

## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

### **ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COUNCIL (ECOSOCC)**

### **ANNUAL ECOSOCC CITIZENS' FORUM ON DEMOCRACY AND DIGITAL GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA**

#### **INVITATION TO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEDIA**

**What:** ECOSOCC's annual Citizens' Forum on Democracy and Digital Governance in Africa

**Who:** The African Union Economic, Social and Cultural Council (AU ECOSOCC) in collaboration with the All-Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), the Coalition for Dialogue on Africa (CoDA) and the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue

**When:** 10 - 11 July 2023, starting from 9am (EAT).

**Where:** Movenpick Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya.

#### **Objectives:**

The 2023 Annual Citizens' Forum will provide a platform to highlight relevant, coherent, effective, efficient, impactful, and sustainable ways for robust citizen engagement within the continental discourse on issues of democracy and digital governance.

#### **Participation**

The Forum will be attended by Civil Society Organisations (CSO) stakeholders from all five regions of the continent working in relevant fields, including academia, media, youth groups, women's groups, advocacy organizations, community-based organisations, non-governmental organizations including faith-based organizations, and regional CSO networks. Participation in the Forum will also reflect other relevant interest groups including member states, regional economic communities, regional mechanisms on peace and security, AU organs, and international partner organizations.

#### **Background**

Democracy and digital governance have emerged as critical components in shaping the political landscape of Africa, offering new opportunities for citizen participation, transparency, and accountability. In today's world, digital technologies offer unprecedented opportunities and challenges. They have the potential for positive transformation, but, when "improperly or maliciously used, they can fuel divisions within and between countries, increase insecurity, undermine human rights, and

exacerbate inequality. The upholding of democratic values as enshrined in the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) is only possible where governments are open and can easily be accessed by the citizens. However, such access is often strained due to limited platforms for engagement between citizens and governments. The advent of innovative communication through digital technology has deeply changed how societies and their governments interact, affecting both democratic processes and the ways citizens engage on political issues. Given the growing global importance of digital technologies, it is essential to explore the potential of digital technologies to contribute to the advancement of democracy and identify how their potential may be harnessed to facilitate inclusive and participatory development. It is in this vein that the ECOSOCC is convening the 2023 Annual Citizens' Forum during which discussions will focus on democracy and digital governance zeroing in on the threats that digital technologies pose to democracy and identifying the safeguards that must be put in place to ensure that digital technologies are not used to the detriment of democracy across the African continent.

**Journalists are invited to cover the opening of the Citizens' Forum on 10 July 2023 at Movenpick Hotel at 9 a.m.**

**For media inquiries, please contact:**

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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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