

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COUNCIL (ECOSOCC)

Press Release No: 005/2024
Venue: Lusaka, Zambia

Date: April 1st 2024

ECOSOCC organizes continental dialogue on the upcoming Summit of the Future

One of the much-awaited global events for this year is undoubtedly the Summit of the Future (SOTF) scheduled in September 2024. SOTF is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to enhance cooperation on critical challenges and address gaps in global governance, reaffirm existing commitments including to the Sustainable Development Goals and the United Nations Charter, and move towards a reinvigorated multilateral system that is better positioned to positively impact people's lives.

To ensure that diverse civil society perspectives are engaged in the preparatory process of SOTF 24 and the preceding 2023 SOTF Ministerial Forum to strengthen and revitalize multilateralism, the Global Futures Forum (GFF) led by the Coalition for the UN We Need (C4UN) in partnership with the African Union's Economic Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) took place in March 2023, in New York. As an Advisory Organ of the African Union, ECOSOCC undertook a number of civil society consultations to provide feedback and inputs on the 'Pact of the Future' including the virtual Town-Hall event (June 2023) culminating in the Continental Dialogue on the Summit of the Future which took place on 28th March 2024.

The Continental Dialogue drew the participation of a panel of experts, the ECOSOCC leadership and diverse African CSOs; it was organized with the aim of sharing information and raising awareness on the Summit of the Future to be held in New York in September and the Civil Society Conference that will be held in Nairobi in May, 2024.

The Summit of the Future is intended to advance ideas for governance arrangements in areas of international concern, and potentially others where arrangements are emerging or require updating.

UN member states will be asked to endorse a 'Pact for the Future,' a blueprint for international cooperation in the twenty-first century.

In his opening remarks, ECOSOCC's Presiding Officer, Khalid Boudali emphasized the importance of CSOs in the consultative process on SOTF24.

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“ECOSOCC's mandate promotes inclusive dialogue with a range of non-state actors in issues that push for good governance. Let us use the moment to bring Afrocentric insights in today's dialogue. I extend gratitude for your unwavering commitment towards efforts that pursue peace and security on the continent and the world over,” he said.

Ms. Carole Agengo, Co-Chair of the United Nations' Civil Society Conference in Support of the Summit of the Future, echoed Mr. Boudali's sentiments on the role of CSOs in shaping the future.

“Since 1947, 68 UN-supported civil society conferences have resulted in successful outcomes. As a result of previous interactions with civil society organizations, we look forward to the 2024 UN Civil Society Conference to be held in Nairobi in May 2024, in support of the Summit of the Future,” she said.

Ms Agengo also expressed her delight at the Summit of the Future happening in the same year that ECOSOCC is celebrating its 20th Anniversary.

A panel of experts during the webinar discussed and gave insights from their technical expertise working in relevant sectors feeding into the Summit of the Future.

Ms. Juliet Okeke Chinemelu, a Member of ECOSOCC's 4th Permanent General Assembly presented on the topic, 'The Struggle for Women's Rights; A Call for Stiffer Intervention.'

"Only 22.6% of women globally participate in the workforce, compared to 77.4% of men and women earn approximately 63% of what men earn for similar work. Women continue to face disparities in education, employment, political representation, and access to healthcare. 52% of women in Africa who experience intimate partner violence seek help or report it. There is a need to get stiffer interventions that accord women all the rights that statistics has shown that they are losing out on currently," she stated.

Dr. Mariama Williams, Senior Adviser at the Global Afro Descendant Climate Justice Collaborative presented on the topic, 'Reflection on Climate Justice for Africa on the Pact for the Future.'

“The use of natural resources must protect the people around it. Climate change is Africa's biggest existential threat. The way wars and conflicts keep creating emissions on the continent and the world, is concerning. We need to hold our governance

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structures accountable in this regard. It has also been observed that climate change has also compelled migration across the world," she explained.

Dr. June Soomer, Chair Designate of the United Nations' Permanent Forum on People of African Descent tackled the topic, 'Towards a Global Financial System that Works for Africa.'

"The summit of the future must look to the past. Let's create financial sustainability within the continent. We must also have more global financing to deal with climate changes. We should marry Agenda 2063 with the African Financial System but let us not forget the 6th region (diaspora) in this drive towards building financial resilience and climate justice," she said.

Mr. Desire Assogbavi, Francophone Africa Director at ONE Campaign made a presentation on the Role of Africa in the Pact for the Future.

"Africa brings demography and human resource. The global community benefits a lot from collaborating with African innovators. Africa is rich with a lot of resources that with proper management will enrich the continent greatly. As a suggestion, we might need a robust accountability mechanism on what needs to be done and which particular entity would do it in this regard," he emphasized.

In closing, ECOSOCC's Head of Secretariat, William Carew said, "ECOSOCC has engaged in raising awareness about the Summit of the Future and is also carrying out consultations to consolidate African voices to ensure that African proposals and insights are reflected in the ongoing negotiations leading to the Summit and in the Pact for the Future."

He promised that ECOSOCC would continue to share more information on the Summit of the Future, the UN Civil Society Conference and all the activities around ECOSOCC's 20th Year Anniversary commemoration.

During the online event, participants had a chance to engage the panel of experts in a question and answer session. The Continental Dialogue also gave a chance to participants to ask questions on financing, climate justice and the Pact of the Future.



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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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