OPENING REMARKS

By the OACPS Assistant Secretary General, Department of Policies and Programmes
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On the occasion of the Diplomatic Dinner Co-Hosted by Stop Ecocide International and Members of the OACPS. (Republics of Vanuatu, Congo, Burundi, Zambia, Equatorial Guinea and the Democratic Republic of Congo)

Thursday, March 26 2026

Your Excellencies,
Hon. Ministers,
Ambassadors,
Distinguished Guests and Colleagues,

Good evening.

It is a profound honor to join you tonight. Standing here as the new Assistant Secretary-General for the Department of Policies and Programmes at the OACPS Secretariat, I am struck by the gravity of our gathering. We are not merely here for a dinner; we are here for a shared mission.

I want to extend my deepest gratitude to our co-hosts—the **Stop Ecocide International** team and our dedicated **OACPS Member States**—for organising this evening. Your leadership on the international stage is exactly the kind of "bold diplomacy" our Secretariat is committed to supporting.

The Pulse of Our Department

At the Department of Policies and Programmes, our mandate is clear: we turn high-level mandates into lived realities for the 1.5 billion people we represent across three continents.

From the blue economies of the Pacific to the lush rainforests of Africa and the vulnerable coastlines of the Caribbean, our people are on the front lines of an environmental crisis they did not create. For us, the term **"Ecocide"** is not a legal abstraction. It is a description of the existential threats we face—the destruction of ecosystems that are our supermarkets, our pharmacies, and our ancestral homes.

A New Chapter of Protection

The OACPS Secretariat views the push for legal recognition of ecocide as a critical pillar of environmental justice. As we move forward, my department is prioritising:

- **Policy Harmonisation:** Aligning our internal frameworks with global movements that hold mass environmental destruction to account such as the Internal Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on Climate Action.
- **Strategic Advocacy:** Ensuring that the unique vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) are central to the international legal discourse.
- **Resilient Programming:** Strengthening our programs to not only adapt to climate change but to proactively safeguard the biodiversity that remains.

Our Shared Commitment

Tonight, as we break bread, let us also break the inertia that often slows international progress. The OACPS is more than just a bloc; we are a family of nations united by the desire to leave a habitable world for the next generation.

We stand ready to learn more about the Stop Ecocide movement and all our partners to ensure that the law finally protects what we cannot live without.

"The protection of our planet is the ultimate human rights issue of our time."

I look forward to the fruitful discussions tonight and to the even more fruitful actions we will take together in the coming months.

Thank you, and please enjoy your evening.