

Statement on the hearing of the Commissioner-designate for DG INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION and DEVELOPMENT

- 1. Water is the key element of the international development policy. During the course of the ongoing negotiations regarding the new UN Sustainable Development Goals, the new Commissioner should emphasise the importance of water and support a stand-alone water-related objective as well as integration of water within relevant policy areas.**

Access to water is a human right and its fulfillment has a direct and proved impact on social and economic development. Despite significant progresses over the last decade, almost 800 million people still do not have access to an improved source of drinking water (40% concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa), while one third of the world population lacks access to sanitation. Furthermore, there is a growing awareness regarding the strong link between water-security and state-security, and the effective governance of trans-frontier water resources represents a key challenge to sustainable water management as well as the reduction of international conflicts and water-related migrations. Thus the EU efforts to promote water diplomacy have to be strengthened and intensified.

- 2. Water is included as a cross-cutting theme of the EU Agenda for Change. The new Commissioner should ensure that water is fully integrated in the implementation of the EU development policy through dedicated support, funding instruments, and specific actions.**

The European Commission clearly identifies water as an important domain of intervention for the EU development policy. In its Agenda for Change, the Commission sets the energy-food nexus at the centre of its strategy. Energy and agriculture are strongly dependent on the availability of water resources. Many people in developing countries suffer from floods. The EC can support by helping with the policy transfer, management and engineering solutions. Targeted actions for the water sector in beneficiary countries are therefore needed, if the Commission is to achieve its objectives.

- 3. The new Commissioner should ensure adequate financial support to capacity-development actions in the water domain, relying on and cooperating with existing international platforms and initiatives.**

The ACP-EU Water Facility proved to be an effective instrument to enhance water management competence in developing countries. This kind of instrument plays a key role when ensuring the ownership and sustainability of results and represents an essential condition to improve the absorption capacity of larger investments for infrastructural projects. Support of capacity-development actions for water management constitutes therefore a key measure to achieve EU objectives. In doing this the EU shall cooperate with existing international platforms and initiatives such as the UN Habitat-led Global Water Operators Partnership (GWOPA) or other UN Conventions.

