

# REPORT OF MEETING OF THE 1<sup>ST</sup> INTER-DEPARTMENTAL TASK FORCE ON THE LAUNCHING OF THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COUNCIL (ECOSOCC)

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Third Ordinary Session of the Summit held in Addis Ababa in July 2004, adopted the Statutes of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), including Transitional Provisions on an interim mechanism under which the Commission has launched the process for launching ECOSOCC. In order to ensure that the Commission is fully engaged with the process, the Bureau of the Chairperson established an Inter-Departmental Task Force to steer this process, with the leadership of the CSSDCA Unit **that hosts the Secretariat of ECOSOCC and is responsible for AU-Civil Society relations.** The Taskforce held its 1<sup>st</sup> meeting on 3 November 2004 in the Conference hall of the CMC at 10 am, and was chaired by Dr. Jinmi Adisa, Senior Coordinator of the CSSDCA.

## ATTENDANCE

2. The following were in attendance.

| No. | Name                        | Department   |
|-----|-----------------------------|--|
|     | Dr. Jinmi Adisa             | CSSDCA Unit  |
| 1.  | Prof. Couaovi A. L. Johnson | Human Resources Science and Technology Directorate                   |
| 2.  | Dr. Esseghairi Kamel        | Social Affairs Department  |
| 3.  | Mr. M. Mustoofa             | Conference Services Directorate                                      |
| 4.  | Dr. Salif Sall              | Strategic Policy, Planning and Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate |
| 5.  | Dr. Dia Mamadou             | Peace and Security Department  |
| 6.  | Mr. M. T. Khaldi            | Protocol Services  |
| 7.  | Mr. D.T. Orjiako            | Communication and Information Unit                                   |
| 8.  | Mrs. Yetunde Teriba         | WGDD   |
| 9.  | Ms. Christiane Yanrou       | Website  |
| 10. | Ms. Genevieve Malimu        | Protocol Services  |
| 11. | Mrs. Alice Mungwa           | CSSDCA Unit  |

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## **AGENDA**

3. The Agenda of the meeting was as follows:
  - i. Date and Venue of the meeting
  - ii. Finalization of the Interim Draft Rules of Procedure
  - iii. List of CSO representatives
  - iv. List of observers, guest and dignitaries
  - v. Invitations
  - vi. Documentation
  - vii. Protocol Needs and requirements
  - viii. Communications Profiles
  - ix. Role and Involvement of Member States
  - x. Production of ECOSOCC paraphernalia and memorabilia
  - xi. Diaspora Involvement
  - xii. Draft Budget Estimates

## **DELIBERATIONS AND OUTCOMES**

4. All the items on the agenda were considered. Discussions on some of the items were guided by draft documents presented by the CSSDCA Unit. Various departments of the Commission were represented with participation of a significant number of departmental heads, lending profound insight and a high quality to the deliberations. The outcomes of the meeting were as follows:

## **DATE AND VENUE OF THE MEETING TO LAUNCH ECOSOCC**

5. The meeting agreed that under the Transitional Provisions for the launching of ECOSOCC, the Commission should follow a two-tier process. The 1<sup>st</sup> step would be to convene a general civil society Conference of about 350 participants that would, amongst other things, elect CSO representatives of the Interim ECOSOCC. It was agreed that this meeting would precede the 6<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Executive Council- Mid-term Session scheduled for the 27-28 2005 in Abuja, Nigeria. The second step would then be to convene the launching meeting. The Taskforce recommended that invitations for the general CSO Conference should be issued before or by the end of December 2004. The proposed dates were 21- 24<sup>th</sup> March 2005, in Addis Ababa. The possibility of engaging a member state to host this event would also be explored. It was stressed that related

issues such as the list of participants and travel arrangements be properly coordinated to ensure smooth handling by the Protocol Department.

It was the considered view of the Taskforce that Member-States be informed of the process as necessary.

## **FINALIZATION OF THE INTERIM DRAFT RULES OF PROCEDURE**

6. It was the considered view of the meeting that the proposed working group to harmonize the existing two versions of the Interim Draft Rules of Procedure would be costly and would pose a number of representational problems. The Taskforce therefore recommended that the legal expert recommended by the Office of the Legal Counsel should together the Consultant initially engaged for this task should harmonize the interim Draft Rules. The Draft document would then be further reviewed by the Commission and subsequently submitted to the ECOSOCC Assembly.

## **LIST/SELECTION OF CSO REPRESENTATIVES FOR GENERAL CSO CONFERENCE.**

7. The Senior Coordinator of the CSSDCA briefed the meeting on the measures that had taken towards updating the database from which CSOs would be selected, including a Note Verbale sent to Member-States inviting their input and suggestions on criteria for selection of CSOs. However, members of the Taskforce were of the view that Member-States should not select CSOs for the meeting, as this would negate the spirit of the constitutive Act.

## **OBSERVERS, GUEST AND DIGNITARIES TO THE LAUNCH OF ECOSOCC**

8. It was the considered opinion of the Taskforce that the presence of the Chairperson of the African Union may be necessary to give the launch the required status and solemnity. However, relevant foreign observers, guests and dignitaries such as ECOSOCC's counterparts in other regional and international organizations may only be invited to the actual launching meeting, to help lay the groundwork for their support, collaboration and interoperation with ECOSOCC.

## **DOCUMENTATION**

9. The CSSDCA informed that it would compile and circulate the list of relevant documents for the launch of ECOSOC, and also proposed the production of a CD ROM comprising these documents. The Information and Communications Unit and Ms. Christiane Yanrou, Website, would oversee this process.

## **PRODUCTION OF ECOSOC PARAPHERNALIA AND MEMORABILIA**

10. The CSSDCA recommended that paraphernalia and memorabilia be produced for this event. It also put forward a list of items to be included for consideration and their costs. The Taskforce was of the view that only 5 banners, 300 leather folders, 300 tee-shirts, and 300 paper caps and flags would be necessary. The Taskforce rejected the proposed Brochure of ECOSOC. However, final decision would depend on the approval of Cabinet and the Chairperson.

## **DIASPORA INVOLVEMENT**

11. The Senior Coordinator of the CSSDCA reviewed some of the challenges presenting themselves regarding the involvement of the Diaspora, such as the geographical allocation of representatives amongst the various regions of the world. He stressed that factors such as the expressed Africanity and commitment to the African Commission continent would be key considerations for the selection of Diaspora CSO representatives. He observed that the Technical Workshop held in Trinidad and Tobago from 2-4 June 2004 had put forward a definition of the Diaspora which was endorsed by the Caribbean Diaspora Network in September 2004 and the European Social Forum on the Diaspora on October 17, 2004. The Task Force recommended that the proposal on definition of the Diaspora be submitted to the next meeting of the Executive Council for consideration and approval and that the formulation of the criteria would also be guided by the definition advanced by the Commission, and the decision of Council on these proposals.

## **MATTERS ARISING**

12. The Senior Coordinator of the CSSDCA drew the attention of the Taskforce to a few concerns coming from the CSO community regarding the operationalization of the Statute of ECOSOC, such as the provision in Article 6 (6) requiring that 50 percent of resources of CSOs aspiring to

membership of ECOSOCC be derived from Membership contributions. Participants expressed various views in reaction to this issue. However, the Taskforce observed that this was a matter that would be submitted for review for ECOSOCC itself subsequent to its establishment.

## **CONCLUSION**

The 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Taskforce was extremely constructive. The Senior Coordinator of the CSSDCA expressed deep appreciation for the commitment, enthusiasm and team spirit of members, and in the light of its success he suggested that, given the cross-cutting character of the ECOSOCC and the civil society interface in general, this taskforce should become a standing mechanism. The aim would be not only to coordinate events, but would also be a vital mechanism for reflection on issues. The next meeting of the Taskforce was scheduled for Tuesday 9 November 2004, and a confirmation would be issued by the CSSDCA in consultation with members.