



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

STATEMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF UGANDA REGARDING SIGNATURE OF THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN, CARRIBEAN AND PACIFIC STATES

Today the 15th of November 2023, the Partnership Agreement between the European Union (EU) and its Member States, of the one part, and the Members of the Organization of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), of the other part, will be signed at a venue in the Independent State of Samoa.

The Agreement is intended to be the framework for relations between the EU and the OACPS over the next 20 years with respect to many areas of common interest – ranging from investment and environmental sustainability and climate change, to irregular migration and good governance.

While Uganda, finds common ground with our EU partners on many of the issues and themes covered by the Agreement, we have concerns and reservations on others, which warrant that we defer the signing of the Agreement today, pending further engagement with our national stakeholders. Uganda is conducting internal consultations to reach a common understanding of the following concepts that are contained in this Agreement: marginalized groups, sex, gender equality, sexual and gender-based discrimination, vulnerable groups and people and sexuality education.

We recognize the existing geographical, historical and structural separation of regions on which aspects of this Agreement are premised and believe that unity across regions may best serve our purposes. The OACPS has historically been one grouping in its relations with the EU. However, this time around, through the 3 Protocols that form part of the Agreement, there is to be Regional Councils of Ministers, Regional Parliamentary Assemblies, etc. for each of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Regions – while maintaining the EU as one bloc. This arrangement not only maintains and reinforces the existing geographical, historical and structural separation of the regions, it also runs counter to the essential premise of the Agreement. In all contexts, Uganda has stood, and will continue to stand, for unity and not separateness. In our view, the balkanization may not adequately support fair engagement of member states since the regions do not have the same bargaining capacities.

The placement of the Agreement above any existing bilateral or other agreements between individual EU Member States and OACPS States is an issue of concern. The Agreement provides that no treaty, convention, agreement or arrangement of any kind between one or more member states of the EU and one or more OACPS members may impede the implementation of the Agreement. The impact of this is to undo and subordinate bilateral relations and regional commitments that Member States have developed over the years and this is likely to affect interstate relations, in our view. As we can appreciate within the context of international treaty-making, States can only be bound by agreements they have either freely negotiated or acceded to.

The Agreement provides that the OACPS-EU Council of Ministers shall have power to adopt decisions that are binding on all the parties and or make recommendations concerning any of its functions, including joint positions in

international organizations and forums. This requires reconciliation with the Constitution of Uganda, as well as the Parliamentary and Cabinet processes regarding international conventions. This is also a matter on which internal consultations will continue in order to safeguard the supremacy of our Constitution in this regard.

The foregoing notwithstanding, Uganda remains open to participation in any dialogues, processes and fora that we believe will be arranged in the future for the purpose of bringing on board every OACPS that, like Uganda, will not sign the Agreement today due to these and other concerns about the Agreement.