

## **ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COUNCIL**

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**Venue: Lusaka, Zambia**

### **ECOSOCC convenes CSO dialogue on cross-cutting issues on women, youth, peace and security, and child protection in conflict situations**

The Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), in collaboration with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), has convened a forum for Civil Society Organisations (CSO) dialogue, knowledge sharing, and capacity building with experts on peace, security, and stability, with a focus on cross-cutting issues such as gender, youth, and the protection of children, indigenous, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and other vulnerable groups in conflict situations.

The 3-day Forum, brought together African Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) active in the field of peace and security as the primary participant group. Also attending the forum are members of ECOSOCC's General Assembly.

Opening the meeting, Mr. William Carew, Head of ECOSOCC Secretariat said ECOSOCC is actively engaged in facilitating CSO participation in efforts to promote peace, security and stability in Africa, allowing African CSOs to leverage the provided platform to lead impactful initiatives within their communities to supplement national, regional, and continental endeavours.

ECOSOCC's initiative to strengthen CSOs' capacity in this thematic area is guided by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) Protocol, as well as the Livingstone Formula and the Maseru Conclusions, all of which are important components of the African Union.

The Livingstone Formula and Maseru Frameworks, emphasise the importance of strengthening CSOs' ability to contribute to peace, security, and stability through conflict prevention, management, resolution, mediation, peacekeeping, and post-conflict reconstruction and development effectively encouraging CSOs to actively participate in the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

Mr. Carew further acknowledged- in commemoration of Africa Youth Day (which falls on November 1<sup>st</sup>)- the active participation of youth in AU and ECOSOCC initiatives.

“Young people, by virtue of their energy, vibe and adaptability, gravitate to the forefront of creating new solutions to old problems, and African governments must leverage that natural affinity through building their capacity and providing spaces for them to thrive,” he said.

Mr. Raymond Kitevu, Conflict Early Warning Expert - Governance, Peace and Security of COMESA acknowledged the strong partnership between ECOSOCC and COMESA within the APSA Framework in the engagement of CSOs.

He iterated the general consensus that CSOs need to complement their strengths and competencies to sustainably and comprehensively address conflicts in Africa.

“While national governments have the primary responsibility to ensure peace and security within their borders, CSOs also have a very important role to play, particularly being close to the grassroots levels where most intra-state conflicts start and take place,” Mr. Kitevu said.

At the end of the forum, an outcome document comprising positive key messages and recommendations on how to approach and incorporate cross-cutting issues into the AU's peace and security agenda, will be produced and disseminated.

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**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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