



Economic, Social and Cultural Council

South Africa Chapter

ECOSOCC-SA CHAPTER

Background

The AU ECOSOCC is established under articles 5 and 22 of the African Union Constitutive Act, following the adoption of ECOSOCC Statutes by the AU Assembly. The launch of AU ECOSOCC marked a significant change in the continent's engagement with civil society, which had previously been relatively non-existent. Thus, the AU Heads of States passed a resolution for the establishment of the AU ECOSOCC country chapters across the 53 Africa member States. The primary mandate for ECOSOCC as ratified by the AU Heads of States and Government is to:

- Promote dialogue between all segments of African people on issues concerning the Continent and its future;
- Forge strong partnerships between governments and all segments of civil society, in particular, women, the youth, children the Diaspora, organized labour, the private sector, and professional groups ;
- Promote the participation of African Civil Society in the implementation of the policies and programmes of the Union ;
- Support policies and programmes that promote peace, security and stability and foster Continental development and integration ;
- Promote and defend a culture of good governance, democratic principles and institutions, popular participation, human rights and social justice ;
- Promote, advocate and defend gender equality ;and
- Promote and strengthen the institutional, human and operational capacities of the African civil society.

As espoused by all AU Heads of States, including that of South Africa, the first South African ECOSOCC consultative platform was created in 2003, which was attended by a broad civil society organisations sector operating across service areas. The consultative conference was also graced by the representatives and leadership from Government, Academia, Business and Labour. An interim

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ECOSOCC-SA Secretariat was set-up and tasked to facilitate the process of institutionalisation and further strengthening of platforms to organise extended consultations that will aim bring as many CSOs in the Council.

AU ECOSOCC General Assembly was formally launched on 29 March 2005 in Addis Ababa, where two members from the ECOSOCC-SA Chapter participated fully and were elected to the AU ECOSOCC Interim Standing Committee. The establishment of the General Assembly took place within the broader vision of Africa's Developmental Agenda and the need to build better partnerships between governments and all segments of civil society.

The launching of the First Permanent General Assembly of ECOSOCC and the holding of its Inaugural Session on the 09 September 2008 was viewed as a milestone in the development of the institutional architecture of the African Union. This was in tandem with the cardinal objectives of the Union of ensuring partnership between governments and all segments of society and achieving popular participation in the affairs of the Union.

This momentous event laid the foundation for the institutional development of ECOSOCC, the AU organ created to facilitate African civil society participation in the Union. The event also presented an opportunity for the First Permanent General Assembly of ECOSOCC to set its agenda and priorities bearing in mind the various developments on the continent and the stage at which the African Union was, as a continental organization.

Envisaged Linkages

The downward linkages from the AU ECOSOCC Statutes are quite clear, with the prioritisation of setting up of chapters within AU member states. The establishment of national chapters of the ECOSOCC is expected to entrench the role of civil society in continental processes. The national chapters are furthermore aimed at ensuring that the objectives of AU ECOSOCC are embodied in each member state and that civil society truly participates in the programmes and activities of the African Union.

The envisaged linkages with SA Government, particularly the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, are to ensure that there are enabling platforms for active participation to promote dialogue and forge partnerships between all segments of governments and civil society sectors, and in this way, contribute to the AU ECOSOCC in the form of advice, reports, recommendations and studies on AU policies and programmes.

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The South African Chapter is organised through the following sectors: Women; Youth; Arts, Culture, Heritage and IKS; Labour; Professionals; Civics; People with Disabilities; Faith; Business; Media; NGOs and CBOs; Children and the Aged. All these sectors are represented by national organisations' representatives who are elected to serve on the ECOSOCC National Council. The national structures receive their mandate to participate within ECOSOCC's activities from the provincial and local branches where their constituencies are based. Currently the sectors are represented by the following organisations:

1. Women Sector - Women National Coalition, Young Women in Dialogue, Young women in business
2. Youth Sector - South African Youth Council, African Renaissance Youth Movement
3. Labour Sector - Nactu and Fedusa
4. Arts, Culture, Heritage and IKS Sector - South African Chapter of the African Renaissance, Indigenous Knowledge Systems of South Africa Trust, Rivone,
5. Professionals Sector - Africa Institute of South Africa, Nurses Council
6. People with disabilities Sector - Disabled People of South Africa
7. Faith Sector - South African Council of Churches, Religious Leaders Forum
8. Business Sector - Business Unity South Africa and Nepad Business Foundation
9. Media - To be confirmed
10. NGOs and CBOs Sector - SANGOCO and CORN
11. Children Sector - National Childrens' Forum, Child Welfare South Africa
12. The Aged Sector - Aged in Action



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Cluster Committees

The 10 Sectoral Cluster Committees of ECOSOCC, established to formulate opinion and provide input into the policies and plans of the African Union, provide ideal channels for segments of CSOs in South Africa to make input on specific issues as set out to influence policies positions on:

Peace and Security: conflict anticipation; prevention; management and resolution; post conflict reconstruction and peace building; prevention and combating of terrorism; use of child soldiers; drug trafficking; illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons and security reforms.

Political Affairs: human rights; rule of law; democratic and constitutional rule; good governance; power sharing, electoral institutions; humanitarian affairs and assistance.

Infrastructure and Energy: energy; transport; communications; infrastructure and tourism.

Social Affairs and Health: health ; children ; drug control ; population ; migration ; labour and employment ; family ; aging ; the physically challenged ; sports ; culture ; youth and protection and social integration.

Human Resources, Science and Technology: education; illiteracy; information technology; communication; human resources; science and technology.

Trade and Industry: trade; industry; handcrafts; customs and immigration matters.

Rural Economy and Agriculture: rural economy; agriculture and food security; livestock; environment; water and natural resources and desertification.

Economic Affairs: economic integration; monetary and financial affairs; private sector development including the informal sector and resource mobilization.

Women and Gender: women; gender and development as a crosscutting issue.

Cross-Cutting Programmes: all other cross-cutting issues that are not covered in above clusters including HIV/AIDS, international cooperation, coordination with institutions and organs of the Union
PROG: f.



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Objectives

- Implementing the ECOSOCC-SA Chapter Plan of Action in line with the AU Decisions and Declarations
- Revive ECOSOCC-SA Chapter activities to galvanise for general participation of Africa's people
- Develop a ECOSOCC Communication and Marketing Strategy
- Profile the work of ECOSOCC-SA Chapter in South Africa and in the continent to promote sharing of best practice models.

Internal Process

- Host executive meetings periodically to inform the work of the Council
- Host Council meetings to appraise and review the work done by the Chapter
- Host Task Team(s) meetings to prepare reports emanating from Cluster Committee discussions and resolutions.

Outreach Approach

- Sectoral consultative sessions and/or workshops at Provincial and Local Community levels
- Information dissemination on the work of ECOSOCC, AU, NEPAD, APRM and other programmes of the African Union.
- Community Participation in programmes on Peace Missions, Foreign Policy domestication, Bi-lateral and Multi-lateral programmes such as the BNCs.
- Media Strategic Briefings and Press Conferences to pronounce on sectoral positions of the AU Decisions and Declarations
- Periodic meetings with Political Principals of government, Business, Labour and Civil society Structures to discuss AU Decisions and Declarations.
- Designing of ECOSOCC-SA Chapter brochures and information booklets for information dissemination and information sharing.



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- Translated information targeting grassroots communities (simplified documents to be understood by rural communities)
- Linkage with GCIS newsletter
- Creation of website
- Use of National and Provincial events to popularize ECOSOCC-SA Chapter, such as izimbizo, the parliamentary community consultations, IDP and ward meetings.

Links of ECOSOCC-SA Chapter Agenda to African Union POA

- Position the SA Chapter to influence policy positions during AU Pre-Summits
- Adapt the SA Chapter's Programmes to be in tandem with the Declarations emanating from the Assembly (ies) of the African Union.
- Commemorate all African Union declared DAYS such as the Africa Day, Africa Youth Day, etc.
- Periodically submit ECOSOCC-SA Chapter position on AU Decisions, such as the transformation of the Africa Union Commission to the African Union Authority, New African Union Flag, etc.



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DATE	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITIES
December 2009	Proper institutionalization of the ECOSOCC-SA Chapter for purposes of easy access by general CSO structures.	ECOSOCC-SA ExCo and Possible Partners
December 2009- March 2011	Participation of ECOSOCC-SA Chapter in all AU ECOSOCC programmes to strengthen South Africa's influence and strategic position within the AU Assembly meetings/ Summits.	ECOSOCC-SA ExCo and Possible Partners
December 2009 (every month)	Partnership meetings for reporting	ECOSOCC-SA ExCo and Possible Partners
January 2010 (every 2 month)	ECOSOCC-SA Chapter Council meetings/ Cluster Committee sittings.	National Secretariat
January 2010	Implementing the communications and brand positioning strategy and plan.	National Secretariat, EXCO and Possible Partners
March 2010 - June 2010	Provincial Workshops to resuscitate	EXCO and Possible Partners

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	effective participation of CSOs within AU programmes such as the APRM, NEPAD, EU-AU, etc	
March 2010 (bi-monthly)	Planning Meetings for the re-launch of ECOSOCC-SA Chapter in October 2010	Ad-hoc Task Team
March 2010 - May 2010	Outreach and awareness programme approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information dissemination • Community Participation • Media Campaigns • SA ECOSOCC Website • AU ECOSOCC Songs 	National Council and Provincial Representatives and Possible Partners
May 2010	Africa Day Celebrations	ECOSOCC-SA ExCo, Council, Provincial sectoral committees and Possible Partners

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June 2010 - November 2010	Sectoral POA Implementation workshops.	ECOSOCC-SA ExCo, Council, Provincial sectoral committees and Possible Partners
October 2010	Re-Launch of the ECOSOCC-SA Chapter	ECOSOCC-SA ExCo, Council, Provincial sectoral committees and Possible Partners
November 2010	Africa Youth Day celebrations	ECOSOCC-SA ExCo, Council, Provincial sectoral committees and Possible Partners
December 2010 - October 2011	Promotion of the Declarations and decisions of the African Union through structured programmes and activities, such as the "Decade of Youth development in Africa".	ECOSOCC-SA ExCo, Council, Provincial sectoral committees and Possible Partnerships

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Successes to date

1. ECOSOCC-SA Chapter spearheaded the participation of CSOs within the African Peer Review Mechanism process in South Africa, consulting with all sector organizations as defined through ECOSOCC structure
2. ECOSOCC-SA Chapter has participated in Election Observe Missions of SADC and other countries in the continent.
3. ECOSOCC-SA Chapter was the first National chapter to call for the inclusion of CBO participation in the AU-ECOSOCC Structures
4. ECOSOCC-SA Chapter has influenced South Africa's position with the general processes of the African Union and its structures.
5. ECOSOCC-SA Chapter is currently recognized as the model that other African countries can draw learnings and experience in facilitating broader participation of civil society organs, particularly on programmes that are geared towards reform instruments and Good Governance of the state to influence service delivery.

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