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ECOSOCC CLUSTER OPERATIONALIZATION

OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE TRADE AND INDUSTRY CLUSTER

NAIROBI, KENYA, 27-28 MAY 2016

Operationalization Meeting of the Trade & Industry Cluster

27-28 May 2016, Nairobi, Kenya

Guided by the key deliberations of the Nairobi Meeting of the Africa Union ECOSOCC held from 10-14 August 2015 on the Operationalization of Sectoral Clusters Committees as stipulated in Article 11 of the ECOSOCC Statutes the core group of the Trade & Industry cluster convened in Nairobi, Kenya from 27-28 May 2016 to initiate the operationalization of the Cluster.

Also attendance of the meeting was the Head of Division of Trade in the Department of Trade and Industry of the AU commission, Mr. Hussein Hassan. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Godfrey Selematsela, the Head of Trade and Industry Cluster.

In his opening remarks, the Chairperson of the Cluster highlighted that the Trade and Industry cluster has the responsibility to collaborate with the Department of Trade and Industry of the Africa Union Commission (AUC) on intra-Africa trade, establishment of continental free trade area and also ensure the enhancement of Africa's competitiveness in the global economy among others. Hence he expressed that it was very important for the core group to hold this meeting to come up with a work plan on how effectively the Cluster can collaborate with the Department of Trade and Industry of Africa Commission and other AU organs and institutions, RECs, ADB and other institutions and collaborating partners.

In his statement, Amb Jalel Chelba, Ag Head of ECOSOCC Secretariat welcomed the participants to the meeting which was chaired by Mr. Godfrey Selematsela, the Head of Trade and Industry Cluster. He informed the meeting that there are a number of cluster meetings starting with the Trade and Industry cluster which had been lined up till 7th June 2016 to operationalize the respective clusters. He further mentioned that he was looking forward for the work plan from the meeting to guide the activities of the Cluster. He encouraged the participants to develop a platform which will bring on board the expertise from civil society organizations so that the Cluster can issue expert and advisory opinions, well informed, that can be used by the Union in this area.

The AU-ECOSOCC Presiding Officer Mr. Joseph Chilengi welcomed the participation of Mr. Hussein Hassan, the Head of Division of Trade in the Department of Trade and Industry of the AU commission. He underlined that the Cluster has both Advisory and Consultative mandate with regards to the implementation of Africa Union Commission policies instruments and programmes on trade and industry. Hence he underscored the importance of the members of the Cluster to closely follow and be abreast of all the developments within the Department of Trade and Industry of the Africa Union Commission and above all broadly comprehend matters around trade and industry. He further highlighted that playing an advisory role entails that the Cluster can either initiate the process as well as be requested where necessary to provide input on various matters or developments around trade and industry.

The opening session was followed by a presentation by the Chairperson of the Cluster Mr. Godfrey Selematsela on the Concept note of the Cluster on Trade and Industry in which he went through the background and mandate of the Cluster, the rationale behind operationalizing the cluster and the expected outcomes from the Cluster.

The Head of the Industry Division of the Department of Trade and Industry, Mr. Hussein Hassan made a presentation on the core mandate, objectives, structure, activities, key areas of impact of the Department of Trade and Industry of the Africa Union Commission. He also highlighted the major achievements and challenges confronted by the Department.

Thereafter, two working sessions were conducted which extended to the next day. The following are the conclusions and recommendations from the meeting:

I. On the Mandate of the Trade & Industry cluster

The meeting recognized that its mandate of operation was derived from the ECOSOCC Statutes and specifically Article 11 which provides for the legal framework for the establishment of ten (10) Sectoral Cluster Committees as key operational mechanisms of ECOSOCC to formulate opinions and provide inputs into the policies and programmes of the African Union. Article 11(f) then spells out the core areas of the mandate of the Trade and Industry cluster.

II. On Structure and Category of Membership

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

III. On Communication strategy

The meeting identified information gaps as a challenge among the members of the Cluster pertaining to critical developments in the AU Department of Trade and Industry. As such there is need for a Communication Strategy for the Cluster in order to enhance effective communication within the Cluster and with the organs and institutions of the African Union and with other institutions including the mass media, social media eg facebook, twitter, You Tube etc.

IV. On Establishment of ECOSOCC National Chapters

In order to facilitate the functioning of the Trade and Industry cluster and popularize the AU Agenda 2063, the meeting agreed on the speedy establishment of ECOSOCC national chapters as per the AU Executive Council decision

V. On Mapping Partnerships

The meeting appreciated the attendance of the Department of Trade and Industry of the Africa Union and hence recognized the need for the Cluster to conduct a mapping of the relevant stakeholders and forge strategic partnerships with the identified stakeholders at national, regional, continental and project Africa's positions at global level. The meeting further agreed to strengthen the collaboration between the Cluster and the Department of Trade and Industry of the Africa Union and endeavor to participate in relevant meetings of the Africa Union Commission, Organs and other institutions.

V. On Annual ECOSOCC Stakeholder Platform on Trade and Industry

The meeting agreed to host and organize an annual meeting on Africa Trade and Industry involving civil society organizations across the five regions of the African continent and other key stakeholders. These platforms will discuss among other issues related to compliance of AU policy instruments on trade and industry. The outcome of these platforms will finally feed into the STC on Trade.

VI. On Cluster Work Plan

The meeting discussed, developed and adopted the Work Plan for the Cluster for 2016 and 2017 which is attached to the Report.

VIII. Next Meeting & Vote of Thanks

The participants agreed to hold the next meeting of the Cluster in September 2016 as indicated in the Work Plan at a venue to be set by the Secretariat. The participants further expressed a vote of thanks to the Department of Trade and Industry of the African Union Commission for participating at the meeting.