



**ECOSOCC**  
Economic Social & Cultural Council

**The Voice of the  
African Citizenry**

# ECOSOCC bulletin

2023 End of Year  
**Newsletter**

An Organ of the  
**African Union**



**Economic Social & Cultural Council**

8658 Kudu Road, Kabulonga - Lusaka, Zambia

Phone: + (260) 211429405

[ecosocc.au.int](http://ecosocc.au.int)





**Dear Friends,**

Happy Holidays and Happy 2024! We hope this message finds you well as we approach the end of a transformative year. It is with a renewed feeling of optimism that I am penning these words today. In December 2022, the 4th Permanent General Assembly made the African citizenry proud by electing its leadership in the most peaceful and consensual manner as enshrined in the AU values and principles. Bouncing on this, we started year 2023 with a new leadership injecting new dynamics but also ensuring a symbiotic working relationship with the Secretariat.

As we bid farewell to 2023, the ECOSOCC team is thrilled to share with you the highlights of the year, showcasing our commitment to empowering civil society for peace, enhancing democratic processes, and fostering collaboration on both continental and global fronts.

2024 comes with new challenges but also opportunities for us to aim and achieve higher. ECOSOCC looks forward to rolling out the National Chapters in all AU Member States. 2024 will also be marked with the celebrations of the 20 years of the establishment of ECOSOCC, thus all throughout the year there will be commemorations around ECOSOCC@20. The Secretariat is also bringing forth a plethora of innovative strategies; amongst which is the GA Monthly Interface (GAMI) meeting where General Assembly members can interact directly with the Secretariat.

As we celebrate the achievements of 2023, we look forward to the opportunities and challenges that 2024 will bring. The future looks very bright, and with gratitude, we express our sincere thanks for your continued support.

With love and gratitude,

**William Carew and the ECOSOCC Team**



### **Empowering Civil Society for Peace: Initiatives and Collaborations by AU-ECOSOCC under the EU APSA IV Program**

On April 20, 2023, the African Union Economic, Social, and Cultural Council (AU-ECOSOCC) hosted an interface meeting in Nairobi, Kenya. The meeting aimed to foster dialogue and collaboration between the ECOSOCC Peace and Security Cluster, the African Union Commission (AUC), RECs/RMs, and selected Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) on African peace and security issues. Specifically, the focus was on enhancing civil society participation in the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), with a strong emphasis on civil society engagement as a key objective of the European Union Support Program to the African Peace and Security Architecture (EU APSA IV).

The meeting laid the foundation for developing a preliminary roadmap for cooperation between ECOSOCC, the Peace and Security Council (PSC), the African Union Commission (AUC), and RECs/RMs and drafting a joint work plan for actions and activities. The areas of focus for the ECOSOCC Peace and Security Cluster include conflict prevention, management, resolution, peacebuilding, terrorism prevention, security reforms, and addressing issues like drug and arms trafficking.

In addition to the interface meeting, ECOSOCC hosted a two-day consultative workshop from 21 to 22 April, 2023, in Nairobi, Kenya.

The workshop was designed to create a consolidated database of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working in the fields of peace and security. The objective was to enhance the institutional, human, and operational capacities of African civil society, with a focus on governance, peace, and security issues.

The database development is aligned with AU Agenda 2063's Aspiration 4, which envisions a peaceful and fully functional African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The EU APSA IV Program has been pivotal in accelerating coordination and partnership within APSA, including CSOs, to address emerging security challenges.

The participants of the workshop recognized that a challenge facing CSOs in Africa is the lack of reliable and up-to-date information about the sector. Mr. William Carew, Head of the ECOSOCC Secretariat, emphasized the need for such a database to foster collaboration, coordination, accountability, and transparency among CSOs. The database would also serve as a resource for governments, donors, and other stakeholders.

The ECOSOCC Peace and Security Cluster's efforts, in partnership with the EU APSA IV Program, aim to empower CSOs to play a more active role in maintaining peace and security in Africa.

Building on the above momentum, ECOSOCC, in collaboration with the African Union's Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) department and COMESA, convened a coordination meeting with civil society organizations (CSOs) to enhance their engagement in the implementation of the European Union Fourth African Peace and Security Architecture (EU APSA IV) Program on July 6-8, 2023.

[Click here to Read more](#)





### **A Step Towards Change: ECOSOCC holds Stakeholder Dialogue on the 2023 General Elections in Sierra Leone and awareness on ECOSOCC National Chapters**

The African Union's Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) from May 8-10, 2023 held a stakeholders' dialogue on the June 24th General Elections in Sierra Leone as well as an awareness program on ECOSOCC National Chapters.

In line with its mandate to promote and defend the culture of good governance, democratic principles and institutions, popular participation, human rights and freedoms as well as to ensure the implementation of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG), ECOSOCC, with the support of the European Union, through Expertise France held the Stakeholder's Dialogue on the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Sierra Leone.

ECOSOCC further partnered with the Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion (ICPNC), the ECOSOCC National Chapter and Campaign for Human Rights and Development International (CHRD) to hold a stakeholders' dialogue in preparedness to deliver a free fair and incident-free election for the people of Sierra Leone.

Elections are increasingly becoming sources of tension and mistrust in much of Africa leading to an increasing lack of confidence in the elections processes, the judiciary, and other election management bodies. The belief that politics is a must-win game, and the winner takes all despite the implications of citizens'

and institutions' actions on the moral and social fabric of society is a trend that has come to the fore in recent years.

Some of the meeting recommendations include: the election date was approved a year earlier to allow for political parties to prepare for the election; legislation for electoral reforms were passed; the judiciary was more responsive to electoral disputes; a multi-stakeholder elections steering committee was formed; ensured the electoral system-the Proportional Representation - was adopted for the conduct of elections in order to minimise tension, ensure greater representation of vulnerable groups as well as minimise the cost (by obviating the need for bye-elections and violent campaigns); and the Government had taken the lead in election financing.

The Executive Council of the AU tasked ECOSOCC to establish National ECOSOCC Chapters (National Chapters) through the ECOSOCC National Chapters Framework. In 2022, as directed by the Member States, ECOSOCC conducted continent-wide consultations on the National Chapters and the draft framework was validated at the 4th Permanent General Assembly of ECOSOCC in December 2022. Subsequently, in February 2023, the AU adopted the National ECOSOCC Chapters Framework to structurally guide the establishment of National Chapters in member states and to further guide their work in providing CSO support to the AU's national-level work. ECOSOCC has thus initiated the implementation of measures to operationalize the Framework in member states. The framework is expected to be a mechanism for the accountability of elected members, serve as a conduit for the dissemination of information about the work and progress of the AU to civil society in each member state and to enable capacity-building and training of CSOs in member states.

On May 10th, the awareness program on ECOSOCC National Chapters to popularise the establishment of interim national chapters and to enhance their engagement and collaboration with ECOSOCC, kicked off.



### **Forging Stronger Ties: ECOSOCC and EESC hold the eighth meeting of the Africa-European Union Economic and Social Stakeholders' Network**

On 28-29 June 2023, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in partnership with the African Union Economic, Social and Cultural Council (AU ECOSOCC) hosted the eighth meeting of the Africa-European Union Economic and Social Stakeholders' Network. In the framework of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES), the EESC organises regular consultations to convey the views of organised civil society to the partnership between the AU and the European Union (EU) in the form of Meetings of the African-EU Economic and Social Stakeholders' Network.

ECOSOCC was represented by Presiding Officer, Khalid Boudali, Head of Secretariat, William Carew and Head of Programs, Kyeretwie Osei. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the Caribbean and Pacific regions, members of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee.

The representatives of African and EU economic and social stakeholders met to discuss the post-Cotonou agreement and the involvement of economic and social partners; water and nutrition and critical raw materials.

The meeting noted with deep concern, the delay in signing the post-Cotonou agreement and urgently called on the Council of the EU to swiftly find a solution to the deadlock hindering the signing of the agreement. The meeting recognized the importance of stakeholders' participation in the new Partnership Agreement between the EU

and the OACPS and called for an inclusive definition of stakeholders, covering all sectors of civil society, economic actors and social partners and called for a swift implementation of the provisions of the agreement related to stakeholder engagement, once the new agreement is in place.

The meeting supported the recommendations on the role of civil society made in the statement adopted by the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee in Porto in March 2021, including that four institutional mechanisms should be set up, namely: one related to the common foundation that would work as an "umbrella" for the other mechanisms; a second one directed towards Africa and underpinned by the EU-Africa Protocol; a third one targeting the Caribbean and built up on the EU-Caribbean Protocol; and a fourth one directed towards the Pacific and underpinned by the EU-Pacific Protocol.

The meeting further recalled the importance of involving civil society and social partners, in all agreements between the EU and AU/ACP countries (including trade agreements, such as Economic Partnership Agreements and Sustainable Investment Facilitation Agreements).

On Water and Nutrition, the meeting underlined the crucial relationship between water sustainability and food security and noted that as a transversal resource, freshwater was also essential to a wide range of economic activities, including agriculture, fisheries, industries, tourism, energy and transport.

On critical raw materials, the meeting underlined the importance of fostering a mutually beneficial partnership in addressing the sustainable production, extraction and trade of critical raw materials, within the scope of national and regional economic plans. It called on the EU and AU to invest in research, development, and innovation both in the EU and AU to address critical raw material challenges and to enhance their collaboration in such projects, notably through knowledge sharing, technical assistance and capacity building, to foster sustainable development and promote local value addition in supply chains.



### **Harnessing Digital Power: ECOSOCC Citizens' Forum shapes the future of democracy and digital governance in Africa; urges civil society to tap into the potential of digital technologies.**

Africa's Civil Society Organisations have been urged to take advantage of the potential of digital technologies to achieve continental aspirations and goals, and in particular, democracy.

Officially opening the Economic Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC)'s 2nd Annual Citizens Forum, Kenya's State Department for Information, Communications and Technology and Digital Economy, Principal Secretary, Eng. John Tanui said digital governance could promote citizen engagement, enabling them to participate effectively in decision-making processes that impact their lives.

The highly anticipated Second Edition of the annual Citizens' Forum themed 'Democracy and Digital Governance in Africa,' held from July 10th to July 11th, 2023, was a defining moment in the continent's quest to achieve democracy and digital governance. The forum took place on the side-lines of the 5th Mid-Year Coordination Meeting (MYCM) of the Assembly of the African Union.

The forum cultivated a collaborative and inclusive environment, providing a platform for substantive and thought-provoking discussions on the multifaceted aspects of democracy and digital governance in the African context. Specifically, it provided an unparalleled avenue for African CSOs and other stakeholders to lend their voices and expertise to the dialogue on democracy and digital governance in Africa.

By embracing holistic participation from diverse stakeholders, the forum not only reinforced its significance, but also nurtured a multi-dimensional dialogue that embodied the values of inclusivity and collaboration.

At the core of the forum's ambitions lay the primary objective of promoting citizen engagement within the overarching continental discourse on the nexus between democracy and digital governance. It achieved this by employing a multifaceted approach that entailed an in-depth examination of the issues as well as the identification of existing continental and international frameworks designed to improve democracy and digital governance. By providing this inclusive space, the forum empowered civil society representatives to assert their voices and articulate their perspectives and concerns. This, in turn, enabled a critical analysis of the intricate challenges, opportunities, and dynamics inherent in the realms of democracy and digital governance. As such, the discussions covered a wide range of topics, including misinformation, propaganda, illicit financial flows, trade and digital governance, bridging the digital divide, youth participation in shaping digital democracy, privacy and security, as well as digital literacy.

ECOSOCC's Citizens' Forum is designed to provide a unique opportunity for African civil society to pronounce itself on the ongoing and pressing issues in Africa that threaten democracy and citizen participation.

The Forum's participation was drawn from CSOs from all six regions of the continent (including the diaspora) working in relevant fields including youth and women's groups, advocacy groups, community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations, and faith-based organisations; esteemed figures from various sectors, including officials from the AUC, AU member states, UN agencies, development partner institutions, media representatives and academia.

A policy statement and a civil society program of action will be issued and circulated to all AU member states.

An Organ of the



## Charting a New Course: Barbados PM Joins ECOSOCC's 2023 Global Africa Forum for Historic Reconciliation

The Economic, Social, and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) convened the 2023 Global Africa People-to-People forum on 21 July 2023. In what has become an annual event following a similar forum held in July 2022, the event was convened with support from Caribbean Pan African Network (CPAN), Emancipation Support Committee of Trinidad and Tobago (ESCTT) and Reform Initiatives.

The Global Africa People to People Forum is an initiative that aims to bring people from diverse backgrounds and regions within Africa and the African diaspora to exchange ideas, share experiences, and foster collaboration. This year's forum was convened under the theme, "Propelling Major Pan-African Breakthroughs in 2023."

Held virtually via Zoom, the 2023 Forum advanced the collective interests of people of African heritage, while fostering strategic partnerships and promoting cross-cultural exchanges. The forum was also a platform for youth to come up with African-led solutions to the complex challenges, problems and crises confronting the African continent and its diaspora. The forum was convened to address the partnership between the African Export/Import Bank (Afreximbank) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Reparations Campaign, the First Africa-CARICOM Summit, the United Nations' Permanent Forum for People of African Descent and the issues around Haiti.

The forum had high-level participation from the Caribbean region and across Africa including, H.E Mia Amor Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados; H.E Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of St. Vincent & Grenadines; H.E Epsy Campbell Bar, Chairperson and Central America Representative of Costa Rica; Dr Carla Barnett, Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretary General, Mr Khalid Boudali ECOSOCC Presiding Officer; Dr Kafra Kambo, Coordinator, Caribbean Pan-African Network (CPAN), Ambassador David Commissiong Chairperson of CPAN and Mr. William Carew, Head of the ECOSOC Secretariat.

The Global Africa People to People Forum focuses on addressing common challenges and finding innovative solutions to promote sustainable development, social cohesion, and cultural exchange among African communities worldwide. This year's forum further drew participation from youth across Africa and the Caribbean region.

ECOSOCC and the Global Africa People to People Forum play significant roles in promoting inclusivity, dialogue, and cooperation among diverse stakeholders within Africa and its diaspora. These efforts contribute to shaping policies and initiatives that address the continent's various social, economic, and cultural issues while fostering a sense of unity and solidarity among its constituents.



### **Strengthening Civil Society Engagement and Building Stronger Communities: ECOSOCC continues awareness raising of National Chapters in Ghana and Tanzania**

The African Union Economic, Social, and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) has taken significant steps to empower Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) by raising awareness of National ECOSOCC Chapters in Ghana and Tanzania, with the support of Expertise France. The ECOSOCC National Chapters aim to enhance engagement between CSOs and the African Union (AU) and bolster capacities in governance, democracy, and human rights.

In Accra, Ghana, a workshop was held to enhance local CSOs knowledge about the National Chapter Framework. The workshop underscored the significance of the Ghana CSOs in ensuring that the voices of the people and civil society are heard and incorporated into the AU's policies and programs.

in Tanzania, a similar awareness and popularization workshop was conducted targeting CSOs forming part of the Interim Tanzania ECOSOCC National Chapter. The workshop aligned with the Tanzanian Government's commitment to fostering engagement with CSOs and operationalizing the ECOSOCC National Chapter for Tanzania, a move seen as pivotal for a brighter Africa.

These initiatives reflect ECOSOCC's mission, established in 2004, to provide a platform for CSOs to contribute to the work of the AU and actively participate in the AU's processes and endeavors. The introduction of National ECOSOCC Chapters aims to strengthen this collaboration and engagement across member states.

These workshops target CSOs focusing on governance, democracy, and human rights. Their objectives include introducing participants to the new ECOSOCC National Chapter frameworks, deepening their understanding of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (ACDEG), and facilitating engagement with AU Organs. This holistic approach seeks to maximize collaboration and strengthen the partnership between CSOs and the AU.

In summary, these ECOSOCC initiatives represent a collaborative effort among stakeholders to enhance CSO engagement with the AU. They aim to bring civil society voices to the forefront, fostering inclusivity, participatory governance, and collaborative development.





### **ECOSOCC's Game-Changing Initiative: Collaborating with Africa Union Peace and Security Council Secretariat to Build a CSO Database for Enhanced Security.**

The African Union (AU) Economic, Social, and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) held consultations with the AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC) Secretariat from September 7-8th, on the Civil Society Organizations (CSO) Database on the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and to develop an implementation matrix.

The meeting symbolized significant progress in empowering CSOs to exert a more influential role in shaping the trajectory of Africa's future and integrating their expertise into the operational machinery of the PSC.

The consultations yielded favourable results, which included a pre-validated CSO Database and a continental online platform and fostering a cohesive collaborative relationship between ECOSOCC and the PSC Secretariat. During the meeting, the recently developed CSO database of CSOs operating in the peace and security sector underwent technical assessment and received feedback from the PSC Secretariat, followed by the delineation of subsequent implementation steps.

Furthermore, through extensive deliberations, the meeting resulted in a detailed implementation matrix and meeting schedule for the coming year, with both the PSC and ECOSOCC committed to ensuring its effective execution.

The engagement matrix, built upon the identification of seven collaboration areas, will lead to more informed decision-making within the PSC in future interactions. As such, this will bolster the impact and effectiveness of CSO insights in shaping PSC decisions and policy considerations.

The consultation had active participation from key stakeholders, including the ECOSOCC Peace and Security Cluster and Political Affairs Cluster Chairs, greatly enhancing the quality of discussions and outcomes. Given the complex nature of emerging security issues in Africa, including Unconstitutional Changes of Government (UCG), their involvement was crucial.

The meeting represented significant milestones in Africa's continued journey toward achieving peace, security, and inclusive governance. It underscored the continent's commitment to harnessing the influence of Civil Society Organizations to sculpt a brighter future for all Africans and highlight the pivotal role played by the CSO database in facilitating improved coordination and communication among CSOs, the AU, and APSA stakeholders, thereby offering tangible support to peace and security efforts in Africa.



### **A Milestone in Integration: ECOSOCC concludes its national dialogue series on African Union's Free Movement Initiative.**

The African Union Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) convened the third and final multi-stakeholder national dialogue series of the year on the Free Movement Protocol (FMP), from 12-13 September 2023.

The third edition hosted with the support of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Government, follows successful national dialogue series convened in March 2023 in Lusaka, Zambia and May 2023 in Port Louis, Mauritius. In 2022, ECOSOCC held regional Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) sensitization forums on the FMP in Ghana, Mozambique, and Morocco.

Increased mass migration and displacement within the African continent has spurred several policy frameworks to address and manage it. The African Union in particular has established two key policy frameworks to address, manage, and promote migration and mobility within the continent: the FMP and the Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA).

Eliminating these barriers translates to economic

growth on the continent as well as improved migration procedures for African citizens.

The FMP aims to curb and eventually eliminate barriers to regional border migration (to work, visit, trade, live, etc.) within the continent.

Unfortunately, despite the existence of migration policy frameworks, policy uptake among AU member states and their popularization within African civil society remains low and has not achieved the desired impact. ECOSOCC has taken up the mantle to popularise the frameworks.

Apart from the CSOs and policymakers that participated during the National Dialogue Series, a side-event drew participation from the Editors Forum. The editors were taken through a discussion on the Free Movement Protocol, the AfCFTA and the Agenda 2063.

The dialogue concluded with a roadmap/advocacy plan on the Free Movement Protocol. The plan will be consolidated with other Action Plans from other allotments of the National Dialogue Series to be convened on the continent so that it feeds into policy drafts from ECOSOCC.

The National Dialogue Series sets the stage for a proposed inaugural Parliamentary Forum on the FMP scheduled for 2024.





**Produced by the African Union - Economic Social & Cultural Council**

[ecosocc@africa-union.org](mailto:ecosocc@africa-union.org) | [ecosocc.au.int](http://ecosocc.au.int)  
8658 Kudu Road, Kabulonga - Lusaka, Zambia

For inquiries and comments please contact : Senior Communications Officer | Editor:  
Carol Jilombo | Email: [Jilomboc@africa-union.org](mailto:Jilomboc@africa-union.org)