



## PRESS RELEASE

### **MILESTONE: ECOSOCC BEGINS OPERATIONALISATION OF SECTORAL CLUSTER COMMITTEES, NAIROBI, KENYA, 11-18 OCTOBER 2015**

The Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union (ECOSOCC) will attain another milestone early next week when it begins the process of operationalization of its Sectoral Cluster Committees in Kenya, Nairobi from 11-18 October 2015.

Article II of the ECOSOCC Statutes qualifies the “Sectoral Cluster Committees” as the “key operationalization mechanisms of ECOSOCC to formulate opinions and provide inputs into the policies and programs of the African Union.” The Sectoral Cluster Committees “shall also prepare and submit advisory opinions and reports of ECOSOCC.”

The Sectoral Cluster Committees were neither formed in the life of the Interim General Assembly of ECOSOCC (2005-2008) or the 1<sup>st</sup> Permanent General Assembly (2008-2012). The issue has been prioritized by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Permanent General Assembly since its inception on 22 December 2014. In his acceptance speech at the inauguration of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Assembly the Presiding Officer, Mr. Joseph Chilengi, underlined this task as pivotal. Subsequently, the 1<sup>st</sup> Ordinary Session of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Permanent ECOSOCC Assembly that met in Cairo from 26 February to 1<sup>st</sup> March 2015 reconfirmed it in its Decisions. The Standing Committee as the Executive Organ of ECOSOCC at its 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Ordinary Sessions held in May and August 2015 respectively set the guidelines and modalities for the setting up of Sectoral Cluster Committees.

The operationalization of Sectoral Cluster Communities establishes the main pillar for the actualization of ECOSOCC mandate and facilitates ECOSOCC interactions with cognate line departments of the AU Commission and interconnectivity with the wider African civil society community.

The operationalization process would be in two phases. Four of five clusters including Political, Peace and Security, Gender and Women Development, amongst others, would be operationalized in October 2015 while a second set of Clusters will be operationalized in November 2015. The formation of these Clusters is a milestone that will make ECOSOCC fully operational and serve to formalize its framework for advisory opinions.