

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

P. O. Box 3243

Telephone: 5517 700

Fax: 5517844

Website: www.au.int

SC16287

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CONCEPT NOTE

**BID BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
TO HOST THE SECRETARIAT OF THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND
CULTURAL COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN UNION
IN LUSAKA, ZAMBIA**

CONCEPT NOTE

BID BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA TO HOST THE SECRETARIAT OF THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN UNION IN LUSAKA, ZAMBIA

I. Introduction

1. The Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) of the African Union (AU) was established as an important advisory Organ through the Constitutive Act of the AU adopted in 2002 to bring the voices of the African people in general and of non-state and non-governmental actors, in particular, into the mainstream of decision-making processes in the AU. In that regard, ECOSOCC was developed through a process of regional consultations with civil society groups across Africa and the outcomes of the consultations were reviewed by the AU.

2. Among other things, ECOSOCC was established to forge strong partnerships between government and all segments of civil society, in particular, women, the youth, children, the Diaspora, organized labour, the private sector and professional groups. In doing that, ECOSOCC will ensure the active participation of African civil society in the integration and development agenda of the continent and the implementation of AU policies and programs in the sphere of peace, security, social and economic development.

II. Background

3. Zambia cherishes and fully identifies with the objective and purpose behind the creation of ECOSOCC. As a founder member of the then Organisation of African Unity (OAU) as well as the AU, Zambia has been committed to and consistent with the ideals of Pan-Africanism. Through this commitment Zambia in 2001 hosted the historic Summit of Heads of State and Government which led to the formation of the AU from the OAU. Zambia's contribution to the fight against the liberation struggle in Africa cannot be over-emphasised. Being surrounded by eight (8) countries which were all fighting for freedom from the colonial masters, Zambia through its founder and first Republican President, Dr. Kenneth David Kaunda, provided the necessary support to its neighbours until the region was liberated from colonisation and apartheid.

4. Zambia being an active member of the AU, believes that the ECOSOCC Secretariat should be independent, as the nurturing period is over and time has come to allow ECOSOCC to have an independent Secretariat. Like many other institutions and agencies of the AU which are based outside the AUC, ECOSOCC should also be allowed to grow and develop with some level of independence.

5. During the AU Summit held in Johannesburg, South Africa from 7th to 15th June, 2015, one of the most important decisions made by the Heads of State and Government was **“to ensure equitable regional or geographical location of institutions of the**

AU including AU Organs, Specialised Agencies and other Offices across the Continent”. This was driven by the fact that the Summit had observed that the present location of AU institutions did not reflect equity. This decision marked a critical turning point in the unfolding tapestry of AU progressive history.

6. Against this backdrop, therefore, on 23rd June, 2015 the Government of the Republic of Zambia through the Minister of Foreign Affairs Honourable Harry Kalaba, M.P., submitted to the African Union Commission (AUC) Chairperson, H.E. Dr. Nkasozena Dlamini-Zuma Zambia’s candidacy to host the ECOSOCC Secretariat.

7. The AUC did not raise any objection to the proposed transfer of ECOSOCC to Lusaka but advised Zambia to liaise with the African Citizen’s Directorate (CIDO) to work out the legal, structural and financial implications of the transfer. The AUC further agreed to put the matter on the Agenda of the Permanent Representative Committee for consideration at the January 2016 Summit.

8. The Embassy accordingly submits Zambia’s bid to host the ECOSOCC Secretariat of the AU and requests that the matter be included as an agenda item for consideration at the Summit of Heads of State and Government scheduled to take place in January 2016. This bid is fully supported by the Cabinet of the Government of Zambia, which has since instructed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to proceed accordingly.

III. Justifications for Zambia to host the ECOSOCC Secretariat

9. Zambia believes that allowing ECOSOCC to have an independent Secretariat would boost its performance, efficiency and allow for greater credibility among ECOSOCC Members and the larger African Civil Society. There are concerns being raised by some African Civil Society that the Commission was acting as a gate keeper of ECOSOCC and that there is need to provide a conducive environment for the civil society to express itself freely. Therefore, allowing ECOSOCC to have an independent Secretariat in Lusaka will undo this misunderstanding. Zambia offers a peaceful, stable and enabling environment for the establishment and effective functioning of such a critical AU institution as the ECOSOCC.

10. Furthermore, in order to bolster its bid further and ensure a speedy, efficient and effective transfer and setting up of the ECOSOCC Secretariat in Lusaka, Zambia has undertaken the following measures:

- a) The Government of Zambia has secured the entire Seventh Floor of the state-of-the-art Government Complex and Conference Centre, which office block is strategically located within a walking distance of Lusaka’s Central Business District, with easy access to high-grade hotels, banking facilities, courier services and other critical amenities necessary to help accelerate the establishment of the Secretariat;

This accommodation will however be necessary only for a transitory period covering slightly over one (1) year;

- b) The Zambian Government has already issued a 10 acre plot, whose Title Deeds are in the name of the ECOSOCC and upon which a permanent building for the Secretariat will be constructed. This plot is near the Kenneth Kaunda International Airport and within reach of various exclusive and highly secure residential areas, apartment blocks, hotels and shopping complexes;
- c) To this end, Zambia has identified cooperating partners who have agreed to construct the permanent complex for the Secretariat and finance the whole project at no cost to the African Union;
- d) In order to further bolster the process of establishing the ECOSOCC Secretariat, the Zambian Government will provide Seconded Officers to work at the Secretariat in addition to those at CIDO. This should help reduce the overall costs for recruitment and the human resource expenditure during the transitory period.

11. Zambia wishes to place on record that when the ECOSOCC secretariat moves to Lusaka, it will remain truly an AU institution manned by AU officers and will continue to operate within the framework of AU standards, rules and procedures, in line with the Host Agreement that will be signed between the Government of Zambia and the Commission, and not undermine the AU corporate interests. Operatives of ECOSOCC in Lusaka will be under the oath of the AU and expected to respect the institutions and procedures of the AU like any other AU institution and organ located outside the AU Headquarters.

12. In addition, Zambia believes that moving the venue of ECOSOCC's activities to Lusaka will help to sensitize the populace in the various Member States and build a popular mass base for African Union activities and programs. Since Lusaka hosts the COMESA Secretariat, it will promote a confluence and integration of impacts, considering that COMESA's focus supports the developmental agenda of ECOSOCC. There will also be a creation of a momentum for wider dissemination of information about the AU and concurrent mobilization of efforts across the broader strata of African society.

13. Zambia deems the hosting of the ECOSOCC Secretariat as a mark of recognition of the role that Zambia has played in the establishment of the AU and continues to play in nurturing its growth and development. Zambia's offer to host ECOSOCC Headquarters is driven by the same spirit and commitment of ensuring socio-economic freedom, peace, stability, development and economic growth of the entire African Continent for the benefit of its peoples.

14. Zambia, a country of approximately 15 million people, has excellent road, telephone communication services and is a hub of regional and continental air transport by most of Africa's leading Airlines such as Ethiopian Airways, South African Airways,

Kenya Airways, Emirates, Rwanda Air, Air Namibia and Air Zimbabwe, etc. The Zambian Government is in the process of establishing its own Airline.

IV. Expected Outcomes if Zambia hosts the ECOSOCC Secretariat

15. If Zambia hosts the ECOSOCC Secretariat, like any other Member State which hosts other AU Organs, Institutions, Agencies and Regional Offices across the various Member States of the Union, this will promote renewed interest, identification and support for our African Union and create a popular mass base for its programs and activities as we attempt to domesticate Agenda 2063 to the peoples of Africa whom we serve.

16. The Government of Zambia, through its Embassy in Addis Ababa, has consulted with the Commission on the implications of the transfer of the seat of ECOSOCC from the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa to Lusaka, Zambia. The Commission having considered Zambia's bid has raised no objections to the proposed transfer. In line with the advice of the AUC, Zambia has consulted with CIDO and the understanding is that the transfer of ECOSOCC to Lusaka does not pose legal, structural or financial problems if it is carried out appropriately.

V. Conclusion

17. In view of the above, the President of the Government of the Republic of Zambia, His Excellency, Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, the entire Cabinet, and the Zambian people at large pray and hope that Member States of the AU approve Zambia's request to host the ECOSOCC Secretariat in Lusaka. The Government of the Republic of Zambia is ready to receive the AUC Officials to inspect the interim Office accommodation and the 10 acre plot that Zambia has offered for the construction of the permanent ECOSOCC Secretariat. It is hoped that the AUC will submit a report of their findings to the January, 2016 Summit.

2016

Bid by The Government of the Republic of Zambia to host the Secretariat of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union in Lusaka, Zambia

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