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AFRICAN UNION INVITES Sao Tome and Principe CIVIL SOCIETY TO TAKE PART IN THE ECOSOCC GENERAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS



Sao Tome, 23 September 2014 –After Congo Brazzaville, Malabo and Libreville, it was the turn of Sao Tome and Principe from 20 – 24 September 2014, to welcome the sensitization and motivation campaign delegation for the election of the 2nd General Assembly of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union (ECOSOCC). A meeting grouping the civil society organization of Sao Tome and Principe was organized to that effect on 23 September 2014 in the conference room of the Sao Tome cultural center to exchange view on the practical modalities and criteria for participation in the elections billed for the fourth quarters of the year 2014.

Addressing participants at the opening ceremony, the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, and Secretary General Mr. Francisco Fernandez, lauded the initiative of the African Union for launching this sensitization campaign which will not only motivate the population but will also close the

gap between the AU organization and the people of the country. He reiterated his government willingness to work hand in hand with the AU delegation to ensure the full participation of the civil society in the ECOSOCC election as well as motivate the population to develop greater interest in the development agenda of the Union.



Speaking earlier, the president of the Federation of NGOs of Sao Tome, Mr Manuel Jorge de Carvallio do Rio welcomed the good initiative, which will help to consolidate the relationship between the African Union and the civil society. He added that this would enlighten the population to know more about the activities of the Union.

Mr. Jalel Chelba, Head of the AU delegation expressed satisfaction to the interest showed by the civil society during the interactive session and he encouraged them to apply massively for the election of 2nd General Assembly of the ECOSOCC. Mr. Chelba called on the journalists who were present at the meeting to help in the sensitization process by popularizing the message calling on all the civil society organizations to mobilize ahead of the ECOSOCC elections.

Mrs. Fatima Karadja, Vice president of ECOSOCC presented the objective of the organ while Mr. Baba Sogodogo, from the office of the Chairperson of the AU Commission briefed the participants on the structures of the AU.

AU Delegation meets Sao Tome and Principe Authorities



Upon their arrival, the AU delegation held a working session on 22 September 2014 with the Director of Political Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sao Tome and Principe, Mr. Urbino Botelho to discuss on the need to involve the civil society as much as possible into the activities of the ECOSOCC through the sensitization campaign of the AU.

On the same day, the AU Delegation was received in audience by H.E Oscar Aguisa E Sousa, Minister of Interior and

Defense of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe who, on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, expressed



gratitude to the AU leadership for sending a team to interact and exchange views with to the Sao Tome and Principe population on important issues concerning the wellbeing of their citizens.

After the audience, the Head of the AU Delegation granted an interview to the national television to explain the objective of the mission and invite the civil society to develop more interest in the ECOSOCC saying that this platform will enable them contribute significantly in the

decision making processes of the continent.

Worth recalling that, the AU sensitization campaign has been launched to ensure the implementation of the decision EX.CL/Dec.849 (XXV), adopted by the 23st Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly, held in Malabo in June 2014. It is aimed at encouraging greater participation the African CSOs; particularly the least represented countries to take part in the elections of the ECOSOCC General Assembly.

Established under the provisions of Articles 5 and 22 of the African Union's Constitutive Act, ECOSOCC is the vehicle for building a strong partnership between governments and all segments of African civil society. The Statute of ECOSOCC, adopted by the Heads of State and Government at the Third Ordinary Session of the Assembly in July 2004 defines it as an advisory organ of the African Union composed of different social and professional groups of the Member States of the African Union [Assembly/AU/Dec.42 (III)].

These CSOs include but are not limited to the following: a) Social groups such as those representing women, children, the youth, the elderly and people with disability and special needs; b) Professional groups such as associations of artists, engineers, health practitioners, social workers, media, teachers, sport associations, legal professionals, social scientists, academia, business organizations, national chambers of commerce, workers, employers, industry and agriculture as well as other private sector interest groups; c) Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs) and voluntary organizations; d) Cultural organizations and e) social and professional groups in the African Diaspora in accordance with the definition approved by the Executive Council.

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