatorial Guinea	Niger	Viet Nam
Eritrea	Nigeria	Yemen
Ethiopia	Oman	Zambia
Fiji	Pakistan	Zimbabwe

Annex 9: The Georgetown Agreement

ACP/27/005/00 Rev.16
Legal Service/NJB/mgf
[Final Version]

Brussels, 28 November 2003

THE GEORGETOWN AGREEMENT
As amended by Decision No.1/LXXVIII/03
of the
78th Session of the Council of Ministers,
Brussels, 27 and 28 November 2003

PREAMBLE

THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN AND PACIFIC STATES, hereinafter referred to as "the ACP States";

DESIROUS OF CONTRIBUTING through continuous and concerted endeavours to the reinforcement of the process of solidarity of developing countries;

HAVING REGARD to the ACP - EEC Lomé Conventions and the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement signed on 23 June 2000 in Cotonou, hereinafter referred to as the ACP-EC Partnership Agreements;

HAVING REGARD in particular to the Suva Declaration, the Montego Bay Plan of Action and the Harare Declaration on intra-ACP Cooperation;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the conclusions of the Summits of Heads of State and Government of ACP States held at Libreville on 6 and 7 November 1997 and at Santo Domingo on 25 and 26 November 1999;

AWARE of the profound changes in the international, political and economic environment;

REAFFIRMING their commitment to the respect for human rights and the rights of peoples, democratic principles and the rule of law;

DESIROUS of consolidating and reinforcing the existing solidarity and unity of the ACP States, and of promoting improved cooperation between their peoples on the basis of interdependence, complementarity and mutual interest;

DETERMINED to promote and develop greater and closer trade, economic, political, social and cultural relations between the ACP States;

RESOLVED to ensure a firm foundation in their respective countries for human-centred, equitable and sustainable development;

RECOGNISING the importance of regional integration, intra-ACP cooperation and cooperation among ACP and other developing countries as a means of promoting the socio-economic development of the ACP States;

CONVINCED that the realization of sustainable development, the eradication of poverty, illiteracy and disease as well as the gradual and smooth integration of the ACP States into the global economy are legitimate objectives reflecting the aspirations of our peoples;

DETERMINED to ensure that the ACP-EC Partnership Agreements contribute to the realization of the common aspirations of developing countries, to self-reliant, endogenous and self-sustained development based on their systems of cultural and social values;

COGNISANT of the need to maintain and expand multifaceted relations with other States, groups of States and international organisations;

RECOGNISING the importance of solidarity and unity in cooperation among the ACP States;

DESIROUS of enhancing the political identity of the ACP Group to enable them to act and speak with a single voice in all international fora and organisations, and

RESOLVED to establish the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States to achieve common objectives so as to contribute towards the realization of a new, fairer and more equitable world order;

HAVE AGREED as follows:

CHAPTER I

MEMBERSHIP AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ACP GROUP

Article 1

The ACP Group

1. There is hereby established the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, designated "the ACP Group".
2. The Members of the ACP Group shall be the African, Caribbean and Pacific States party to this Agreement or to the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement.
3. Accession to the ACP Group shall be in accordance with Article 28 (1) of this Agreement.
4. The ACP Group shall be organised on the basis of six geographical regions, namely Central Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa, West Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.
5. The ACP Group shall have legal personality. It shall have the capacity to contract, acquire, and dispose of movable and immovable property and to institute legal proceedings.

Article 2

The Objectives of the ACP Group

The main objectives of the ACP Group shall be to:

- a) ensure the realisation of the objectives of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreements in particular, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and the smooth and gradual integration of ACP States into the world economy;
- b) co-ordinate the activities of the ACP *Group* in the implementation of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreements;
- c) promote and strengthen unity and solidarity among the ACP States, as well as understanding between ACP peoples;
- d) consolidate, strengthen and maintain peace and stability as a precondition for improving the well-being of ACP peoples in a democratic and free environment;
- e) contribute to the development of greater and closer economic, political social and cultural relations among developing countries and, to that end, cooperation between the ACP States mainly in the fields of trade, science and technology, industry, transport and communications, education, training and research, information and communication, the environment, demography and human resources ;
- f) promote policies especially in the areas of the environment and the rational management of natural resources, in pursuit of sustainable development ;
- g) promote and reinforce intra-ACP regional integration so as to enable ACP States to increase their competitiveness and to meet the challenges of globalization;
- h) strengthen relations with the European Union with the aim of speeding up the development of ACP States;
- i) define a common stand for the ACP vis-à-vis the European Union on matters covered by the ACP-EC Partnership Agreements and on the issues tackled by international bodies likely to affect the implementation of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreements;
- j) aim for the promotion of a fairer and more equitable new world order;
- k) strengthen the political identity of the ACP Group to enable it to act as a coherent political force in international bodies and to ensure that due regard is accorded its specific interests;
- l) promote and reinforce political dialogue within the ACP Group so as to consolidate ACP unity and solidarity;
- m) engage in effective and meaningful political dialogue at the appropriate levels with the European Union in order to strengthen ACP-EC Partnership;
- n) contribute to strengthening regional mechanisms for the prevention, management and peaceful settlement of conflicts and by pursuing and developing cooperation between ACP States and third States, and;
- o) establish contacts and relations with other States and groups of States.

CHAPTER II

ORGANS OF THE ACP GROUP

Article 3

The decision-making bodies of the ACP Group shall be:

- a) the Summit of Heads of State and Government, hereinafter referred to as the Summit, which shall be the supreme organ;
- b) the Council of Ministers; and
- c) the Committee of Ambassadors.

Article 4

There shall be a Secretariat of the ACP Group which shall be headed by a Secretary General.

Article 5

An ACP Parliamentary Assembly may, in due course, be established.

Pending the establishment of the aforesaid Assembly, the provisions of Article 18 of the Georgetown Agreement as revised in November 1992 shall, mutatis mutandis, continue to apply.

Article 6

The Council of Ministers may propose to the Summit, the creation of other consultative organs whenever necessary.

Article 7

The Summit

1. The Summit of Heads of State and Government shall consist of the Heads of State or Government of the ACP States or their designated representative.
2. The Summit shall meet on the initiative of its Bureau or on the recommendation of the Council of Ministers.
3. The Summit shall be presided over by the Head of State or Government of the host country.

Article 8

In the inter-sessional period, the Summit shall be coordinated by a Bureau composed as follows:

- a) The President-in-office;
- b) The out-going President;
- c) The in-coming President, if already designated.

Article 9

The Summit shall lay down the general policy of the ACP Group and issue the Council of Ministers with the directives relative to its implementation.

Article 10

The Council of Ministers

The Council of Ministers shall consist of a member of the Government of each of the ACP States or its designated representative.

Article 11

The Council of Ministers shall determine the modalities for the implementation of the general policy referred to in Article 9 of this Agreement and shall periodically evaluate its state of execution.

Article 12

Bureau of the Council

1. There shall be a Bureau of the Council of Ministers which shall co-ordinate the work of the Council.
2. The Council shall appoint the members of its Bureau at the end of each ordinary session.
3. The Bureau shall be composed of nine Members and its composition shall be as follows:
 - a) the President of Council, designated on the basis of rotation among the six regions identified in Article 1 (4) in conformity with arrangements agreed on by the ACP Group.
 - b) one member from each of the four regions of Africa, one from the Caribbean and one from the Pacific, with the region which holds the Presidency being represented by another country from that region;
 - c) the out-going President and the in-coming President, in an ex-officio capacity.
4. The President of Council together with the outgoing and incoming Presidents shall comprise the Troika of the Bureau.

Article 13

1. The Council of Ministers shall meet in ordinary session every six months.
2. In addition, the Council may decide to meet in special session on its own initiative *or* on the decision of the President after consultation within the Troika and with the representative of each of the regions on the Bureau.
3. Furthermore, the Council of Ministers shall, as the need arises, convene meetings of ACP Ministers responsible for the various aspects included among the objectives of the ACP Group.

Article 14

The acts of the Council of Ministers may take the form of a decision, resolution or recommendation.

Article 15

Decision-making within the Council

1. The acts of the Council of Ministers shall be adopted on the basis of a consensus of its members.
2. However, under special circumstances, and after consultation among its members, the Council of Ministers may decide on the matter by a majority of four-fifths of its members.
3. In the event of such a majority not being obtained after voting in the course of two meetings of a session of Council, the matter shall be postponed to the next session, at which the Council shall decide on the matter by a majority of two-thirds of its members.

Article 16

The Council of Ministers shall adopt its rules of procedure.

Article 17

The Council of Ministers may delegate any of its attributions to the Committee of Ambassadors.

Article 18

The Committee of Ambassadors

The Committee of Ambassadors shall consist of an Ambassador or other designated representative of each of the ACP States.

Article 19

1. The Committee of Ambassadors shall assist the Council of Ministers in the performance of its functions, and shall carry out any mandate entrusted to it by the latter.
2. In particular, the Committee of Ambassadors shall monitor the implementation of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement with a view to achieving the objectives set out therein.
3. The Committee of Ambassadors shall present a report on its activities to each regular session of the Council of Ministers.

Article 20

1. There shall be a Bureau of the Committee of Ambassadors which shall co-ordinate its work.
2. The Bureau of the Committee of Ambassadors shall comprise nine members and Article 12 of this Agreement shall apply mutatis mutandis in relation to its composition.
3. The members of the Bureau of the Committee of Ambassadors shall be the representatives of the same States as those which comprise the membership of the Bureau of the Council of Ministers.

Article 21

The acts of the Committee of Ambassadors shall be in the form of a decision, resolution or recommendation and shall be adopted on the basis of consensus of its members.

Article 22

The Committee of Ambassadors shall adopt its own rules of procedure.

CHAPTER III

THE SECRETARIAT OF THE ACP GROUP

Article 23

1. The Secretariat of the ACP Group shall be located in Brussels, Belgium.
2. The Secretariat of the ACP Group shall be managed by a Secretary General vested with Executive powers.
3. The Secretariat of the ACP Group shall:
 - a) carry out all tasks as may be assigned to it by the Summit of Heads of State and Government, the Council of Ministers, the Committee of Ambassadors and the ACP Parliamentary Assembly ;
 - b) contribute to the implementation of the decisions of these organs;
 - c) monitor the implementation of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement; and
 - d) service the organs of the ACP Group and, as appropriate, the joint institutions established under the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement.

Article 24

1. The Secretary General:
 - a) shall ensure that good quality technical and administrative support and services are provided by the Secretariat to the members and the organs of the ACP Group;
 - b) is the Authorising Officer for the Budget;
 - c) manages the personnel, the projects and programmes; and
 - d) shall be the designated representative of the ACP Secretariat.
2. The Secretary-General may present proposals to the Committee of Ambassadors for the effective achievement of the objectives set out in Article 2.
3. The Secretary-General shall through the Committee of Ambassadors, present a report to each regular Session of the Council of Ministers on the activities of the Secretariat.

Article 25

1. The Council of Ministers shall determine the organisational structure of the ACP Secretariat, and lay down its staff regulations, on the proposal of the Committee of Ambassadors.
2. The Council of Ministers shall, appoint the Secretary-General of the ACP Group on the basis of merit, qualifications, professional competence and integrity.
3. The Secretary-General shall appoint Assistant Secretaries-General in accordance with the Staff Regulations on the basis of merit, qualifications, professional competence and integrity of the proposed candidates after consultation with the regions.
4. The appointments to the most senior positions of the ACP-EU joint institutions that fall to the ACP Group shall be made according to the same criteria of merit, qualifications, professional competence and integrity.

5. The principle of rotation shall be applied to all these appointments so as to ensure that account is taken of the need to ensure an equitable and balanced representation of the regions as identified in Article 1 of this Agreement.
6. The Secretary-General shall recruit staff, in accordance with the staff regulations of the ACP Secretariat, on the basis of merit, qualifications, professional competence and integrity. In addition, the staff complement shall, to the fullest extent possible, reflect an equitable and balanced representation of the Member States of the ACP.

Article 26

1. In the event of duly certified incapacity of the Secretary General, or whenever it is clear that his resumption of duties shall be unexpectedly delayed in such a manner as to impair the smooth and efficient running of the ACP Secretariat, the President of Council shall authorise the Assistant Secretary-General who is the most senior by virtue of his date of assumption of office, to temporarily perform the duties of Secretary General.
2. The temporary performance of the duties of Secretary General by the Assistant Secretary General shall cease on the day before the date specified by the incumbent to the President of Council and the Assistant Secretary-General in writing, as the date that he will resume his duties.
3. In the event of the Secretary-General not resuming duty after the expiry of sixty days from the date of the commencement of the temporary performance of duties by the Assistant Secretary-General, the Council of Ministers shall decide at its next session on how to resolve the situation.
4. If the next session of Council is not held before the expiry of an additional period of thirty days, the President of Council shall consult within the Troika and with the representative of each of the regions on the Bureau, with a view to seeking a temporary solution pending a Council decision at its next session.

Article 27

1. The Council of Ministers shall establish the financial regulations and the Budget of the ACP Secretariat.
2. Each ACP State shall contribute to the Budget in accordance with the provisions established by the Council of Ministers.

CHAPTER IV

NEW MEMBERS AND OBSERVERS

Article 28

1. The Council of Ministers may take a decision to admit a State as a member of the ACP Group:
 - a) by virtue of its location within the geographical regions of the ACP Group, and/or
 - b) if it accedes to the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement currently in force.
2. In either case the Council of Ministers shall determine the modalities for admission.
3. The new member shall assume all the rights and the obligations arising from this Agreement.

Article 29

On the recommendation of the Committee of Ambassadors, the Council of Ministers may grant Observer Status in the ACP Group to:

- a) independent states within the ACP geographical regions which express their intention to seek membership of the ACP Group or to accede to the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement currently in force;
- b) regional bodies of the ACP states; and
- c) international organisations that pursue development objectives similar to those of the ACP Group, on the basis of reciprocity.

CHAPTER V

FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 30

1. The provisions of this Agreement may be amended by a decision of the Council of Ministers.

2. A proposal for an amendment shall be submitted in writing by any Member State to the ACP Secretariat. It shall be accompanied by supporting documents.
3. The proposed amendment and supporting documents shall be communicated by the ACP Secretariat for the consideration of the Member States of the ACP Group.
4. The proposed amendment shall not be included on the Agenda of a meeting of the Council of Ministers unless a period of at least six months from the date of its communication to the Member States has elapsed.
5. The amendment shall enter into force when it is approved by a decision of the Council of Ministers.

Article 31

1. The official languages of the ACP Group shall be English, French, Portuguese, Spanish and any other language as may be decided by the Council of Ministers.

Article 32

The ACP Secretariat is the depository of the Georgetown Agreement and shall ensure its publication.

The preceding text is a certified true copy of the Georgetown Agreement as amended and deposited in the archives of the Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, in Brussels, which entered into force on the 28 November 2003, the date on which it was adopted by Decision No.1/LXXVIII/03 of the ACP Council of Ministers.

Brussels, 1st December 2003

Jean-Robert GOULONGANA
Secretary-General of the African,
Caribbean and Pacific Group of States

Annex 10: Questionnaire

Intake

Interview with:

Country/institution:

Date:

Place

Interviewed by:

Interview number:

Language:

Recorded:

Record number:

List of questions

1. How long do you know the ACP?
2. What are the strengths of the ACP?
3. What are the weaknesses of the ACP?
4. What are the Opportunities of the ACP?
5. What are the threats to the ACP?
6. Can the ACP group exist as an independent group?
7. Can the ACP group exist as an independent group independent from the EU?
8. What is the political weight of the ACP group?
9. Can you give positive examples where the political weight of the ACP group made a difference?
10. How useful is the office in Geneva to represent the ACP to the WTO?
11. What difference can the ACP make in the area of climate?
12. Can the ACP play a role in international fora such as the G20?
13. What obstacles does the ACP group need to overcome to increase its political weight?
14. Do you see the ACP Group as the best framework within which address certain problems?
 - a. If yes for which problems?
 - b. If no, which fora are better equipped?
15. Do the African countries need the Caribbean and Pacific in this project? Is it important to stay as a group of 80 countries? Are there more advantages or disadvantages in this?
16. Would it be helpful if other countries, for example Indonesia, joined the ACP Group?
17. Would it be helpful to change the ACP Group into a group of LDCs?
18. How to change the image of the group into a prestigious group, with values could underpin this?
19. Has your country signed any EPAs? Are there ongoing negotiations? What do you expect from these?
20. Should the ACP enhance itself as an economic group?
21. To establish a common market within the ACP, with what kind of measure could you start?
22. Is there any example of economic cooperation that is a good example of the success of the ACP group, or that could be developed for the future?
23. How do you see the future of EU – ACP relations?
24. What do you think about the possibility of an ACP Investment Bank?

- a. What should be its main sources of finance?
- b. What should be its main targets?
25. What do you think that I could add to my research? Do you have any suggestion?
26. What do you think of the possibility of a "Tobin Tax" in Africa? Do you have any similar initiatives at ACP level?
27. What are the main partners that are of interest to the future development of the ACP?
28. What kind of finance is of most interest to the ACP group?
29. How can economic cooperation in the ACP group be enhanced?
30. Is the EU a decisive partner for the future of the ACP?
31. What organisational issues should be addressed to strengthen the ACP group?
32. Do the opportunities for the ACP outweigh the threats in your view?
33. How can the weaknesses of the ACP be overcome?
34. How would you weigh the proportion of weaknesses versus strengths of the ACP?
35. What are the key challenges and opportunities in the external environment?
36. What other questions should this research look at?
37. Do you feel I forgot to address important issues? If so, what are those?

Annex 11 : Questionnaire french ambassadeurs ACP (interviews semi-structuré)

Intake

Entretien avec:

Lieu/institution:

Date:

Lieu:

Interviewé(e) par:

Numéro de l'interview:

Langue:

Enregistré:

Numéro d'enregistrement:

Liste de questions

1. Depuis quand connaissez-vous l'ACP ?
2. Quelles sont les forces de l'ACP?
3. Quelles sont les faiblesses de l'ACP?
4. Quelles sont les opportunités de l'ACP?
5. Quelles sont les menaces de l'ACP?
6. Le groupe ACP peut-il exister en tant que groupe indépendant ?
7. Le groupe ACP peut-il exister en tant que groupe indépendant, indépendamment de l'UE ?
8. Quel est le poids politique de l'ACP?
9. Pouvez-vous fournir quelques exemples positifs où le poids politique du groupe ACP a fait la différence ?
10. Dans quelle mesure est le bureau de Genève utile à l'ACP ?
11. Quelles différences peut l'ACP faire concernant le domaine climatique ?
12. L'ACP peut-il jouer un rôle dans les forums internationaux comme le G20 ?
13. Quel(s) obstacle(s) le groupe ACP doit surmonter pour accroître son poids politique ?

14. Pensez-vous que le groupe ACP possède la meilleure structure pour répondre à certains problèmes ?
 - a. Si oui, pour quel(s) problème(s)
 - b. Sinon, quels forums sont le plus apte?
15. Est-ce que les pays africains ont besoin des Caraïbes et du Pacifique dans ce projet ? Est-il important de conserver un groupe de 80 pays ? Y-a-t-il plus d'avantages ou d'inconvénients a cela?
16. Serait-il plus utile que d'autres pays, tel que l'Indonésie par exemple, rejoignent le groupe ACP?
17. Serait-il utile que le groupe ACP devienne un groupe de pays les moins avancés (PMA) ?
18. Comment changer l'image du groupe en un groupe plus prestigieux, quelles valeurs pourraient y contribuer ?
19. Est-ce que votre pays a signé un APE ? Y-a-t-il des négociations en cours? Qu'attendez-vous de celles-ci ?
20. Est-ce que l'ACP devrait s'accroître en groupe économique ?.
21. Afin d'établir un marché commun parmi l'ACP, par quelle mesure faudrait-il commencer ?
22. Y-a-t-il un exemple de coopération économique qui est un bon exemple du succès du groupe ACP ou qui pourrait être développé dans le futur ?
23. Comment voyez-vous les futures relations entre l'UE et l'ACP ?
24. Que pensez-vous de la possibilité d'une Banque d'Investissement ACP ?
 - a. Quel serait ces sources de financement?
 - b. Quelles devraient être ses cibles prioritaires ?
25. Que pensez-vous qu'il serait utile d'ajouter à ma recherche ? Avez-vous des suggestions ?
26. Que pensez-vous de la possibilité d'un "Tobin Tax" en Afrique? Avez-vous des initiatives similaires au niveau du groupe ACP ?
27. Quels sont les majeurs partenaires qui seraient intéressés dans le futur développement de l'ACP ?
28. Quel type de finance est du plus grand intérêt pour le groupe ACP ?
29. Comment la coopération économique du groupe ACP peut-elle être améliorée ?
30. L'UE est-il un partenaire décisif pour le futur de l'ACP ?
31. Quel (s) problème(s) organisationnel doit être résolu pour renforcer le groupe ACP ?
32. Selon vous, est-ce que les opportunités de l'ACP l'emportent sur les menaces ?
33. Comment les faiblesses de l'ACP peuvent-elles être éconduites ?
34. Comment évaluez-vous la proportion de faiblesses et de forces de l'ACP ?
35. Quelles sont les majeurs enjeux et opportunités dans l'environnement extérieur ?
36. Quelles autres questions cette recherche devrait adresser ?
37. Avez-vous le sentiment que j'ai pu omettre de traiter des problèmes importants ? Si oui, quels sont-ils ?

Annex 12: interview protocol with ACP ambassadors

1. List of interviewees is drawn up – priority to include all ACP ambassadors in first full research phase
2. Appointments scheduled by assistants with a standard letter and follow up approach in English/french
3. Semi-structured Questionnaire English/French developed, piloted and fixed

4. Preparation of fact sheet per country
5. Interviews held at location of preference
6. Clarified that interviews are conducted on basis of anonymity, and that citations will not be included unless explicitly requested by researcher and approved by interviewee in follow up of the interview
7. Interviews conducted by consultant and assistant, following questionnaire protocol and taking notes
8. Interviews audio-recorded
9. Based on audio-recording and notes interviews are written out in a transcript
10. Analysis according to a research matrix, including quantitative counts
11. Additional analysis according to key words
12. Seeking clarifications on points that remain unclear after transcript
13. Request for copy of notes if and when available, to check recorded responses

About the author

In October 2010, Prof van Reisen was appointed as the Endowed Chair in honor of Marga Klompé on International Social Responsibility at Tilburg University, School of Humanities. Prof. Mirjam van Reisen, Ph.D., is the founding director of Europe External Policy Advisors (EEPA), a research centre of expertise on European Union external policy based in Brussels. She has 20 years experience working both in and alongside European Commission institutions. Since 2007, she has been an elected member of the International Coordinating Committee of Social Watch and member of the Social Watch Management Committee. She also serves on the board of the Dutch development and research organisations SNV and the Transnational Institute (TNI). Mirjam van Reisen is author of the books *Window of Opportunity, EU development cooperation after the end of the Cold War* (Africa World Press, 2009) and *EU Global Player* (International Books, 1999).

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