

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COUNCIL (ECOSOCC)

Press Release No: 052/2023

Date: December 12th, 2023

Venue: Nairobi, Kenya

ECOSOCC holds training on CSO engagement in the civilian component of the AU Peace Support Operations

The African Union Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) is hosting a three-day training workshop for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)'s engagement in the civilian component of the African Union Peace Support Operations (PSOs), in countries where they are actively operating.

The training is meant to prepare the CSOs with the necessary expertise and skills to render civilian assistance within the peace operations. Additionally, the training will empower CSOs to play an active role in peacekeeping and conflict resolution within their respective countries.

Specific goals include equipping the CSOs to: understanding the Fourth European Support Programme for the African Peace and Security Architecture (EU APSA IV) programme components; understand civilian roles and responsibilities; how to engage in peace processes; how to apply human rights and gender perspectives within peace operations; understand local context; and operational preparedness.

The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), is a comprehensive framework strategically designed to ensure peace, security and stability throughout the African continent.

Delivering the opening statement of the training, Mr. Manhendranath Busgopaul ECOSOCC Deputy Presiding Officer, East Africa, said the training marked a crucial stride in bolstering the CSOs' capabilities in conflict management in regions PSOs are deployed, fostering a stronger relationship between AU and civil society.

"The active engagement of CSOs in conflict management is pivotal for realizing a peaceful continent. CSOs offer a unique perspective, rooted in their understanding of the needs and challenges faced by their communities," he said. "As partners in development, CSOs require the requisite knowledge, skills, and techniques to effectively support the AU in its pursuits to promote peace and security across the continent."

ECOSOCC Head of Secretariat, William Carew said ECOSOCC 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.

He pointed out that since 2021, ECOSOCC, in collaboration with COMESA, with support of the European Union had been engaged across the continent, positioning

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COUNCIL (ECOSOCC)

African CSOs as pivotal implementers of the EU-funded 4th Support Project to the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA IV).

“Our focus today is strengthening the capabilities of CSOs in implementing a vital component of the APSA and the African Standby Force, which is responsible for deploying peace support operations across the continent, incorporating civilian and military elements,” he said. “While the presence of military personnel is often visible in peacekeeping operations, the indispensable role of civilians in supporting these efforts cannot be understated.”

Ms. Elizabeth Mutunga, Head of the COMESA Governance, Peace and Security underscored the importance of CSOs in the African Peace and Security Architecture. She encouraged CSOs to fight hard to be accepted in the peace and security space.

The outcomes of the training 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 selected CSOs engaged in peace and security initiatives within countries where PSOs are present, expert trainers from the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, and technical experts working on the civilian component of the African Standby Force from the AU Commission.

#

Media Contact:

Ms. Carol Jilombo | Senior Communications Officer | AU ECOSOCC Secretariat, Lusaka, Zambia.

E-Mail: Jilomboc@africa-union.org

About ECOSOCC

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.

Learn more at: <https://ecosocc.au.int>

Facebook: African Union ECOSOCC; Twitter: @AU_ECOSOCC