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**Brief on the
Official Launch of the First Permanent General Assembly of
the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African
Union (ECOSOCC)**

**7-9 September 2008
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania**

I. Introduction

1. The launch of the First Permanent General Assembly of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union (ECOSOCC) has been scheduled for 9 September 2008 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. It is being done pursuant to the decision EX.CL Dec.422 (XIII) of the Thirteenth Ordinary Session of the Executive Council, which was subsequently endorsed, by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union. The decision, among other things, requested 'the Chairperson of the Commission in consultation with the Chairperson of the Union to set an early date for launching the Permanent Assembly of ECOSOCC and to take all necessary measures to facilitate the process'.

2. The launching of the First Permanent General Assembly of ECOSOCC and the holding of its Inaugural Session is a milestone in the development of the institutional architecture of the African Union. It is in tandem with the cardinal objectives of the Union of ensuring partnership between governments and all segments of society and achieving popular participation in the affairs of the Union.

3. This momentous event will lay the foundation for the institutional development of ECOSOCC, the AU organ created to facilitate African civil society participation in the Union. It is also an opportunity for the First Permanent General Assembly of ECOSOCC to set its agenda and priorities bearing in mind the various developments on the continent and the stage at which the African Union is, as a continental organization.

II. Participants

4. In view of the importance of the launch of ECOSOCC, the President of the United Republic of Tanzania and current Chair of the African Union, H.E. President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete will preside over the event. The Presiding Officer of the Interim ECOSOCC General Assembly and the Deputy Chairperson of the AU Commission, H.E. Mr. Erastus Mwencha will also grace the occasion.

5. The following are also expected to participate:

(a) The elected Civil Society Organizations' (CSO) representatives at the Continental, Regional and National Levels as follows:

- i) Eight Continental CSO Representatives;
- ii) Two Regional CSO Representatives each for the East, Southern and West Regions; and
- iii) Two National CSO Representatives each for the following twenty three (23) Member States of the Union: Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Niger, Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda and Zambia.

(b) The six (6) Nominated Members of the ECOSOCC General Assembly

- (c) Ten (10) to Fifteen (15) Observers from the Continent and the African Diaspora
- (d) Three (3) dignitaries from the African Diaspora
- (e) African Diplomatic Corps accredited to Tanzania
- (f) Media Houses with continental and regional spread and those based in Tanzania.
- (g) Representatives of the AU Commission Departments

III. The Programme

6. Though the launch is scheduled for 9 September, 2008, the programme will commence on 7 September 2009. Before the launch, there will be a short induction on ECOSOCC including on, its background, objectives, functions, internal structure and its place in the AU institutional architecture. There will be elections for the Presiding Officer, Deputy Presiding Officers and the Credentials Committee of the ECOSOCC General Assembly. There will be Observers for the elections. The Dignitaries and the Members of the African Diplomatic Corps will only attend the launch ceremony. After the launch the ECOSOCC General Assembly will hold its Inaugural Session to discuss its workplan. The media will be facilitated to conduct interviews and have briefings with relevant officials in the course of the programme. Attached hereto is the Draft Programme for information.

IV. Outcomes

7. This event will achieve the following outcomes:
- (a) Launch of ECOSOCC and compliance with the AU Executive Council's Dec. EX.CL 422(XIII)
 - (b) Induction for newly elected ECOSOCC Members
 - (c) Election of the Presiding Officer, Deputy Presiding Officers and the Credentials Committee of ECOSOCC
 - (d) Inaugural Sessions of the ECOSOCC Assembly and Credentials Committee
 - (e) Awareness raising and media coverage on ECOSOCC

**African Citizens' and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO)
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