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Conseil Economique, Social et Culturel
ECOSOCC

Conselho Económico, Social E
Cultural Da União Africana

ECOSOCC CLUSTER OPERATIONALIZATION

OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE SOCIAL AFFAIRS CLUSTER

CAIRO, EGYPT, 3-4 APRIL 2016

Operationalization Meeting for the Social Affairs Cluster Committee

Cairo, Egypt, 3-4 April, 2016

In line with the decisions of the 1st Ordinary Session of the ECOSOCC Standing Committee held in Khartoum, Sudan from May 26 – 29, 2015 and the Extra Ordinary Session of the Standing Committee held in Nairobi from August 10-14, 2015 which calls for the operationalization of the cluster Committees, in view of the above, the ECOSOCC Social Affairs and Health Cluster organized a meeting in Egypt from 3-4 April, 2016 to consider the different elements related to the mandates and full operationalization of the Social Affairs and Health cluster and adopted a two year strategic implementation work plan as a prerequisite for the functioning of the cluster.

Through its adversary role and engagements with relevant stakeholders, the Cluster is constituted to complement and support the achievement of the Social Policy Framework and facilitating its popularization and mainstreaming at continental, regional and national level.

SECTION I: Opening Session

Three communications were given at the opening session, this includes: Keynote address was delivered by Dr. Tunji Asaolu, the Chairperson of Social Affairs and Health Committee Cluster, Welcoming address by the representative of the ECOSOCC Secretariat Amb. Jalel Chelba, Statement by the ECOSOCC Presiding Officer, Dr Joseph Chilengi.

SECTION II: Presentations

1. Operational Structure of the Cluster

In his Presentation, Dr. Tunji Asaolu delt stressed on the importance of the Committee in achieving the mandates of ECOSOCC as a people center organ which informed the choice of the members carefully selected for the Committee noting further that the work of the Social Affairs Committee will largely determine the impact of the Council. He equally emphasized the need to co-opt other members to give the committee a continental outlook and to enrich the work of the Committee. The Core Working Group will include Members of the General Assembly and Experts drawn from the Civil Society Groups.

The Committee agreed to nominate members to work with the Chairperson to run the affairs of the Cluster. Members were nominated for the following positions:

- i. Rapporteur/Programme
- ii. Partnership Division
- iii. Information and Communication
- iv. Civil Society Liaison Officer
- v. Head of Technical/Diaspora Division

- vi. AUC Liaison Officer
- vii. Mobilization Officer on Social Policy Framework, Agenda 2063, etc.

2. Presentation of the Social Affairs Department of the AU Commission

In his Presentation, Mr. Lefhoko Kesamag commended the ECOSOCC Secretariat for setting the stage for a possible partnership between the Social Affairs Department of AUC and the Social Affairs Committee of ECOSOCC. He noted that cooperation among organs of the Union will eliminate unhealthy competition and strengthen the impact of the Union across Africa. He elaborated on the operational structure of the Social Affairs Department and emphasized that the partnership will be necessary as the Department will from the advisory role of the Cluster and collaborate in joint initiatives that will promote the social wellbeing of the people. He noted that the partnership is a win-win for both organs which will enable collaboration and participation in each other's programme and meetings. Furthermore, he noted that the partnership will be promoted as a template that can be adopted by other organs of the Union for the benefit of continent and Africans at large. He then promised to provide necessary information of other Departments of AUC that the Cluster can equally relate with to facilitate its work.

Section III- Presentation of Work Plan and Decisions

The proposed programs has been carefully designed to complement and promote the attainment of Agenda 2063 goals and Social Policy Framework of the African Union. In this regard, the Committee will play its advisory role and equally engage relevant stakeholders to embark on critical action plan that will impact positively on the people of Africa. Furthermore, the programs of the Committee will promote partnership with other relevant committees of ECOSOCC and Departments of the Commission.

Section IV- Decisions and Recommendations

The Committee reached the following decisions;

- i. On Membership**
 - a. That membership should be expanded to cover the five African Regions, establish national chapters with country heads and that the core membership shall be 15 members taking gender into consideration,
 - b. That membership should be extended to wider civil society group,
 - c. That membership composition of Cluster should take gender and people with disabilities into considerations, and
 - d. That membership shall include AUC (Social Affairs Department), PAP, APRM, RECs, NEPAD and other relevant AU organs and government agencies.

ii. On the mandates of the Social Affairs Cluster Committee,

The mandate of the Social Affairs and Health Cluster Committee includes:- Health; Children; Drug Control; Population; Migration; Labour and Employment; Family; Aging; the Physically Challenged; (persons with disabilities), Sports; Culture; Youth and Protection and Social Integration, etc.

Observing the window for provided by the etc., the Committee believe that there is room for expansion of the mandate of the Social Affairs and Health Cluster, Committee to cover the following social needs of the people pending the ratification by the ECOSOCC General Assembly:-

- a. Promoting the domestication and mainstreaming of the Social Policy Framework at both regional and regional,
- b. Promoting social interaction and Youth participation in leadership
- c. Promoting Demographic Dividends
- d. Promoting the Welfare of Vulnerable/Marginalized Groups and Internally Displace Persons in Africa,
- e. Inclusive social growth such as Women, Persons with disabilities and Gender equality, and
- f. Promotion of the education of the girl child and ending child marriage in Africa.

iii. On the Social Policy Framework

a. Committee agrees that pending the amendment of the Social Policy Framework to accommodate and give visibility to the Social Affairs Cluster Committee and ECOSOCC like every other Organs of the Union, in the meantime, ECOSOCC shall perform all the roles stipulated for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

b. Committee further agree ECOSOCC be recognized under the Social Policy Framework as the recognized link with CSOs and that all Civil Society Organization shall henceforth be identified and granted consultative status with ECOSOCC according to the directive of the Executive Council.

iv. On Partnership

Committee agrees on the need for synergy and cooperation among all the Organs of the Union. In effect the Committee,

a. Request the Chairperson as a matter of urgent need, to commence the procedure for building sustainable partnership between the Social Affairs Department of the AUC and Social Affairs Cluster committee of ECOSOCC, other relevant organs of the Union, International Organizations and Private Sector institutions and to arrange for possible courtesy/familiarization meetings,

b. Agree that the Chairperson should transmit an official communication on the programmes to the Social Affairs Department of AUC and possible follow up with a courtesy visit to the Department,

c. The Representative of the Social Affairs Department should furnish the Committee with information of other Departments of the AUC that are relevant to the assignment of the Social Affairs Committee and should equally proceed to initiate possible collaborations with relevant local and international key Stakeholders.

v. On Work Plan

a. The Committee adopted the Work plan and thus set in motion modalities for necessary engagement and collaboration with the Social Affairs Department of AUC and other key local and international Stakeholders to facilitate implementation of Committee initiatives with the launching and roll-out in the five African regions,

vi. On Programmes Initiatives

The Committee commits to the full domestication and popularization of the Social Policy Framework as a tool to achieving Agenda 2063 through the engagement of relevant Departments of AUC and other stakeholders. And in playing its advisory role, the Committee agrees to mobilize its collaborating partners and other stakeholders to effectively facilitate the following initiatives at national, regional and continental levels as instruments for the achievement of the Social Policy Framework and Agenda 2063:

- a. Rural Health Information Center (RHIC)
- b. Pan-African Cultural Carnival,
- c. Annual Youth Meeting and Summits (to full engage the youths),
- d. Civil Society Outreach and Sensitization on Agenda 2063/Social Policy Framework,
- e. Disseminations of information on the activities of the ECOSOCC and its clusters and other organs of the Union,
- f. Identify and commence procedures for the presentation and launch of AU-ECOSOCC Watch Magazine with all its component of Social Media Versions and newsletter as an Official Magazine of the AUECOSOCC, and
- g. The Social Affairs Cluster in liaison with the Representative of the Social Affairs department should work out the implementation modalities including budget development and identification of key partners for each of the initiatives.

vii. On Meetings

The Committee further decides;

- i. In absence of rules for Cluster meetings, the Committee shall adopt the rules of the ECOSOCC General Assembly for its meetings,
- ii. That the Committee will meet on quarterly basis depending on availability of funds. However the committee agreed that fund could be sourced to fund its meetings, in conformity with AU financial rules and regulations
- iii. Extra-ordinary meetings shall be held to review the implementation of the work plan or make decisions on urgent matters are requested by ECOSOCC or other organs of the Union,

- iv. That Committee shall continually adopt internal, external, vertical and horizontal strategies of communication with members.

viii. Functions and other Activities Committee agreed to:

- i. Mobilize and undertake missions when necessary to advance the advisory roles and engagement agenda of the Cluster or ECOSOCC as the case may be,
- ii. Engagement with relevant local and international stakeholders for mobilization of resources to facilitate the implementation of Cluster programme and initiatives, in conformity with AU financial rules and regulations
- iii. Periodically provide advisory opinion on topical matters pertaining to the mandate of the social affairs and health cluster committee,
- iv. The Cluster shall observe global and AU ceremonial sector days which are related to the Social Affairs cluster committee
- v. Identification and mapping of Civil Society Organizations working in the areas of the mandate of the Social Affairs and Health Cluster Committee of ECOSOCC.