

May 5th, 2023

MEDIA ADVISORY

STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE ON THE GENERAL ELECTIONS IN SIERRA LEONE & POPULARISATION AND AWARENESS RAISING ON ECOSOCC NATIONAL CHAPTERS

INVITATION TO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEDIA

What: Stakeholder Dialogue on the general elections in Sierra Leone and Popularisation and awareness meeting on ECOSOCC National Chapters

When: **May 8-9, 2023 and May 10th, 2023**

Who: The Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), European Union through Expertise France

Where: **Sierrabay Hotel and Resort, Sierra Leone**

Background: 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 EU, through Expertise France will hold the Stakeholder's Dialogue on the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Sierra Leone and popularization and awareness raising on ECOSOCC National Chapters.

Sierra Leone will hold its general elections on June 24, 2023. The election will comprise presidential, parliamentary, and local council elections. Elections are 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.

In view of the above, ECOSOCC has partnered with the Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion (ICPNC), the ECOSOCC National Chapter and Campaign for Human Rights and Development international (CHRDI) to hold a stakeholders' dialogue in preparedness to deliver a free fair and incident-free election for the people of Sierra Leone. The institutions will promote social cohesion by providing an inclusive space to convene key actors of government and civil society, as

well as religious leaders both at the regional and national levels to facilitate platforms of engagement and forums for solutions in order to support concrete initiatives on the ground.

For the ECOSOCC National Chapters, the Executive Council of the AU tasked ECOSOCC to establish National ECOSOCC Chapters (National Chapters) through the development of an ECOSOCC National Chapters Framework. 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.

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, in Nairobi, Kenya. 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.

In light of the foregoing, ECOSOCC will hold an awareness and popularisation workshop with the Sierra Leone Interim National Chapter of ECOSOCC. The Workshop will target CSOs with mandates in governance, democracy, and human rights to introduce the new National Chapters frameworks, build capacities on the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (ACDEG), engage with AU Organs, and learn about the Early Warning and Response Mechanisms of the African Union.

Objectives

To facilitate key stakeholder coordination ahead of the elections and to structurally formalize the establishment of interim national chapters and to enhance their engagement and collaboration with ECOSOCC.

The media are invited to cover the opening ceremonies at Sierrabay Hotel and Resort on May 8th at 9.00 a.m., for the Stakeholders Dialogue on the general elections AND May 10th, at 9.00.a.m., for the Popularization and Awareness Workshop

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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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