
Statutes of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union (2004)

Adopted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in July 2004 by the AU Assembly, under article 22(2) of the AU Constitutive Act.
ECOSOCC is intended to provide a voice for civil society in the AU. The Council held its first meeting in March 2005 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Full text available at www.au.int

Excerpts

Preamble

The Assembly of the African Union,
Recalling the objectives and principles enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the African Union;
Recalling further the establishment of ECOSOCC under the provision of articles 5 and 22 of the Constitutive Act;
Convinced that popular participation in the activities of the African Union, as enunciated in the African Charter for Popular Participation, is a prerequisite for its success;
Guided by the common vision of a united and strong Africa and by the need to build a partnership between governments and all segments of civil society, in particular women, youth and the private sector, in order to strengthen solidarity and cohesion among our peoples;
Recalling the decision of the Assembly to invite and encourage the full participation of the African Diaspora as an important part of the continent, in the building of the African Union.

Agrees as follows:

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Article 2: Objectives

ECOSOCC shall amongst other things, and in conformity of objectives of the African Union as provided in the Constitutive Act, perform the following functions:

1. Promote continuous dialogue between all segments of the African people on issues concerning Africa and its future;
2. Forge strong partnerships between governments and all segments of the civil society, in particular women, the youth, children, the diaspora, organised labour, the private sector and professional groups;
3. Promote the participation of African civil society in the implementation of the policies and programmes of the Union.
4. Support policies and programmes that will promote peace, security and stability in Africa, and foster development and integration of the continent;
5. Promote and defend a culture of good governance, democratic principles and institutions, popular participation, human rights and freedoms as well as social justice;
6. Promote, advocate and defend a culture of gender equality;
7. Promote and strengthen the institutional, human and operational capacities of the African civil society;

Article 3: Composition

1. ECOSOCC shall be an advisory organ of the African Union composed of different social and professional groups of the member states of the African Union.
2. These CSOs include but are not limited to the following:
 - (a) Social groups such as those representing women, children, the youth, the elderly and people with disability and special needs;
 - (b) Professional groups such as associations of artists, engineers, health practitioners, social workers, media, teachers, sport associations, legal professionals, social scientists, academia, business organisations, national chambers of commerce, workers, employers, industry and agriculture as well as other private sector interest groups;
 - (c) Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs) and voluntary organisations;
 - (d) Cultural organisations.
3. ECOSOCC shall also include social and professional groups in the African Diaspora, organisations in accordance with the definition approved by the Executive Council.

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Article 6: Eligibility requirements for membership

The requirements to be fulfilled by CSOs seeking membership are as follows:

1. Be national, regional, continental or African Diaspora CSO, without restriction to undertake regional or international activities.
2. Have objectives and principles that are consistent with the principles and objectives of the Union as set out in articles 3 and 4 of the Constitutive Act.
3. Registration and status:
 - (a) Be registered in a member state of the Union and/or;
 - (b) Meet the general conditions of eligibility for the granting of observer status to non-governmental organisations;
 - (c) Show a minimum of three (3) years proof of registration as either an African or an African Diaspora CSO prior to the date of submission of application, including proof of operations for those years.

4. Provide annual audit statements by an independent auditing company.
5. Show proof that the ownership and management of the CSO is made up of not less than fifty percent (50%) of Africans or of African Diaspora.
6. The basic resources of such an organisation shall substantially, at least fifty percent (50%), be derived from contributions of the members of the organisation. Where external voluntary contributions have been received, their amounts and donors shall be faithfully revealed in the application for membership. Any financial or other support or contribution, direct or indirect, from a government to the organisation shall be declared and fully recorded in the financial records of the organisation.
7. Provide information on funding sources in the preceding three (3) years.
8. For regional and continental CSOs, show proof of activities that engage or are operative in at least three (3) member states of the Union.
9. CSOs that discriminate on the basis of religion, gender, tribe, ethnic, racial or political basis shall be barred from representation to ECOSOCC.
10. Adherence to a Code of Ethics and Conduct for civil society organisations affiliated to or working with the Union.

Article 7: Functions

As an advisory organ, ECOSOCC shall:

1. Contribute, through advice, to the effective translation of the objectives, principles and policies of the Union into concrete programmes, as well as the evaluation of these programmes;
2. Undertake studies that are recommended or deemed necessary by any other organ of the Union and submit recommendations accordingly;
3. Carry out other studies as it deems necessary and submit recommendations as appropriate;
4. Contribute to the promotion of popularisation, popular participation, sharing of best practices and expertise, and to the realisation of the vision and objectives of the Union;
5. Contribute to the promotion of human rights, the rule of law, good governance, democratic principles, gender equality and child rights;
6. Promote and support efforts of institutions engaged in review of the future of Africa and forge Pan-African values in order to enhance an African social model and way of life;
7. Foster and consolidate partnership between the Union and CSOs through effective public enlightenment, mobilisation and feedback on the activities of the Union;
8. Assume such other functions as may be referred to it by any other organ of the Union.