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PRESS RELEASE 2017

ECOSOCC elects new Bureau Members at 2nd Permanent General Assembly in Cairo, Egypt



27-31st March 2017 – Cairo, Egypt – The Economic, Social & Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) of the African Union (AU) has elected Mr. Richard Seewakiryanga from the Uganda National NGO Forum as its new Presiding Officer. The election took place on Thursday 30 March 2017, during the 2nd Ordinary Session of the 2nd Permanent General Assembly held in Cairo, Egypt.



The newly elected Presiding Officer of ECOSOCC is taking over from the Zambian, Mr. Joseph Chilengi whose mandate as Presiding Officer of ECOSOCC has come to an end after two terms of two years (each) as member of the Standing Committee.

The elections of the Standing Committee of the General Assembly of ECOSOCC was conducted by the Office of the Legal Counsel. The process of the General Assembly was facilitated by the Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO), in its capacity as ECOSOCC Secretariat with the support of other AUC Departments.

The ECOSOCC General Assembly in Cairo has been convened in accordance with Article 9 of the ECOSOCC Statutes, which requires the General Assembly to convene in

Ordinary Session once every two years. This is the second Ordinary Session of the current General Assembly following the inaugural Session in December 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya.

The new bureau members of the ECOSOCC are:

1. Presiding Officer - Mr. Richard Ssewakiryanga, Uganda National NGO Forum - (East)
2. Deputy Presiding Officer– Mr. Blaise Batongue, GIMAC – Cameroon (Central)
3. Deputy Presiding Officer– Madame Fatma Mehdi (SADR) (North)
4. Deputy Presiding Officer– Mr. Patson Malisa (South Africa) (South)
5. Deputy Presiding Officer– Madame Fall Tall (Senegal) (West)

The newly elected Heads of Cluster Committees of the ECOSOCC are:

1. Peace and Security: Mr. Ngalim Eugene Nyudine (Cameroon)
2. Political Affairs: Mr. Abozer Elmana Mohammed Elligai (Sudan)
3. Social Affairs: Dr. Tunji Asaolu (Nigeria)
4. HRST: Mr. Abdurrahman Mokhtar (Libya)
5. Infrastructure and Energy: Dr. Raj Gowtam Chintaram (Mauritius)
6. Rural Economy and Agriculture: Mr. Guy Mpembele Kisoka (DRC)
7. Trade and Industry: Godfrey Selematsela (South Africa)
8. Economic Affairs: Ms. Monde Reberiah Kabandula (Zimbabwe)
9. Women and Gender: Mr. El Hacene Mbareck (Mauritania)
10. Cross-Cutting: Dr. Serge Michel Kodom (Togo)

The General Assembly has drawn participation from AU Member states, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs); and African diaspora organizations. Sixty nine (69) voters representing different African NGOs, took part in the election.

The newly elected members of the ECOSOCC took oath of office in the presence of the Ag Director of CIDO, Mr. Ahmed El-Basheer El-Madani, the Ag. Legal Counsel and the outgoing Standing Committee members.

The new bureau members in their statement committed to bear allegiance to the African Union and to the ECOSOCC while preserving, protecting and defending the Constitutive Act of the Union.

Worth recalling that, the **Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC)** is an advisory body of the African Union designed to give civil society organizations (CSOs) a voice within the AU institutions and decision-making processes. ECOSOCC is made up of civil society organizations from a wide range of sectors including labour, business and professional groups, service providers and policy think tanks, both from within Africa and the African diaspora.

In his remarks, the incoming Presiding Officer Mr. Richard Ssewakiryanga expressed his hope of making sure that during his tenure, ECOSOCC will unleash the potential of Civil Society to play a more meaningful role in the promotion of Agenda 2063, the African Union Commission's flagship project. Ssewakiryanga also called on the outgoing Bureau members to keep supporting the new office-bearers for a smooth transition and progressive roll out of tasks for the good of ECOSOCC.

On his part the Acting Director of CIDO Ahmed El-Basheer appreciated the decorum with which the elections to elect new office-bearers for ECOSOCC was held. He also appreciated that the elections were conducted in a fair, impartial and transparent manner.

The first Interim President of ECOSOCC was Kenyan Nobel Prize winner of blessed memory, Prof. Wangari Maathai. In 2008, she was replaced by Cameroonian lawyer Akere Muna of the Pan-African Lawyers Union (PALU).

For more information, please contact:

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