

AFRICAN UNION

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**Welcome Statement by Dr. Jinmi Adisa, Director, Citizens and
Diaspora Directorate (CIDO) and Head of the Secretariat of the
Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union
(ECOSOCC) to the 1st Session of the 2nd Permanent ECOSOCC
General Assembly held In Cairo, Egypt,
26 February to 1 March 2015.**

Welcome Statement by Dr. Jinmi Adisa, Director, Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO) and Head of the Secretariat of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union (ECOSOCC) to the 1st Session of the 2nd Permanent ECOSOCC General Assembly held In Cairo, Egypt, 26 February to 1 March 2015.

Your Excellency, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt,

The Honorable Presiding Officer of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union,

Your Excellency, the Head of AU Mission in the Cairo Office,

Your Excellency, The Advisor to the Chairperson

Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Honorable Members of the 2nd ECOSOCC Permanent General Assembly,

Distinguished Members of the African Civil Society,

Members of the Press Corps and Fourth Estate,

Invited Guests,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is with honor and great delight that I welcome you all to this maiden session of the 2nd Permanent General Assembly of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union (ECOSOCC) in Cairo, Egypt, from 26 February to 1 March 2015. This meeting comes closely on the heels of the inauguration of the Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya on 23 December 2015 and in the wake of the recent session of the Council and Assembly of the African Union held in Addis Ababa from 25-31 January 2015.

The meeting marks the celebration of the pledge given by the Honorable Presiding Officer at the installation of the ECOSOCC Assembly in Nairobi regarding the need for an orientation program in February 2015 to situate the 2nd General ECOSOCC Assembly within the framework of the African family so that

the efforts of Members and the corporate body can be aligned effectively to the aims and objectives of ECOSOCC and the Union at large.

As soon as the meeting in Nairobi was concluded on the eve of Christmas celebration of December 2015, the Secretariat began consultation with our two focal points in Egypt and Egyptian Government authorities in the Foreign Ministry regarding the prospects for holding the meeting. Simultaneously, the ECOSOCC Secretariat initiated measures for securing authorization for administrative and political support at the level of the Commission through the Office of the Chairperson as required by the appropriate rules and regulations of the AU. The agenda and work program was also developed in collaboration with the Bureau and Presiding Officer for your consideration as you deem fit. The development of this agenda and work program has been guided by the aims, objectives and goals that you agreed upon in Nairobi and the subsequent decisions of the Summit.

I wish to acknowledge the strong support of the two national focal points, the Egyptian Red Crescent represented by Ms. Nagwa Metwaly and the Egyptian Business Women Association represented by Dr. Ahmany Asfour in ensuring that the meeting can be held as scheduled. More significantly, I wish to acknowledge the profound support of the Government of Egypt and especially the Foreign Ministry in making sure that all necessary facilities are offered and provided to support this meeting. These include political, moral and material support and active communication and liaison with us in Addis Ababa to ensure that the process is smooth and successful.

It is noteworthy also that our arrival here and follow-up preparations has been aided by active connivance of the Government and people of Egypt who have spared no efforts to make us feel welcome. I wish on behalf of the Secretariat to express our candid appreciation and gratitude for this fellowship that is given in the best tradition of African solidarity and brotherhood. We briefed the Bureau and the Presiding Officer about the progress of this endearing experience and the enthusiastic support we have received. We wish to convey our sincere and fervent gratitude to the people and Government of Egypt and to indicate that we are assured that the Second ECOSOCC Assembly will hold quality deliberations and come out with significant decisions that will mark its debut in Cairo as an occasion of immeasurable importance as a mark of tribute to the people and Government of Egypt.

I would also like to welcome and thank all Honorable Members of the General Assembly of ECOSOCC for taking the time and effort to attend this important meeting. The significance of this meeting is underlined by the ECOSOCC Statutes that invests the General Assembly in Article 9 with authority as the highest policy and decision-making body of ECOSOCC. This maiden session will set general and specific directions for the conduct and activity of this important Organ and it is important to get it right an appropriately so it fine. The strength of

any building depends on the foundation and what we do today echoes continually afterwards.

Each and every Member of this August Assembly has invested significantly in ensuring that they are present here today. The various members have other full time obligations, which implies that there is an opportunity cost in coming here. Travel carries its own inherent discomforts including the cramped seats and jet lags, the fabricated airplane meals, occasional and enforced association with people that some may often wish that they have not had to meet, the waiting periods for embarkation, arrival processes and immigration formalities and health screening for Ebola besides travel delays, ticket difficulties and other associated impediments. Every honorable Member has experienced this in one way or the other, albeit in different degrees. So also have AU staff members that have come to support this meeting. You are all here because you have the commitment to be here to support the development and integration agenda of the continent.

Africa salutes you all.

Thank you.