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SC17454

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Twenty-Ninth Ordinary Session

10 – 15 July 2016

Kigali, RWANDA

EX.CL/976(XXIX)a

Original: English

**REPORT OF THE RELOCATION OF THE SEAT OF
ECOSOCC TO LUSAKA, ZAMBIA**

REPORT OF THE RELOCATION OF THE SEAT OF ECOSOCC TO LUSAKA, ZAMBIA

1. AU Assembly Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.4(XXVI) endorsed the offer of the Republic of Zambia to host the ECOSOCC Secretariat and subsequently directed the African Union Commission to work together with the Government of the Republic of Zambia to define the legal, structural and financial implications of the relocation.

Interdepartmental Committee

2. Accordingly, an interdepartmental committee meeting was convened within the AU Commission in order to begin preparations for the implementation of the said Decision. The interdepartmental committee meeting was organized under the auspices of the Bureau of the Chairperson of the AU Commission and chaired by the Chief of Staff. The following departments within the AU Commission were invited to the meeting in view of the fact that the implementation of the Decision falls under their respective mandates: CIDO, as the Secretariat of ECOSOCC; the Department of Administration, Human Resources Management; the Department of Program, Budgeting, Finance and Accounting; the Office of the Legal Counsel of the Commission and the Bureau of the Deputy Chairperson.

Extraordinary Session of the ECOSOCC Standing Committee in Lusaka

3. H.E. the Chairperson authorized the ECOSOCC Secretariat to convene an Extraordinary Session of the ECOSOCC Standing Committee in Lusaka, Zambia, in order to discuss the parameters of the proposed relocation in accordance with the above-mentioned AU Assembly Decision. The specific objectives of the Extraordinary Session were to:

1. Initiate the process of amending the relevant Statutes of ECOSOCC in accordance with the advice of the Office of the Legal Counsel of the African Union Commission; and in fulfilment of the directive of Assembly Decision 4 (XVII) regarding the relocation of the Secretariat of ECOSOCC from the AU Commission to Lusaka, Zambia.
2. Define the structural and financial requirements of a fully-fledged Secretariat in Zambia; in accordance with advice received on same.
3. Discuss interim arrangements as required.

4. The same departments of the AU Commission invited to the interdepartmental committee meeting were also invited to attend the ECOSOCC Standing Committee meeting in Lusaka in order to provide guidance to the discussion and to interact with the Standing Committee members on the appropriate measures required, from the point of view of each respective department, to complete the relocation of the ECOSOCC Secretariat to Zambia.

5. The above-mentioned AU Commission departments contributed to the outcomes of the Standing Committee meeting with regard to the three main implications of the proposed relocation: legal, structural and financial.

Legal implications

6. With regard to the legal implications, the Office of the Legal Counsel (OLC) recommended that the amendments to the relevant legal instruments, specifically the ECOSOCC statutes and the Rules of Procedure, be carried out as a first step in the relocation process.

7. The meeting agreed to develop a comprehensive approach amendment to include the entire set of Statutes which should be submitted to the STC on justice and legal affairs and regarding the implementation of the Assembly Decision on relocation there is only one article that should be amended by the next STC.

8. The OLC further advised that the Government of Zambia and the AU Commission initiate the process of negotiation on the draft host agreement in order to have it ready for signature once the report of the AU Commission verification mission has been submitted to, and approved by, the Assembly of Heads of State and Governments of the Union.

Structural implications

9. For its part, the Department of Administration and Human Resources Management (AHRM) provided guidance on the necessary steps towards the elaboration of a staffing and administrative structure for the Secretariat in Lusaka. The AHRM advised that the task of designing an appropriate new staffing structure for ECOSOCC be absorbed into the World Bank-funded Restructuring of AU Organs Project; which is an ongoing project the recommendations of which are due to be presented to the AU Assembly for approval during the July 2016 Summit in Kigali, Rwanda.

10. Subsequently, the AHRM has directed the consulting firm in charge of the Restructuring project, Bain & Company, to engage the ECOSOCC Standing Committee and Secretariat in relevant discussions leading to the development of a suitable and responsive staffing and administrative structure for ECOSOCC. These discussions have taken place and appropriate input transmitted to the consulting company for their necessary action.

11. The AHRM further clarified the process of staffing recruitment within the African Union and advised ECOSOCC to take cognizance of same in the context of developing its new structure. Specifically, the department underlined that the proposed new structure would be submitted to the Sub-Committee on Structure of the Permanent Representatives Council (PRC) for review and onward recommendation to the full PRC; in accordance with the established procedure relating to all matters pertaining to structure within the African Union.

12. It was recommended that ECOSOCC prioritize a core set of positions in the full structure in view of the probability that recruitment of new staff will be done incrementally over a multi-year period following the approval of the new structure by the AU Assembly. This core set of positions would be recruited first and would be expected to manage the core affairs of the organ in the first years in Lusaka.

13. It is to be mentioned that the Zambian Government has expressed its readiness to provide seconded officers to work at the Secretariat in addition to those that will be engaged by the AUC.

Financial implications

14. With regard to the financial implications of the relocation, it was agreed that the full picture would only emerge after the proposed new staffing structure has been adopted and the number of new positions is known.

15. However, the Standing Committee took note of the significant financial commitments made by the government of Zambia with regard to the relocation efforts. In particular, the Zambian authorities made available for the inspection of the ECOSOCC delegation a 10-acre plot of land whose title deeds are in the name of ECOSOCC donated by Zambia for the construction of the permanent Secretariat building complex. The said plot of land is located in a designated “diplomatic triangle” that is earmarked to host other major international organizations including COMESA as well as the premises that will host the African Union Summit in 2020. The Zambian authorities also arranged for the ECOSOCC delegation to tour two office spaces that have been made available as options for the interim Secretariat of ECOSOCC. The interim offices of ECOSOCC

will now be on the 3rd and 4th floors of Mukuba House while the permanent site is being developed. The Zambian Government has also mentioned that it is in the process of identifying appropriately furnished and equipped residential accommodation for the Head of ECOSOCC Secretariat and it will be made available immediately the Director is appointed.

16. In addition, the government of Zambia is currently undertaking negotiations with international partners with a view to securing financing for the construction of the permanent Secretariat of ECOSOCC.

Conclusion

17. During the Extraordinary Session of the Standing Committee in Lusaka, the delegation took particular cognizance of the demonstration of political will at the highest levels of the Zambian government, which was reiterated in meetings with the President of the Republic, HE Edgar Chagwa Lungu and the First President of the Republic HE Kenneth David Kaunda.

18. While significant progress has been achieved following Decision, it is expected that further work will be required on the part of the different stakeholders; namely the AU Commission; the Government of Zambia, and ECOSOCC; in order to complete the relocation.

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SC17460

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
Twenty-Ninth Ordinary Session
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Kigali, RWANDA

EX.CL/976 XXIX)b
Original: English

**REPORT OF THE AFRICAN UNION ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND
CULTURAL COUNCIL (ECOSOCC)**

REPORT OF THE AFRICAN UNION ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COUNCIL (ECOSOCC)

INTRODUCTION

1. Council will recall that in the preceding report we underlined the need for consolidation of ECOSOCC as an organ of the Union in addition to the implementation of key programmatic priorities. Accordingly, our main concern for the period under review was to put in place the structures and sub-organs of ECOSOCC that will drive the execution of its program agenda and to ensure that they are working at peak effectiveness. Consequently, a concerted effort was invested in ensuring the operationalization of the ten sectorial clusters. In addition, Council endorsed the proposal by the Republic of Zambia to host the Secretariat of ECOSOCC in Lusaka. This Decision necessitated the convening of an Extraordinary Session of the Standing Committee to consider the related implications of the relocation; including the legal, financial and structural ramifications. This report summarizes the core activities of ECOSOCC from a functional or administrative point of view before proceeding to provide an update on the programmatic accomplishments for the period under consideration.

SECTION I: ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

1. **Proposed Relocation of ECOSOCC Secretariat to the Republic of Zambia.**
2. AU Assembly Decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.4(XXVI) endorsed the offer of the Republic of Zambia to host the ECOSOCC Secretariat and directed the African Union Commission to work together with Zambia to define the legal, structural and financial implications of the relocation.
3. An Extraordinary Session of the ECOSOCC Standing Committee was subsequently held in Lusaka, Zambia, from 13-15 April 2016 to discuss the parameters of the proposed relocation in accordance with the above-mentioned Assembly Decision.
4. The Standing Committee recommended that amendments to the relevant legal instruments, specifically the ECOSOCC Statutes and the Rules of Procedure, be carried out as a first step in the relocation process. The Standing Committee further called on the three major partners: the Government of Zambia, the AU Commission and ECOSOCC work closely at the appropriate levels to carry out the practical measures required to complete the relocation process.
5. In this regard, it was determined that the most immediate requirement is to amend Article 14 of the current ECOSOCC Statutes, which states, “ The competent unit of the Commission shall serve as the Secretariat of ECOSOCC within the Commission.” This statute needs to be amended to state specifically that the Secretariat would be based in Lusaka, Zambia. The current ECOSOCC Secretariat in CIDO is working in collaboration with the Office of the Legal Counsel of the Commission to propose a specific text for the amendment.

6. The Standing Committee noted with appreciation the high level of commitment on the part of the government of Zambia to facilitate the relocation. In particular, the Zambian authorities made available for the inspection of the ECOSOCC delegation a 10-acre plot of land whose title deeds are in the name of ECOSOCC donated by Zambia for the construction of the permanent Secretariat building complex. The said plot of land was located in a designated “diplomatic triangle” that is earmarked to host other major international organizations including COMESA as well as the premises that will host the AU Summit in 2020.

7. In addition, the Zambian authorities arranged for the ECOSOCC delegation to tour two office spaces earmarked as options for the interim Secretariat of ECOSOCC while the permanent site is being developed. Moreover, the Standing Committee took particular cognizance of the demonstration of political will at the highest levels of the Zambian government, which was reiterated in meetings with the President of the Republic, HE Edgar Chagwa Lungu; and the First President of the Republic HE Kenneth David Kaunda.

2. Elaboration of New Staffing Structure for ECOSOCC Secretariat.

8. In line with the directives of Summit Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.4(XXVI); the Extraordinary Session of the Standing Committee also considered the structural implications of the proposed relocation of the ECOSOCC Secretariat to the Republic of Zambia.

9. It was consequently agreed that the task of designing an appropriate new staffing structure for ECOSOCC would be absorbed into the World Bank-funded Restructuring of AU Organs Project; and the ECOSOCC Secretariat, in partnership with the ECOSOCC Bureau, subsequently worked in close collaboration in this regard with the consulting firm undertaking this project with a view to co-developing a suitable and responsive staffing and administrative structure for ECOSOCC.

10. The government of the Republic of Zambia has offered to provide seconded officers to carry out the functions of the Secretariat until the new structure is established. The Zambian authorities have also confirmed that the process of identifying appropriately furnished and equipped residential accommodation for the Chief Executive of the Organ has also started.

3. Establishment of Disciplinary Committee

11. Within the context of institution building and ensuring that the various structures of ECOSOCC are established and activated to enable the organ effectively carry out its mandate, ECOSOCC has put in place, during the Nairobi meeting in June 2016, a disciplinary committee composed of membership from all 5 regions of the continent as stipulated by the ECOSOCC Rules of Procedures.

12. The committee have the mandate of reviewing cases of conduct and behaviour that may constitute non-conformance or a breach of applicable rules and regulations of ECOSOCC and the African Union.

13. The committee will also have to develop a Code of Conduct that will be submitted for the approval of the Standing Committee and/or the policy making

organs. The committee will work in close cooperation in this regard with the Legal Counsel Office.

14. The committee's work will help prevent or forestall behaviours on the part of ECOSOCC officers that may be susceptible to generate adverse implications on the image and reputational integrity of ECOSOCC and the African Union.

SECTION II: PROGRAM UPDATES

4. Strategic Plan

15. The ECOSOCC Strategic Plan is currently under development. A small working group composed of members of the General Assembly has been tasked by the ECOSOCC Bureau to present the draft Strategic Plan for adoption at the next meeting of the Standing Committee.

5. Youth Engagement and the Popularization of AU Agenda 2063

16. One of the key pillars underpinning ECOSOCC's program implementation in the period in question has been the popularization of AU Agenda 2063 and the sensitization of key civil society groups to African Union policies and programs generally.

17. In this regard, the Presiding Officer held a sensitization and engagement event with young Africans who have been selected as Mandela - Washington Fellows under the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI). YALI is a youth empowerment program introduced by US President Barack Obama as a means of empowering and promoting youth leadership in Africa. Speaking at the Western Africa Regional Conference of YALI which took place in Accra, Ghana, from 19-21 May 2016; the Presiding Officer engaged with over 250 young African leaders drawn from the fields of civic leadership, business and entrepreneurship and public administration across 21 West and Central African countries.

18. The conference provided an opportunity for ECOSOCC to engage with the young African leaders on two levels: firstly, through a Partnership Expo in which staff from the ECOSOCC Secretariat briefed the assembled youth on the programs of ECOSOCC and the African Union in General; and secondly, through a Town Hall on the AU Agenda 2063; in which the Presiding Officer highlighted the main components of the flagship African Union development plan.

19. The two interactive platforms allowed for the youth leaders to develop an increased understanding of the structures, policies and programs of both ECOSOCC and the African Union; particularly as relates to youth engagement. The selection of the Mandela-Washington Fellows and the partnership of ECOSOCC with the Young African Leaders Initiative takes on increased significance with the impending declaration of 2017 as the AU Year of the Youth.

6. Operationalization of ECOSOCC Sectorial Cluster Committees

20. One of the key programmatic achievements of ECOSOCC during the period under review is the completion of the operationalization process for all ten (10)

sectorial cluster committees. Article 11 of the ECOSOCC Statutes recognized the sectorial cluster committees as key operational mechanisms of ECOSOCC that will relate the programs and policies of the African Union to those of African citizens across all walks of life.

21. Council would recall that despite its seminal importance, neither the Interim ECOSOCC Assembly (2005-2008) nor the 1st Permanent General Assembly (2008-2012) was able to activate or operationalize sectorial clusters. The 2nd General Assembly was cognizant of this deficit and took the initiative to correct it by establishing a framework for cluster operations within the organ. The operationalization process had begun in the 2nd quarter of 2015 with the successful operationalization and activation of the first three Clusters – Political Affairs, Peace and Security and Gender Cluster. The process was however interrupted by the institution of austerity measures at the AU Commission which subsequently froze the ECOSOCC Budget. Working in close collaboration with the AU Commission, however, the process was resurrected in the first two quarters of 2016; and all remaining 7 clusters were operationalized in two batches; the first in Cairo, Egypt in March 2016 and the second in Nairobi, Kenya, in May/June 2016.

22. With all 10 clusters now operationalized and activated, ECOSOCC is in the best programmatic position it has ever been and is now properly equipped to undertake its core function of serving as an advisory organ to the Union.

7. Continuation of Elections into ECOSOCC General Assembly

23. Decision EX.CL/Dec.869(XXVI) of the Executive Council had directed ECOSOCC and the African Union Commission to “continue with by-elections for the vacant positions in the ECOSOCC General Assembly to ensure the widest possible representation of Member States of the Union within ECOSOCC”. The Credentials Committee of ECOSOCC that led this process met in Maseru, Lesotho in June 2015 to establish the composite program for completing this assignment. It recognized the need to mobilize civil society organizations around this process and emulated the example of CIDO in the preceding period by drawing up a plan for sensitization mission across the continent. It also put in place a program for processing applications along with an election calendar to support this process. Unfortunately the Credentials Committee discovered that there were no funds allocated for this purpose in the 2015 program budget and thus adjusted its planning framework so that activities can commence within the 2016 budget year. ECOSOCC leadership has subsequently undertaken consultations through the framework of the Interdepartmental Steering Committee (ISC) of the AU Commission with a view to resuming the sensitization campaigns in countries where vacancies still exist for the election of qualified CSOs into the General Assembly. The process will therefore begin in earnest in the next quarter of the year and is scheduled to be completed within the 2016 budget year subject to access to allocated funds.

8. Establishment of ECOSOCC National Chapters

24. It will be recalled that the sensitization and motivation campaign that culminated in the establishment of the 2nd General Assembly of ECOSOCC had highlighted the need for the establishment and consolidation of National ECOSOCC Chapters as a framework of accountability for elected members and as an instrument

for the dissemination of information and mobilization of support for AU policies and programs. This has remained a central focus of the ECOSOCC program agenda in the period under consideration. Following efforts of the Organs of ECOSOCC to define appropriate guidelines in this regard, ECOSOCC has proceeded to establish interim national chapters in 9 countries; including Mauritius, Nigeria, Zambia, and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. These interim national chapters will serve as crucibles for testing the standards of the guidelines that have been developed; while ECOSOCC works with member states to complete the necessary processes leading to the formal launch of national chapters. The establishment of national ECOSOCC chapters in more countries remains a main focus of ECOSOCC work for the remainder of the current year of 2016. A campaign of sensitization is in progress in the remaining countries in consultation with the member states with a view to finalizing the establishment of national chapters in all member states of the Union.

9. Expansion of Civil Society Space in AU Partnerships

25. The process of ensuring effective civil society participation across the framework of the AU's international partnerships remains entrenched in ECOSOCC's program agenda for the period under review. Council will recall that within the framework of the Africa-EU partnership, the continental and intercontinental CSO frameworks under ECOSOCC leadership were activated and operationalized to provide inputs for the JAES process with emphasis on preparations for the Africa-EU Summit in Valetta, Malta in November 2015; as well as the Joint Annual Forum (JAF) of the Africa-EU Partnership which had been scheduled for April 2016 but was ultimately postponed.

26. Outside the frameworks of these specific events, ECOSOCC has taken steps to revitalize, in concert with non-state actors across regions of the world, the process of civil society engagement in the AU's international partnerships. This process has faltered in recent times as increasing emphasis was placed on state-to-state relationships. In this context, ECOSOCC has engaged with civil society actors in China, Turkey, India, Japan, etc with a view to ensuring that emphasis on civil society inclusion in the process is entrenched and that the view of citizens outside government structures are fully incorporated within the framework of global development initiatives.

THE ROAD AHEAD

27. With the completion of the operationalization process and the activation of all ten sectorial clusters, ECOSOCC has come into its own as a fully operational organ. Consequently the scope of funding for its program must be enlarged to be commensurate with its newly expanded range of program activities. In this regard the continued difficulty of the ECOSOCC Secretariat to access approved resources under the ECOSOCC budget remains a major challenge for which I would like to seek the urgent support of Council in addressing. I refer specifically to the continued subjection of ECOSOCC to the restrictions of the austerity program imposed at the AU Commission; a program that was meant to apply to departments and units within the AU Commission.

28. The application of AUC austerity measures to ECOSOCC, an AU organ separate and independent of the AU Commission, continues to severely hamper the

ability of ECOSOCC to carry out the implementation of its agenda. Of particularly critical concern is when the application of these measures prevents ECOSOCC from carrying out statutory functions on which it must report to the principal organs of the Union including this august Council. Against this background ECOSOCC wishes to propose, and to seek a Decision from Council on same, that ECOSOCC be permitted to access its approved budget normally without being subjected to the restrictions of the AU Commission's austerity program.

29. In addition, the continuing existence of vacancies on the General Assembly remains a critical shortcoming that must be addressed without further delay. The prevalence of these vacancies directly contravenes the Decision of Council (EX.CL/Dec.869 (XXVI) directing the African Union Commission and ECOSOCC to ensure the widest possible representation of Member States of the Union within ECOSOCC. In this regard, I wish to appeal to member states to authorize ECOSOCC to resume the campaign of sensitization within member countries where vacancies still exist. ECOSOCC further requests the support of member states of the Union in facilitating the process of sensitization and the organization of elections into the ECOSOCC General Assembly.

CONCLUSION AND APPRECIATION

30. Finally, we wish to acknowledge the work of ECOSOCC Secretariat in the Citizens and Diaspora Organizations Directorate (CIDO) under its current leadership for the excellent work it has done since the inception of the 2nd ECOSOCC General Assembly. The dedication, hard work and aptitude of the Secretariat has been well appreciated by the Bureau, Standing and Credentials Committee and the General Assembly of ECOSOCC.

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