

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COUNCIL (ECOSOCC)

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Meet ECOSOCC's New Leadership



The African Union's Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) convened the Second Ordinary Session of its 4th Permanent General Assembly (PGA). As per its statutes, the Second Ordinary session of the General Assembly is also characterized with the mid-term elections of the Standing Committee.

The ECOSOCC General Assembly is the highest decision and policy making body of ECOSOCC composed of: **Two** CSOs from each African Union Member State; **ten** CSOs operating at regional level and **eight** at continental level; provisions are also made for 20 CSOs representing the African Diaspora as defined by the Executive Council.

Established under the provisions of Articles 5 and 22 of the African Union's Constitutive Act, ECOSOCC is the vehicle for building a strong partnership between governments and all segments of African civil society. The Statute of ECOSOCC, adopted by the Heads of State and Government at the Third Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly in July 2004 defines it as an advisory organ of the African Union composed of different social and professional groups of the Member States of the African Union [Assembly/AU/Dec.42 (III)].

The ECOSOCC General Assembly has a tenure of four years; the 4th Permanent General Assembly (4PGA) was constituted in December, 2022. The 4PGA reconvened from 11th to 13th December 2024 principally for the renewal of its leadership. On 12th December 2024, ECOSOCC showcased that Africa's rich traditions of communal decision-making prioritizing unity, dialogue and collaboration are still very much deeply rooted. The African Union (AU) prioritizes consensus over electoral procedures to ensure broader agreement and stability across its member states and ECOSOCC led by example, with the constitution of its new leadership (Bureau & Cluster Chairpersons) without having to conduct a single election as members embraced the higher interest of the organ over any form of division; a landmark victory of African solidarity over acrimony.

The members of the GA elected a bureau comprising the Presiding Officer (PO), Deputy Presiding Officers and chairs of sectoral cluster committees as follows:

- Presiding Officer: Mr. Louis Cheick Sissoko of Mali (Western Africa)
- Deputy Presiding Officers:
 - Mr, Mahamat Haroun Adoum of Chad (Central Africa)
 - Dr. Ayman Saber Taha Mostafa Okeil of Egypt (Northern Africa)
 - Mr. Robert Mbilizi Phiri of Malawi (Southern Africa).
 - Mr. Stanley Evarist Alphonse of Tanzania (Eastern Region).

Chairpersons of Sectoral Cluster Committees elected are the following:

- Mr. Boniface Cheembe, Zambia (Peace and Security);
- Dr. Eyole Monono, Cameroon (Political Affairs);
- Mr. Vinesh Chintaram, Mauritius (Infrastructure and Energy);
- Ms. Nazik Abdelhameed Elsayed Osman, Sudan (Social Affairs and Health);
- Ms. Amogelang Chikunyana Botswana (Human Resources, Science and Technology (HRST));
- Mr. Tsonam Cleanse Akpeloo Ghana (Trade and Industry);
- Ms. Sarra Gharbi Tunisia (Rural Economy and Agriculture);
- Mr. Choukri Hafid Algeria, (Economic Affairs);
- Ms. Winnie Ida Françoise Central African Republic, (Women and Gender);
- Ms. Aminatou Seydou Allakaye Niger (Cross-cutting Programmes).

Members of the Disciplinary Committee of the 4PGA comprising:

Mr. Ezzeddine Hamdene (Tunisia); Mr Ngalim Eugene, (Cameroon); Mr. Richard Ssewakiryanga (Uganda; Ms. Thandi Nhlengethwa, (Eswatini) and Mr. Victor Naclan, (Cote D'Ivoire) also officially took Oath of Office on the occasion. The Disciplinary Committee is composed of one ex-GA member from each of the five regions.

In his maiden speech, Presiding Officer- Elect, Mr. Sissoko expressed his gratitude for being elected and shared his vision for his tenure to focus on three strategic axes: strengthening impact within the African Union and internationally, optimizing internal functioning, and mobilizing resources through innovative financing strategies.

He thanked Mr. Khalid Boudali, the outgoing PO, for his outstanding leadership displayed during his tenure starting December 2022.

“For two years, marked by pressing challenges and renewed hopes, we have collectively established ECOSOCC as a true lighthouse of resilience and a sanctuary of participatory governance,” he concluded.

Head of Secretariat, William Carew welcomed and congratulated the elected members, and reminded them of the key principles they should adhere to including, accountability, responsibility, passion, unity, oneness, and result driven approaches. He touched on the following: Alignment with Continental Goals; Strategic Planning and Accountability; Collaborative Leadership; Enhanced Technical Capacity; Maintaining and Elevating Standards; Leadership by Example and assured them of the Secretariat's full support.

During the closing ceremony of the 4PGA, outgoing Presiding Officer, Mr. Khalid Boudali, congratulated Mr. Sissoko, and affirmed that he was confident the leadership of the Second Ordinary Session of the 4th Permanent General Assembly would steer ECOSOCC to the next level.

He highlighted significant achievements during his tenure, including leading an international coalition to oversee historic elections, fostering unity within North Africa, and strengthening the voice of civil society. He further emphasized the Assembly's role as a beacon of hope, justice, and progress for Africa, celebrating the collective efforts of the Secretariat, and members in shaping the continent's future.

The term of office for the Standing Committee members is 2 years. The functions of the Standing Committee are to coordinate ECOSOCC's work, prepare its General Assembly meetings, follow up implementation of the Code of Ethics and Conduct, and prepare and submit the ECOSOCC annual report to the AU Assembly.

Nine new members from under represented Member States were also elected into the General Assembly. The distinctive character of ECOSOCC is that it gives an opportunity for African civil society to play an active role in charting the future of the Continent, organizing itself in partnership with African governments to contribute to the principles, policies and programmes of the African Union.

Learn more: <https://ecosocc.au.int/en/ga/4/2nd-ordinary>

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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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