

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COUNCIL

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Venue: Lusaka, Zambia

Launch of the Zambian Constitutional Booklet



The African Union Economic, Social and Cultural Council (AU-ECOSOCC) in partnership with the Centre for Human Rights (CHR), University of Pretoria and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung on May 5th, launched the Zambian Constitutional Literacy Booklet.

The aim of the event was to promote human rights and constitutional literacy in Africa, and specifically to introduce a simple-easy-reference booklet that summarises the Bill of Rights as espoused in the Zambian Constitution to the public. The booklet will improve constitutional literacy and enhance citizens' awareness of the constitutional provisions of their fundamental rights.

Speaking during the launch ceremony, Mr. Kyeretwie Osei, Head of Programs, ECOSOCC Secretariat, highlighted the role of ECOSOCC in promoting participation of Civil Society Organisations in the programs and initiatives of the African Union. He

emphasized the importance of the booklet to the advancement of the mandate of ECOSOCC, while calling on civil society to come on board and give their voices to the human rights issues, as they play an important role in the protection of human rights on the continent.

“We are looking to engage CSOs working in the areas of democracy, human rights and the rule of law on the continent on a more regular basis. I really can’t stress the importance and timeliness of this booklet, especially to the future of the work we do at ECOSOCC and working towards a continent built on good governance, human rights and social justice,” he said.

Dr. Pamela Sambo representing the acting Dean, University of Zambia School of Law expressed her pleasure with the partnership with CHR and the support they had received from other partners.

She emphasised that, “simplifying and explaining the constitution of Zambia in a simple booklet is the best defence against gross human rights violations as it brings the law closer to the people and in a language that they understand.”

Director, Rule of Law Program for Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa, Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Dr. Stefanie Rothenberger, acknowledged that the booklet was the best way to raise awareness among citizens, because it would enhance accountability and participation in governance affairs, emphasizing that the law would lose its essence if not interpreted, understood and valued in a language in which the people it was formulated for would understand.

The partners recounted how important and timely the launch of the booklet was to the advancement of human rights and highlighted the importance of accessibility of the law to citizens in protecting human rights in their respective countries.

In attendance were representatives from the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) Secretariat, Centre for Human Rights, Government Ministries in Zambia, Selected Embassies, Legal Institutions, Students and relevant CSOs.

About ECOSOCC

The Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) was established in July 2004 as an Advisory Organ composed of different social and professional groups of AU Member States. The mandate of ECOSOCC is to contribute, through advice, to the effective translation of the objectives, principles and policies of the African Union into concrete programmes, as well as the evaluation of these programmes.

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