

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COUNCIL (ECOSOCC)

Press Release No: 009/2024

Date: July 5th, 2024

Venue: Lusaka, Zambia

ECOSOCC Secretariat and the Government of Zambia Host Flag Raising Ceremony Marking the Start of #ECOSOCC20 Commemorations

The African Union Economic, Social and Cultural Council (AU-ECOSOCC) Secretariat, in collaboration with the Government of Zambia, officially hosted a Flag Raising Ceremony on July 4th, 2024, at the ECOSOCC Secretariat in Lusaka, Zambia. This significant event officially marked the commencement of the #ECOSOCC20 flagship commemorations, celebrating 20 years of ECOSOCC's impactful journey towards African unity and enhanced citizen participation in continental affairs.

Since its inception in 2004, ECOSOCC has been dedicated to promoting civil society participation in the policymaking and implementation processes of the African Union. Over the past two decades, ECOSOCC has championed numerous initiatives aimed at promoting good governance, human rights, and socio-economic development across Africa.

The Flag Raising Ceremony was a poignant reminder of the vision that inspired the establishment of ECOSOCC as a civil society policy organ. Additionally, it underscored Zambia's commitment to upholding the African Union's vision.

Officially opening the ceremony, President of the Republic of Zambia, H.E. Hakainde Hichilema, represented by Vice-President, H.E. Mutale Nalumango said, "This event will not only remind us that policymakers should ensure African citizenry voices are heard, but also highlight the role of civil society in shaping Africa's democratic future. The flag-raising ceremony is a testament of our unwavering commitment to unity, solidarity, and cooperation.

"The African Union flag represents our shared values of unity in diversity, peace and security, as well as economic development and integration. The flag, further, represents our democratic governance and human rights on the African continent. We, therefore, stand on the shoulders of our forefathers who fought for our independence and self-determination."

As hosts of the ECOSOCC Secretariat since November 2019, this event reaffirmed the Zambian government's dedication to African unity and solidarity, highlighting collaborative efforts among African states to achieve common objectives.

H.E. Nalumango noted, "[This flag raising ceremony] symbolizes Zambia's ongoing commitment to the African Union vision and its direct engagement with the continent's citizenry. This ceremony is not only a formal recognition of Zambia's role as the host

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nation for the ECOSOCC Secretariat, but also reaffirmation of African solidarity and unity. It provides an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of ECOSOCC and to recommit to the ideals of democracy, human rights, and economic empowerment across Africa.”

The flag raising ceremony also symbolized the unity, resilience, and progress of ECOSOCC over the past two decades. It served as an opportunity to reflect on past achievements, discuss future goals, and reinforce ECOSOCC’s commitment to advancing inclusive development and good governance in Africa.

Mr. Khalid Boudali, ECOSOCC Presiding Officer, recognized ECOSOCC’s contributions, unwavering professionalism, and altruistic dedication to Africa’s renaissance.

“As we stand on the threshold of a new dawn of African unity and prosperity, let us honor the indelible impact of the ECOSOCC Secretariat in crafting our shared destiny. On behalf of African CSOs, NGOs, and the Diaspora, we express our deepest gratitude. Your relentless commitment to the elevation of our continent is a beacon of inspiration, illuminating the path for generations yet to come,” he said.

ECOSOCC, also referred to as “the Voice of the African Citizenry” continues to play a critical role in bridging the gap between African citizens and their governments, ensuring that the voices of civil society are heard at the highest levels of policymaking.

H.E. Mr. Remigius Siyave Haindongo, High Commissioner of the Republic of Namibia and Dean of the African Group of Ambassadors noted that ECOSOCC has undoubtedly been a key player in advancing our continent’s vision for citizen-centred development.

“Through its efforts to enhance civic engagement, integrate civil society into decision making processes and influence policies across Africa, ECOSOCC has significantly driven our shared goals of promoting Pan-Africanism and fostering socio-economic and cultural development,” he said.

Mr. William Carew, Head of ECOSOCC Secretariat, highlighted that the Flag Raising Ceremony marked a historic milestone for ECOSOCC and acknowledged the efforts of the Government of Zambia as the host country, along with the African Union.

“Today’s Flag Raising Ceremony is a historic moment both for Zambia and the African Union, symbolizing a renewed commitment to the principles of the African Union and the active participation of its citizenry in shaping a prosperous continent and to this we are grateful to H.E The President and the Government of the Republic of Zambia for honoring our invitation,” he said.

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Mr. Carew continued, “On this symbolic 04th July 2024, we have a special announcement to make - ECOSOCC has taken the decision to name its (to be constructed) RESOURCE-CENTRE after Late Dr Kenneth Kaunda in gratitude to the People and the Government of Zambia.”

Mr. Carew also solicited the Government of Zambia, being a member of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government (C-10), to “lend all its support for the ongoing reforms of the UN Security Council.”

The C-10 was setup by the African Union (AU) and given the mandate to advocate and canvass the African Common Position on United Nations Security Council (UNSC) reforms.

Notable attendees at the flag raising ceremony included senior government officials of the Republic of Zambia, representatives of the African Union Commission, diplomatic corps/missions accredited to Zambia, and civil society organizations (CSOs), totalling over 200 participants.

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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>

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