



## Press Release N°230/ 2014

## ECOSOCC Mission in the Seychelles: Setting the pace for the Sensitization Campaign



**Victoria, Seychelles, 18<sup>th</sup> September 2014** – The African Union (AU) Mission for the Sensitization of the African civil society community to participate in the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) arrived in Victoria, Seychelles on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2014.

Representatives of the Liaison Unit of Non-Governmental Organizations in Seychelles (LUNGOS) received the delegation at the airport. Subsequently, the delegation met formally with officials of the LUNGOS Secretariat on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2014 to finalize plans and arrangements for the Sensitization program in the Republic of Seychelles. The program was conceived in two parts. First was the formal meeting with the large majority of civil society organizations scheduled to take place in Care House, Victoria on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2014. Second was the pre-meeting program involving discussion with government officials, civil society groups and the media.



In the course of the program meeting, the Honorary Chairperson of LUNGOS noted that LUNGOS was pleased to serve as a focal point for AU activities and liaison with the Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO). LUNGOS was founded 25 years ago and has just marked its anniversary in this respect. It serves as an umbrella organization for

harnessing the talents and expertise of CSOs in Seychelles to support democracy and development in Seychelles, within SADC and in the larger framework of the AU.

He observed that the Chief Executive Officer of LUNGOS, Mr. Steve Lalande was currently away to attend the SADC Forum for NGOs where Seychelles was expected to assume the Vice-Presidency setting the pace for it to assume the Presidency next year. The task of LUNGOS was to create an inclusive framework for CSO participation at a national level that would feed in appropriately into facilitating the work of ECOSOCC at the continental and regional level.



Following this, the mission paid a courtesy call on the Principal Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Maurice Loustau-Lalane. The delegation thanked Mr. Lalane for the efforts of the Ministry to ensure that its work was facilitated in Seychelles. In turn, the Principal Secretary stressed that Seychelles attaches great importance to its

membership of the AU. Seychelles acknowledges the contribution of the OAU/AU in its struggle for Independence and seeks closer integration within its African family umbrella. This is the main reason why Seychelles is seeking to take on greater responsibility within the AU context so that it can serve the Organization and the African family more vigorously.

He noted that though Seychelles is a relatively small country with a small population, it has illustrious attributes and distinct roles it can play in the African commonwealth to promote integration and development. Seychelles' blue water economy was built on a model that recognizes the need to put people at the center of development efforts. This is the model of the AU Constitutive Act and the impetus for ECOSOCC. Thus Seychelles would necessarily have an important role to play in the realization of that vision.

The meeting with the Principal Secretary was followed by a Press Conference with the media which examined a variety of concerns including the development of the AU process and ECOSOCC, the precise



objectives of the sensitization mission, the reasons behind the Summit decision that prompted the mission, the nature of African CSOs, external linkages, the communication strategy of the AU and significant developments within the AU framework.



On 18 September, the mission was taken on a guided tour of the Botanical Gardens and later to lunch hosted by the Secretary of State of Seychelles, Mr. Barry Faure. The lunch date served as an opportunity to review the details of the sensitization meeting and the role that the Seychelles government can play in support of the civil society agenda.

The mission stop in Seychelles is the fourth leg of the East African Campaign. After the sensitization meeting tomorrow the mission will proceed to Eritrea.

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