



**DECLARATION OF THE 21ST SESSION OF THE ACP PARLIAMENTARY
ASSEMBLY ON THE PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE OF RELIGIONS
AND THE IMPORTANCE GIVEN TO THE PHENOMENON OF HOMOSEXUALITY
IN THE ACP-EU PARTNERSHIP**

At its 20th session held in Tenerife (Spain) on 26 March 2010, the Parliamentary Assembly of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States engaged in a lengthy debate on certain phenomena whose current perceptible rise constitutes a threat to social cohesion in the ACP countries and the Member States of the European Union and to the harmony of the ACP-EU Partnership.

The ACP Parliamentary Assembly spoke passionately about the increasing number of political speeches that incite inter-religious hatred in certain EU Member States and the resurgence of clashes between different religious communities in certain ACP States, as well as phenomena which demonstrate the difficulties posed to the peaceful cohabitation of different faiths in the same society.

Referring to various international instruments on the matter, particularly the United Nations Declaration of 25 November 1981 on the fight against all forms of religion-based intolerance and discrimination, to which most of the ACP States and EU Member States are signatories, the ACP Parliamentary Assembly urged all ACP States and all the Member States of the European Union to reinforce their vigilance and to take, individually and collectively, all the necessary measures to push back inter-religious intolerance which is an obstacle to the harmonious development of individuals and societies and to promote peaceful co-existence and mutual respect among all religious communities.

The ACP Parliamentary Assembly also focused its attention on discussions surrounding the phenomenon of homosexuality in the framework of the ACP-EU Partnership and, in particular, the profound divergences that this issue has created in the framework of the second revision of the Cotonou Agreement.

While re-affirming its unfailing commitment to the respect of human rights and its full devotion to the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ACP Parliamentary Assembly remains firmly convinced that the ACP-EU Partnership can work and be fully functional with due respect for the cultural differences and social diversity of the two Parties.

The ACP Parliamentary Assembly is urgently appealing to the European Union to refrain from any attempts to impose its values which are not freely shared in the framework of the ACP-EU Partnership, to which the ACP States renew, once again, their profound attachment and complete confidence.

Brussels, 28 September 2010