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**Direction de l'information et de la communication**

**PRESS RELEASE N.218/2014**

**AU calls on the Congolese civil society to take active part in the elections of the ECOSOCC 2nd Assembly**



**Brazzaville, 11 September 2014**

- A delegation of the African Union Commission (AUC) led by Mr. Jalel Chelba has embarked on the ongoing sensitization campaign of the ECOSOCC for the Central African Region to hold from 7 to 24 September 2014.

The campaign started with the Republic of Congo from 7 to 10 September 2014. The other members of the AU sensitization and motivation team: Mrs. Fatima Karadja, Vice President of the first General Assembly of ECOSOCC,

Mr Baba Sogodogo from the Office of the Chairperson of the AU Commission and Mrs. Esther Azaa Tankou, Head of Information Division in the Directorate of Information and Communication of the AUC, were received in audience on 8 September 2014 by HE Mr. Jacques Obindza, Director General of Africa and acting Secretary General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Congo. The meeting focused on the preparations to ensure a greater mobilization of the Congolese civil society.

The Representative of the AU Commission was given an opportunity to announce the objectives of the AU mission on the national TV and radio news channels. He highlighted the great attention paid to the issue by the Chairperson of the AU Commission, HE Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma in line with the Decision of the Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Malabo in June 2014.

## AU calls on the Congolese civil society for greater interest of the ECOSOCC



The representatives of the African Union (AU) called on all the stakeholders of the Congolese civil society to participate massively in the next election of ECOSOCC as the deadline for applications is scheduled for 30 September 2014. The urge was made during the meeting with the Congolese civil society on 10 September 2014 in the conference room of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Congo Republic, in the presence of Mrs. Chantal Maryse Itoua Apoyolo, Ambassador and Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry, Mr. Yves Bernard Mahoungou Massila, Coordinator of the Civil Society Associations and Networks of Congo (CARISCO), members of the diplomatic corps and invited guests.

During the official opening ceremony, Mr. Jalel Chelba noted that the presence in Brazzaville of the AU sensitization team explains the great interest of the AUC on the need to establish direct relationships with the African citizens. "We came in Brazzaville to implement the Decision EX.CL/849 (XXV), adopted by the Summit in Malabo in June 2014 by the Executive Council, which mandated the Commission to undertake a continental awareness campaign of the African civil society to encourage them to participate in large numbers in the elections of the ECOSOCC " he said. (See complete speech on the AU website: [www.au.int](http://www.au.int))

Representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Congo, Ambassador Chantal Maryse Itoua Apoyolo, and head of the Department of Multilateral Affairs at the Ministry noted that, the Republic of Congo was among the AU member countries that have not submitted candidates for the ECOSOCC elections. She noted that this is not due to lack of organization of the Congolese civil society given that, over the years, "the political will to help the Congolese civil society to better organize itself has become an essential component of the national policy. "This development, we must recognize, was made possible thanks to the climate of the ongoing dialogue and confidence-building, promoted by the President of the Republic, HE Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso," she underscored.

Ms. Apoyolo invited all the actors of the Congolese civil society to join in the momentum

of the ECOSOCC so as to take ownership of the shared vision which is that of a united Africa as stipulated in 2063 development agenda of the AU. (See complete speech on the AU website : [www.au.int](http://www.au.int))

Mr. Yves Bernard Mahoungou Massila, representing on organizations of Congolese civil society on his part, welcomed the initiative of the AU to deploy a sanitization and motivation team to interact with the focal points of the Congolese civil society. He promised to help relaying the information to other organizations in the country.

### **AU interacts with Congolese civil society**

During the interactive session with Congolese civil society, the head of the AU delegation pointed out that the election process of the second General Assembly of the ECOSOCC was initiated since 2012 but could not get a quorum for its implementation. "This is why the AU Commission was mandated by the Malabo Summit last June, to carry out this continental campaign for the civil society organizations (CSOs). We have mostly focused on member states that do not have a sufficient number of eligible candidates for the elections of ECOSOCC". He underlined, adding that, "The candidates you will choose will have to take part in the decision-making processes and orientation of the continent. They will work with other stakeholders to achieve our joint project. They will also have the responsibility to report to you on their actions and ensure the liaison with grassroots organizations for the welfare of our society," he noted.

To carry out this campaign, the head of the AU delegation invited the media to play their role as mediators and amplifiers of messages in view to disseminate the information as much as possible to the public. He recalled that their contribution and commitment is essential as the African Union relies on the media to inform its citizens.

This forum was an opportunity for the Congolese civil society to exchange their views with the AU delegation and get clarification to enable active participation in the processes of the ECOSOCC.

During the interactive session, the Vice President of the Assembly of ECOSOCC Mrs. Karadja and Mr. Sogodogo presented the history, objectives and process of elections ECOSOCC respectively, while the Head of the Division of Civil Society of the AUC outlined the conditions and eligibility of candidates.

Ms. Karadja emphasized on the interest of the African civil society as the main actors and player in setting the direction of the destiny of the continent.

The AU team distributed an information kit containing the necessary guidelines to enable the civil society to be better organised and modalities to present their candidatures for the elections.

Present in the meeting were: representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Congo, the Congolese Civil Society organizations (women's groups, children and youth), associations of professionals and volunteers as well as the media.

It should be noted that, after the Republic of Congo, the AU delegation will travel to Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and finally Sao Tome and Principe, where she will complete their mission for the Central African region.

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