

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COUNCIL (ECOSOCC)

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ECOSOCC holds Training of Trainers workshop for CSOs on information gathering, conflict analysis and early warning/response

The African Union Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) is hosting a Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) on information gathering, conflict analysis and early warning/response.

The three-day training workshop, an integral component of the Fourth European Support Programme for the African Peace and Security Architecture (EU APSA IV) programme, represents an opportunity to harness the expertise of CSOs and leverage their role as catalysts of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), a comprehensive framework strategically designed to ensure peace, security and stability throughout the African continent.

The main objective of the ToT is to enhance CSOs' capacity in information-gathering, conflict analysis, and early warning/response to strengthen their participation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding across Africa.

The ToT workshop officially opened by Sierra Leone Minister of Foreign Affairs and international Cooperation, Hon. Timothy Kabba.

Hon. Kabba said recent events had called for Africa's leadership especially in international peace and security. He acknowledged the critical role of CSOs in democracy, stating that it was important for governments and CSOs to intensify their complementarities.

"This ToT is testament to our collective dedication to empowering CSOs in your role as catalysts in the African Peace and Security Architecture. It's time for the continent to recognize that we have a common problem and that we can either have a common solution or no solution at all," Hon. Kabba said. "Yes, democracy will thrive without CSOs but without CSOs, democracy will always have the tendency of sliding into tyranny."

ECOSOCC Head of Secretariat, William Carew said ECOSOCC had and has been playing a pivotal role in creating a platform for actively involving CSOs in initiatives aimed at advancing peace, security, stability, good governance, and the protection of human rights in Africa.

"We are here to enhance the capacities of CSOs on one of the 5 pillars of APSA IV, the Continental Early Warning System. It plays a role in ensuring APSA's functionality and operational efficiency, as enshrined in article 12 of the Peace and Security Council Protocol." He said.

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Mr. Carew said the early warning system identifies potential conflict triggers and facilitates early responses, enabling AU member states to respond promptly and mitigate conflicts, noting that the current democracy, peace, security and stability challenges with the threats of climate change make the system more relevant.

ECOSOCC Deputy Presiding Officer for West Africa, Brenda Moore explained that engagements like the ToT around peace and security had never been more critical for the region than now, citing an increase in the disruption of democracy and rule of law.

Ms. Moore mentioned that the ToT would strengthen CSOs' capacities and equip them to develop analytical capabilities for conducting conflict analysis, identifying root causes, potential triggers and deepen understanding of conflict dynamics in Africa.

"It will also ensure the capacity of CSOs to systematically collect, analyse and disseminate accurate and timely information on conflict dynamics enabling us to serve as authoritative sources for enhancing the quality and relevance of data provided," she said.

The ToT opening ceremony was also attended by Amb. Duwai Lungay, Deputy Head of Mission of Sierra Leone to Ethiopia.

The outcomes of the ToT include improved understanding of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) pillars, enhanced proficiency in the critical areas, concrete action plans for implementation, and a network of skilled CSOs collaborating on conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Participants include African CSOs, particularly those led by and focused on women and youth in peace and security initiatives, along with trainers and experts from West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP), the African Union, ECOSOCC and APSA project staff.

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The Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) was established in July 2004 as an Advisory Organ composed of different social and professional groups of AU Member States. The mandate of ECOSOCC is to contribute, through advice, to the effective translation of the objectives, principles and policies of the African Union into concrete programmes, as well as the evaluation of these programmes.

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