

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

P. O. Box 3243

Telephone: 5517 700

Fax: 5517844

Website: www.au.int

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

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

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The year 2016/17 admittedly has been a busy year for ECOSOCC for various reasons including the 2nd General Assembly of the organ and the election of its Standing Committee, the development of the organ's first strategic Plan and communication strategy, operationalization of ECOSOCC national chapters, the relocation of ECOSOCC secretariat, the development and amendment of relevant policy documents such as Rules of Procedures for Standing Committee, Disciplinary Committee and Credentials Committee, code of ethics and amendment of the ECOSOCC statute. This report briefly highlights the status of implementation on the various aspects mentioned above.

II. 2ND SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2. Article 9(3) of the ECOSOCC Statutes stipulates that the General Assembly shall meet in Ordinary Session once every two (2) years and may meet in Extra-Ordinary Sessions under conditions to be specified in the rules of procedure of the organ; whereas Article 9(4b) specifies that the term of office of the ECOSOCC Bureau shall be for two (2) years. In compliance with the statutory requirement, the second session of its 2nd Permanent General Assembly took place in Cairo Egypt from the 27th – 31st March, 2017 in which new member (coming from unrepresented countries) were admitted into the ECOSOCC General Assembly and new Bureau and Standing Committee members were elected to spearhead the mandate and activities of the organ.

3. The outcome of the elections saw the inauguration of 16 new members representing 14 member states at national, regional and continental levels; as well as four ex-officio members nominated by the Chairperson of the AU Commission in accordance with Articles 4 (1d) and 5 (4) of the ECOSOCC Statutes. A total of 20 new members were therefore sworn into the General Assembly; representing a major step forward in the implementation of the Executive Council Decision to expand membership of the ECOSOCC General Assembly to all member states of the Union.

4. The General Assembly saw the successful organization of elections for members of the Standing Committee; which is comprised of the Bureau and the Heads of the cluster committees. At the end of the electoral process, the following members were elected to a term of office of 2 years.

Bureau

1. Presiding Officer – Mr. Richard Ssewakiryanga (East)
2. Deputy Presiding Officer (North) – Madam Fatma Mehdi Hassam
3. Deputy Presiding Officer (South) – Mr. Patson Malisa
4. Deputy Presiding Officer (West) – Madam Khady Fall Tall
5. Deputy Presiding Officer (Central) – Mr. Alain Blaise Batongue

Heads of Cluster Committees

1. Peace and Security: Mr. Ngalim Eugene (Cameroon)
2. Political Affairs: Mr. Abozer Elmana Elligai (Sudan)

3. Social Affairs: Dr. Tunji Asaolu (Nigeria)
4. Human Resources Science and Technology: Mr. Abdurrahman Mokhtar (Libya)
5. Infrastructure and Energy: Dr. Raj Gowtan Chintaram (Mauritius)
6. Rural Economy Mr. Guy Mpembele Kisoka (Democratic Republic of Congo)
7. Trade and Industry: Mr. Godfrey Selematsela, (South Africa)
8. Economic Affairs: Ms. Monde ReberiahKabandula(Zambia)
9. Women and Gender: Mr. El Hacene Mbareck (Mauritania)
10. Cross-Cutting: Dr. Serge Michel Kodom (Togo)

5. While the elections were successfully conducted, a few interpretation challenges in the Rules of Procedures were observed. The General Assembly emphasized the need to review the Rules of Procedure to ensure clarity of all provisions. It also underscored the need to completely fulfill and meet the criteria and directives of the policy making organs of the AU in relation with the Gender Policy. Though, in the mid-term election, while the women representation in the Bureau where doubled, only one woman was elected as a cluster head. However, this can be attributed to the low representation and participation of women within the African civil society organizations leadership in general and within ECOSOCC in particular. Currently, the Standing Committee is committed to work alongside the GA members, the secretariat, board of African CSOs and all stakeholders on increasing the effective participation of youth, people with special needs and women to absolutely achieve the AU Gender Policy and other policies within ECOSOCC. Beyond representation, ECOSOCC will also commit to ensuring a stronger gender equality and inclusion.

6. It is important to also note that the 2nd General Assembly is constituted of (83) members from (37) Member States which is a big achievement comparing to the 1st General Assembly which had only (60) members coming from (29) Member States. The Organ will continue working to improve and increase the involvement of the wider civil society in its activities as well as bringing more CSO's from the non-represented Member States.

III. ECOSOCC STRATEGIC PLAN AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

7. The organ saw the need for the development of a strategic plan that clearly outlines the priority areas of focus of the organ in the short and medium term. This strategic plan is linked with the AUC 10 year's implementation plan cycle. In the just concluded ECOSOCC GA, the General Assembly reviewed, approved and adopted the Strategic Plan and Communications Strategy of the organ and proposed Logo for the ECOSOCC. This is a significant milestone marking the first time in the history of the organ that a strategic plan had been developed to provide long-term guidance to its programs and activities. The Strategic Plan was developed on the basis of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, which sets out the vision of the African Union to build "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven and managed by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena". It also integrated the mandate and functions of the organ as were assigned under Article 5 and Article 22 of the Constitutive Act of the Union; and was the product of an in-house Working Group working on a voluntary basis. The group was headed by Mrs Fatima Karadja, former Deputy Presiding Officer and involved members of the General Assembly, civil society organizations outside ECOSOCC, the Strategic

Planning Department of the AUC as well as CIDO Department the secretariat of the Organ.

IV. FRAMEWORK FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL CHAPTERS

8. There is a clarion call for the establishment of ECOSOCC national chapters. In this regard, the General Assembly directed the Standing Committee to finalize the ECOSOCC national chapter framework with input from the General Assembly members for onward submission to the relevant policy organs for adoption. It is to be recalled that Executive Council Decisions EX.CL/Dec.869(XXVI) of 23-27 January 2015 and EX.CL/Dec.924(XXVI) of June 2015 directed the establishment of national ECOSOCC Chapters as a framework for accountability of elected members, as well as a conduit for disseminating information and mobilizing support for AU programs and activities. In this regard the General Assembly urged all members to prioritize the establishment of ECOSOCC national chapter in collaboration with their home member state governments. It was further recommended that ECOSOCC actively engage past members of the General Assembly as part of the effort to establish national chapters.

V. THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELEVANT POLICY AND OPERATIONAL DOCUMENTS

9. Policy documents or frameworks are essential operational tools that lay out long term goals and processes by creating structure through rules and procedures thereby making an institution function in a consistent and coherent manner. Looking at an institution of ECOSOCC repute, the importance of such policy and operational documents cannot be overemphasized. In order to ensure the effective and efficient operationalization of the policy organ, the General Assembly of the organ saw the need to put in place the relevant policy and operational documents to facilitate the smooth engagement of the organ. Various technical committees of the General Assembly were constituted to work on the following documents; the ECOSOCC national chapter framework, communication strategy, strategic plan and the branding aspect of the organ.

10. In addition, the General Assembly constituted a 6-member working group of General Assembly members to review broader amendments to the ECOSOCC Statutes and propose recommendations for additional amendments to be made to the same and further propose a draft for the consideration of the Office of the Legal Counsel of the Union. The same working group was also tasked with the review of the draft legal instruments that had been presented before the General Assembly; namely, the Code of Ethics, the Rules of Procedure for the Standing Committee and the Rules of Procedure for the Credentials Committee.

VI. THE RELOCATION OF ECOSOCC SECRETARIAT TO LUSAKA, ZAMBIA

11. The ECOSOCC General Assembly took note of the AU Assembly Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.4(XXVI) that welcomed the offer of the Republic of Zambia to host the ECOSOCC Secretariat. However, the Standing Committee is fully understand that as per the aforementioned decision, the AU Commission is mandated to undertake the appropriate evaluation mission and submit a detailed report to the next Ordinary Session of the Assembly through the Executive Council that defines all

relevant aspects particularly the legal, administrative, structural, logistical and financial implications of the relocation. The Standing Committee also took note that a comprehensive report is expected to be submitted to the next AU ordinary Summit.

VII. CONCLUSION AND APPRECIATION

12. The 2nd ECOSOCC GA has dedicated the first two years in establishing the key operational mechanisms for ECOSOCC, visible in the production of a strategic plan which also includes a proposed structure, the activation of the sectoral cluster committees, and finally in establishing a committee to examine the different legal documents and to propose the amendments and harmonization of the Statutes and the rules of procedure that guides the operation of the organ as well as address issues related to the relocation process.

13. Having laid the groundwork for its operation, in its second term, the 2nd GA will place emphasis on executing its technical functions as an advisory organ of the union.

14. Finally, we wish to acknowledge the work of the AU Commission with particular reference to ECOSOCC Secretariat in the Citizens and Diaspora Organizations Directorate (CIDO) under its current leadership for the work done since the inauguration of the 2nd ECOSOCC General Assembly. We also want to acknowledge the work of the outgoing ~~Presiding Officer and Standing Committee~~leadership of the organ for the work accomplished in the execution of the ECOSOCC mandate during their term of office. The unwavering support of the Office of the Chairperson of the Commission is well appreciated by the Bureau, Standing and Credentials Committee and the General Assembly of ECOSOCC.

DRAFT
DECISION ON THE REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC SOCIAL AND CULTURAL
COUNCIL (ECOSOCC)
Doc. EX.CL/1031(XXXI)

The Executive Council,

1. **TAKES NOTE** of the Report of ECOSOCC and the recommendations contained therein;
2. **CONGRATULATES** the newly elected leadership of ECOSOCC and **ENCOURAGES** the organ to effectively play its role and provide the expected advisory functions;
3. **COMMENDS** ECOSOCC for the activities undertaken during the period under review including the operationalization of Cluster Committees and the adoption of its Strategic Plan;
4. **REQUESTS** the Commission and Member States to implement the previous Decisions on ECOSOCC in line with the current reforms of the AU;
5. **COMMENDS** the Commission for its efforts that led to the successful outcomes of the 2nd Session of the ECOSOCC General Assembly including the mid-term elections.

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