

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COUNCIL

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ECOSOCC convenes annual CSO meeting on the state of peace and security in Africa: Sharing experiences and lessons learned

The Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), from November 16-18, held an African Civil Society Organizations' (CSOs) meeting on the sharing of experiences and lessons learnt in the field of peace and security; and to assess the progress and challenges in governance, peace and security interventions.

The meeting, held in collaboration with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the AU on the European Union (EU) Support Programme on the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA-IV), converged African CSOs active in the field of peace, security and governance from all 5 regions of the Continent as the primary participant group. Also attending the meeting were representatives from RECs, RMs, the African Union Commission (AUC) and members of ECOSOCC's General Assembly (GA).

Speaking during the opening ceremony, Ambassador Yabesh Monari, Director for Africa and AU Directorate, Kenyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said CSOs had a central role to play in addressing the key drivers of conflict, and reminded them that the APSA remained the best tool for promoting peace and security on the continent, in an integrated approach.

ECOSOCC Presiding Officer, Mr. Denise Kodhe, emphasized that the future and stability of Africa depended on Africans.

Furthermore, "CSOs have a grassroots-level experience of peace and security in Africa. We look forward to their inputs, which will give an apt picture of the state of peace and security in Africa by the end of the meeting," he said.

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 AU peace and security frameworks.

The Livingstone Formula and Maseru Conclusions, emphasize 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 APSA.

Mr. William Carew, Head of ECOSOCC Secretariat, highlighted that the meeting would build CSOs' capacity in the field of peace and security through experience sharing and lessons learnt, and would ultimately provide inputs into the policies and programs of the AU.

“The meeting will also provide an opportunity for CSOs to assess the progress and challenges in governance, peace and security interventions and their engagement with the AU and RECs/RMs. This is an institutional mechanism and we call upon you as CSOs to take advantage of this and play a pivotal role in contributing to peace, security and stability of this continent,” said Mr. Carew.

Adding to that, Mr. Raymond Kitevu, Conflict Early Warning Expert, Governance, Peace and Security of COMESA, told participants the meeting would identify key challenges faced by civil society, and how they could be supported.

Ambassador George Kwanya, Kenya's Deputy Permanent Representative to the African Union also attended the meeting and reminded CSOs of the cardinal role they play in peace and security efforts.

ECOSOCC and the RECs/RMs recommitted to improving collaboration with CSOs in implementing the Livingstone Formula/Maseru Conclusions, including giving visibility to CSOs in the work of the mechanisms. The meeting also identified improved avenues for participation of civil society in the implementation of the Livingstone Formula and other policy development and implementation processes of AU and RECs/RMs.

An outcome document on recommendations for a more feasible pattern of interaction and cooperation between the AU, RECs/RMs, and CSOs in achieving sustainable peace and security in Africa will be disseminated.

For media inquiries, please contact:

Ms. Carol Jilombo | Senior Communications Officer | AU ECOSOCC Secretariat,
Lusaka, Zambia

E-mail: Jilomboc@africa-union.org

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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For further information, please contact:

Carol Jilombo, Senior Communications Officer | ECOSOCC Secretariat | African Union Commission
| E-mail: Jilomboc@africa-union.org | Lusaka, Zambia