

Opening Statement by Amb. Lazarous Kapambwe, Advisor to the AUC Chairperson at the ECOSOCC Sensitization and Motivation Campaign for Tanzania Civil Society Organizations, Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania, 15 September 2014.

I am delighted to be here today to address Tanzania civil society organizations regarding the ongoing process of elections into the 2nd General Assembly of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union (ECOSOCC).

The AU mission is here to implement the Directives of the Executive Council of the African Union through Decision EX/CL/849 (XXV) that was adopted in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea in June 2014. Prior to that Decision, the Executive Council had received a report from the AU Commission indicating that the process of elections into ECOSOCC was constrained by the fact that a significant number of Member States of the Union did not have a sufficient number of eligible candidates to participate in elections to the 2nd ECOSOCC General Assembly.

Council then decided that the Commission should carry out a Sensitization and Motivation campaign to those Member States that do not have sufficient eligible candidates for the elections in order to ensure that the 2nd ECOSOCC Assembly is truly representative and reflects the full diversity of the Union. Council added that if the Sensitization exercise provides the necessary quorum, the 2nd ECOSOCC Assembly should be constituted for a full term of four years. If not, the ECOSOC Assembly should be constituted on an interim basis for only two years. Council mandated the Commission to ensure that in either case, an ECOSOCC Assembly would be in place before the end of 2014.

In compliance with the strict timelines imposed for this exercise by the executive organs of the AU, the Commission developed an appropriate mission plan that provided for a three month Sensitization programme in the run up to the actual elections in late November or early December 2014. It is our expectation also that an inaugural session of the ECOSOCC Assembly will be held immediately afterwards.

The purpose of this mission here today is to ensure the faithful implementation of the decision of our executive organs on ECOSOCC in close collaboration with our Member States of the Union in general and the civil society community in Tanzania in particular. This is a mission that involves cooperation with governments but is not directed primarily at Governments. It is an outreach programme for the people at the grassroots that is designed and implemented in the spirit of the people-driven focus and people-driven agenda of the African Union.

The mission is truly reflective of the ECOSOCC agenda. ECOSOCC is an organ that seeks to connect the people at the grassroots in Africa directly with the continental governance structures. It is a body elected and directed by civil society, a people's parliament that works with cognate departments of the Commission-- as the Secretariat of the Union-- to formulate, implement, monitor and evaluate policies and programmes.

The composition of ECOSOCC mirrors the diversity, vigor, strength and complexity of African society. It is a framework for bringing the views and inputs of the various segments of the society including the Non Governmental organizations, social and professional groups, doctors, lawyers, medical personnel, trade unions, the private sector, employers associations, community based organizations, voluntary organizations, cultural groups, etc. to impact upon and contribute directly to policies and programmes of the Union.

ECOSOCC has a total of 150 members including 2 from each Member State, 5 continental CSOs, 10 sub-regional CSOs, 20 representatives of the African Diaspora and 6 nominated members to represent special interests that may have been excluded by the electoral process.

ECOSOCC is a truly representative organ of the African people. It is important therefore, that Tanzania which played host to the launching and formation of the 1st Permanent General assembly here in Dar-Es-Salaam in September 2008 should be effectively represented in the organ as it matures and grows in the context of the 2nd ECOSOCC General Assembly that would be constituted before the end of 2014. This is the appeal that the AU delegation is making during this

campaign. It is an appeal that I am confident that Tanzania civil society organizations will respond positively towards.

I thank you all.