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Conseil Economique, Social et Culturel
ECOSOCC

Conselho Económico, Social E
Cultural Da União Africana

ECOSOCC CLUSTER OPERATIONALIZATION

OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE
ECONOMIC AFFAIRS CLUSTER

NAIROBI, KENYA, 1ST -2ND JUNE 2016

**Operationalization Meeting of the Economic Affairs Cluster
Nairobi Kenya, 1st – 2nd June 2016**

On 1-2 June 2016 the ECOSOCC Economic Affairs Cluster held a meeting on the operationalization of its Cluster Committee. The meeting was held pursuant to Article 11 of the Statutes of the ECOSOCC on the Sectoral Cluster committees which was also reiterated as a priority during the 1st ordinary and extra ordinary sessions of the ECOSOCC Standing Committee held on 29 May 2015 in Khartoum, Sudan and 14 August 2015 in Nairobi, Kenya, respectively.

In addition to the members of the Cluster, the Presiding Officer of ECOSOCC, and ECOSOCC Secretariat staff, was also in attendance the Senior Policy Officer in the Department of Economic Affairs of the AU Commission, Mr. Liwaaddine Fliss. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Despond Maphanga, Chairperson of the Economic Affairs Cluster of AU-ECOSOCC.

The overarching objective of the Cluster is to “Support implementation of AU initiatives, policies and programs on economic development and regional integration in collaboration with the AUC-EAD, RECs and other stakeholders”.

The Nairobi EAC meeting was structured into (I) key note statements, (II) plenary presentations and discussions, (III) development of an operational action plan for the year 2016 and 2017, and (IV) the final outcome resolutions and recommendations.

I/ Key note statements

The Chairperson of the EAC, Mr. Desmond Lee Nkosinathi MAPHANGA, welcomed the participants, and introduced the Economic Affairs Cluster and the objectives of the meeting alongside the expectations of the meeting.

The Ag Head of ECOSOCC Secretariat Amb Jalel Chelba mentioned in his opening address the “people-centered and people-driven” nature of the Union is implemented through the AU-ECOSOCC which is the civil society Organ. He highlighted the importance of the ECA in the ECOSOCC and the added value its effective operationalization will bring within the process of fast tracking intra-African trade and economic prosperity in Africa. He equally emphasized the fact that accelerating economic improvement in Africa is crucial to the mandate of the AUC which necessitates the full involvement of ECOSOCC.

In his statement, Mr. Joseph Chilengi the ECOSOCC Presiding Officer (PO) emphasized the importance of operationalizing the EAC as a critical step in reinvigorating the mandate of ECOSOCC especially in aligning and complementing the mission of the African Union. He further underscored the fact the effective operationalization of the EAC will add value to the AUC. In essence; he challenged the members of the EAC to discuss and put in place a framework for an effective functioning of the cluster. He further reiterated that all advisory opinions issued by any of the ECOSOCC clusters are vital in informing the ECOSOCC report that is submitted to the AU Executive Council.

II/ Plenary presentations and discussions

a) Briefing regarding the Economic Affairs Files of the AU Commission presented by Mr. Liwaaddine Fliss Senior policy Officer, at the EAD of the AUC.

Key notes of his presentation include the following:

- EAD's work intersects with the work of the department of Trade and Industry and that of Science and technology. The EAD is cross-cutting and so therefore; it works with many other AUC Departments.
- Underlined the fact that EAD is responsible for Initiating and promoting the AU economic policies and implementation strategies.
- The EAD is currently working on how to operationalize the key AU economic institutions such as the African Monetary Fund (AMF), the African Central Bank (AIB), the African Investment Bank (ACB); etc.
- The EAD coordinates, harmonizes and facilitates economic policies for the economic integration of the AU which has created special collaboration with Regional Economic Communities (RECs).
- The EAD works with other regional entity platforms such as the AU-India platform, AU-China platform, AU-EU platform, AU- Japan platform, etc.
- The EAD also works with a wide variety of development partners such as the African Development Bank, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), etc.

The core responsibilities of the EAD includes:

- Harmonization of statistics in Africa;
- Coordination for the establishment of the three Pan-African financial institution (ACB, AMF and AIB);
- Follow –up of the SDGs;
- Convening of the Congress of African Economists;
- Promoting private sector development at national, regional and continental levels;
- Coordinating the implementation of the agenda 2063.
- Operationalizing the African Union Institute of statistics-STATAFRIC- based in Tunisia.

b) Presentation of the COMESA industrialization Strategy: By Mr. Sifiso Motsa from Swaziland.

The presentation was drawn from Article 99 of COMESA industrial constitutive statement which highlights the need for industrial development in the region. The presentation stressed the need for the cluster to support the AUC's industrialization agenda; particularly with regard to the following themes:

- self-sustained and balance growth;
- Increase availability of industrial goods and services and intra common-market;
- Improved competitiveness to achieve structural transformation;
- Development of a community of local industrialists.

The meeting agreed that the membership of the Cluster will be composed as follows:

- Cluster Steering Committee of 10 organizations (2 from each region of Africa Union working in the area of trade and industry
- 54 representatives from the continent representing respective Member States and national focal points in the area of trade and industry
- Trade and Industry cluster at national level comprising of the CSOs working in the area of trade and industry

c) Cluster's structure

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III/ Development of an operational action plan for the year 2016 and 2017

The action plan for 2016 and 2017 developed by the Cluster Committee is structured around the four strategic objectives:

- Popularization and domestication of AU initiatives, policies and programs on economic development and regional integration at the national level.
- Stimulation of dialogue among stakeholders on AU initiatives, policies and programs on economic development and regional integration at the national level.
- Consolidation of partnership between the Union and CSOs through consultations across the continent on critical economic development issues.
- Coordination of Economic Affairs Cluster undertakings to ensure effective delivery of the Action Plan.

IV) Final outcome resolutions and recommendations

- Adoption of the action plan for 2016 and 2017
- Enhance the collaboration and partnership with the EAD and other relevant AUC Departments in the implementation of its operational action plan.
- Support and Strengthening of in-country systems and institutions to popularize and domesticate AU products.