

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COUNCIL (ECOSOCC)

Press Release No: 046/2023

Date: August 10th, 2023

Venue: Accra, Ghana

ECOSOCC formalises Ghana National Chapter

The African Union Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), with support from Expertise France, held an awareness raising and popularization workshop to formalize the establishment of National ECOSOCC Chapters and in particular, the Ghana National Chapter. The workshop, held on August 9-10, 2023 in Accra, Ghana, amplified the collaboration between Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the African Union (AU) by formalizing National ECOSOCC Chapters and building capacities in governance, democracy, and human rights.

ECOSOCC was established in 2004 to provide a platform for civil society to contribute to the work of the AU, and actively engages civil society in the processes and work of the AU, with a focus on Africa's integration and development. The introduction of National ECOSOCC Chapters aims to further enhance the engagement and collaboration between ECOSOCC, the AU, and CSOs across member states.

Following continent-wide consultations in 2022, the draft framework for National Chapters was validated at the 4th Permanent General Assembly of ECOSOCC in December 2022, Nairobi, Kenya. In February 2023, the AU officially endorsed the National ECOSOCC Chapters Framework, aiming to structurally guide the establishment of National Chapters across member states. The framework ensures robust CSO support for the AU's endeavors at the national level, with ECOSOCC actively implementing measures to set it into motion.

In light of these developments, ECOSOCC has started to convene awareness raising and popularization workshops strategically designed to target CSOs with mandates in governance, democracy, and human rights. Its objectives include introducing participants to the new National Chapters frameworks, fostering deeper understanding of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (ACDEG), and facilitating engagement with AU Organs. The workshops also facilitate interaction with the AGA Secretariat, encouraging a holistic approach that maximizes collaboration.

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COUNCIL (ECOSOCC)

The central objective of the workshop in Ghana was to structurally formalize the establishment of the interim national chapter in the country, bolstering interaction and collaboration with both the AU and ECOSOCC.

Mr. William Carew, Head of ECOSOCC Secretariat, speaking at the opening of the workshop, emphasized the significance of formalizing the National Chapter for Ghana.

"The ECOSOCC National Chapter for Ghana will play a critical role in ensuring that the voices of the people and civil society are heard and incorporated into the AU's policies and programs," he said.

He further expressed the hope that the operationalization of the National Chapter would strengthen the partnership between the AU and CSOs in Ghana.

Officially opening the workshop, Mr. Wilson Adja-Kwesi, Deputy Director of Regional Integration in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, Ghana, speaking on behalf of the Foreign Affairs Minister Ms. Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, said the workshop exemplified a critical bridge that ECOSOCC had built between CSOs and the AU.

"The journey towards a more integrated and prosperous Africa demands the active involvement of all stakeholders, especially our civil society partners. The Ghana Interim National Chapter of ECOSOCC stands as a beacon of this engagement, bringing together CSOs tirelessly working for governance, democracy, human rights, and gender equality."

Mr. Wilson Adja-Kwesi further highlighted, "The formalization and operationalization of the ECOSOCC National Chapters represents a significant stride in amplifying the voices of CSOs across the African continent. The newly endorsed National Chapters Framework provides a structured mechanism, enabling CSOs to engage comprehensively with the African Union's work, thereby fostering growth and development across our continent. This workshop serves as a pivotal opportunity for CSOs in Ghana to acquaint themselves with the framework, explore its potential, and chart a course aligning national priorities with the overarching aspirations of the African Union."

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COUNCIL (ECOSOCC)

Ambassador Salah Hammad, Head of the AUC Secretariat of the African Governance Architecture (AGA), commended the formalization and operationalization of the ECOSOCC National Chapters, in Ghana as it would play a crucial role in providing a platform that resonates with the values of inclusivity, participatory governance, and collaborative development.

Representative of Expertise France, Ms. Priscilla Ankut said African citizens had been yearning to draw close to the AU and to be heard. She emphasised that there was no better way for the African citizenry to be heard than through ECOSOCC and reiterated Expertise France's commitment to supporting the Organ.

The workshop stands as a testament to the dedication of all stakeholders involved in the pursuit of a more integrated, prosperous, and united Africa.

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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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