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**DRAFT REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE MEETING  
OF THE ECOSOCC**

**M-PLAZA HOTEL, ACCRA GHANA  
17-20 JUNE 2007**

## **1. OPENING SESSION:**

1. The Credentials Committee of the Interim ECOSOCC pursuant to Article 12 (2) of the ECOSOCC Statute held the first credentials screening exercise meeting at the M-PLAZA Hotel in Accra, Ghana, from June 17 - 20, 2007. It was presided over by the Chairperson of the Credentials Committee, Hon. Saida Agrebi, who welcomed participants to Ghana and expressed her appreciation to all for honouring the invitation to attend the meeting at such short notice and in spite of the postponing of the earlier meeting that was scheduled for Tunis, Tunisia.

2. Honourable Agrebi also extended her gratitude to the government and people of Ghana for their hospitality and expressed confidence that this, alongside the peaceful Ghanaian environment would be conducive for the work of the Credentials Committee.

3. She drew the attention of members of the Committee and resource persons to the January 2007 AU Executive Council Decision (EXCL/Dec.388(X)) in Addis that extended the mandate of the Interim Assembly of ECOSOCC to December 2007 and reminded them of the emphases placed by this decision on the need to ensure that the process of elections into the post-interim Assembly of the ECOSOCC is completed within this timeframe.

4. Honourable Agrebi explained that it was as a follow-up to Council's Decision and to lay the groundwork for the establishment of a substantive ECOSOCC Assembly, that the Presiding Officer of the Interim ECOSOCC, Prof. Wangari Maathai, convened the meeting of the Interim Standing Committee (ISC) that held in Cairo, Egypt from 24-26 February 2007. The meeting discussed the implications of the Council Decision and also developed a work programme that would enable the Interim Assembly to meet its mandate within the new timeframe defined by Council.

5. She intimated that although the Cairo meeting discussed a wide-range of issues, its focus was largely on questions relating to the organisation of elections into the post-interim ECOSOCC. Honourable Agrebi explained that it was within this context that the meeting examined processes of consultation, mobilisation and sensitisation carried out by members of the Interim Assembly since the launch of the ECOSOCC in 2005. She said although participants at the Cairo meeting acknowledged that quite some efforts had been dispensed in this regard, concerns were raised about the strength, scope, depth and viability of these consultations to serve as a basis for the holding of credible elections into the post-interim ECOSOCC. Accordingly, the ISC elected for a roadmap that would be transparent, inclusive, open and that would command legitimacy.

6. The Hon. Chairperson of the Credentials explained that, to set the process in motion, the ISC adopted the variables for the Application Form that was to be distributed to prospective candidates and mandated the ECOSOCC Secretariat to follow up on its dissemination, including receiving duly filled application forms for onward transmission to the Credentials Committee. She stressed that this process was intended to ensure uniformity, scientific assessment and ease of verification of claims, as well as guaranteeing accountability and transparency.

7. Hon. Agrebi briefed members of the Committee on the ECOSOCC Secretariat's execution of the Cairo mandate that included amongst others: (i) the production and effective dissemination of the draft application forms, alongside an electoral template; (ii) posting of the template and the application form, alongside other relevant documents and information regarding the electoral processes on both the AU and ECOSOCC websites; (iii) liaising with African Permanent Missions and other stakeholders for saturated adequate media publicity of the electoral process; (iv) issuing appeals to Members of the ISC to support the publicity campaign in their respective

national and regional constituencies; and (v) the publication of the template on a number of national media outlets and two continental Magazines.

8. The Chairperson of the Committee further informed members of the Committee that the response to the publicity exercise has been very impressive as reflected in the receipt of over two hundred applications from about thirty five (35) African countries for national, regional and continental elections. She stressed that this was a mark of the commitment of African civil society to the ideals and goals of both the African Union and the ECOSOCC process and also their determination to be actively involved in the activities of the Union.

9. Hon. Agrebi said the ISC and the ECOSOCC Secretariat have come a long way in the process of establishing a post-interim ECOSOCC. She noted that with the impressive response by the African civil society community, the election process into the post-interim ECOSOCC was now on course. She however, stressed that for the process to be truly irreversible, there was need for the Credentials Committee to effectively and diligently play its role as assigned to it by the ECOSOCC Statutes.

10. She underscored the strategic place of the Credentials Committee in the ECOSOCC process and the critical role of the accreditation exercise in determining the pace and direction of ECOSOCC. She intimated that the objective of the meeting was to verify and authentic application files and supportive documents tendered in by prospective candidates for elections into the ECOSOCC Assembly, with the ultimate goal of short-listing candidates for elections in line with the eligibility criteria laid down in the ECOSOCC Statutes. She recognised the enormity of the responsibility bestowed on the Committee and contended that the success or failure of the entire ECOSOCC process lies with the Committee. She urged members of the Committee to accept and execute this seeming daunting task with diligence and dedication.

11. Hon. Agrebi made a plea for the accreditation exercise to be firmly anchored on legal stipulations, particularly the requirements set out in the Statutes of ECOSOCC and the Constitutive Act of the Union. She emphasised that while all the requirements are important, the Committee had a responsibility to ensure that in measuring the applicability of these requirements, it is also guided by the need to ensure that the overall objective of ensuring that ECOSOCC elections are held at the set date of December 2007 is met. She admonished members of the Committee to be realistic and pragmatic in their work, without necessarily being complacent.

12. Hon. Agrebi said the work of the Committee has precise implications for the timetable adopted by the Interim Standing Committee in Cairo, Egypt in February 2007. She explained that although the timetable has had to be flexible with attendant implications on the agenda set in Cairo, what is important is for the process to be completed by December 2007, and more importantly, with credible and legitimate outcomes. Her expectations were that the exercise would provide the Credentials Committee, the ISC and other stakeholders a clear sense of countries or/and regions that are ready for elections. This would be reported appropriately to the Presiding Officer, the Standing Committee of ECOSOCC, the Commission of the Union and its relevant organs. She however, stressed that the Credentials Committee derives its powers and mandate from the ECOSOCC Statute in the same manner as the Interim Committee/Bureau and as a result, the Credentials Committees report to the Standing Committee would be largely for purposes of information and also to enable it appreciate the fairness and credibility of the process.

13. The Chairperson of the Credentials Committee commended the ECOSOCC Secretariat, particularly Ms. Roguiai and Dr. Ikome, under the leadership of the Principal Coordinator, CIDO, Dr. Jinmi Adisa and other staff of the Directorate for their commitment and dedication to the

ECOSOCC process. She recognised the new impetus and dynamism that they have brought to the ECOSOCC process since they joined the Secretariat in November of 2007.

13. She called on all the members of the Committee to give their utmost to this important exercise and also that decisions that are taking collectively during the meeting should be projected and defended in a collective manner.

14. Speaking after the Chairperson of the Credentials Committee, the Principal Coordinator, CIDO, Dr. Jinmi Adisa who doubled as resource person and representative of the Chairperson of the Commission, joined the Chairperson of the Committee in underscoring the crucial importance of the Credentials Committee Meeting. On behalf of the Chairperson of the Commission, Prof. Alpha Konare, Dr. Adisa also welcomed participants to the meeting. He urged members of the Committee to distinguish between resource persons and members of the Credentials Committee, emphasising that resource persons are only there to provide experts' advice, and that the primary responsibility for deciding which direction the selection process takes, lies solely with members of the Credentials Committee. He nevertheless admonished members of the Committee to be pragmatic and realistic in the selection process while at the same time upholding the prescriptions of the ECOSOCC Statutes regarding criteria for eligibility of candidates. The PC-CIDO noted that since he was not a member of the Credentials Committee and only a resource person invited by the Chairperson of the Committee, he would not play any active role in the meeting. He accordingly excused himself from the meeting after the opening session to, in his words, 'allow the President of the Committee, Hon. Agrebi and her able team to carry out their work peacefully in the quite of the M-PLAZA Hotel'.

15. Ms Roguiai and Dr. Ikome of the ECOSOCC Secretariat then took the floor to take the members of the Committee through the processes leading up to the convening of the Accra Meeting. They gave details of how they went about executing the mandate given them by the Credentials Committee, highlighting some of the difficulties and challenges they had to contend with, including lack of adequate support from some members of the Interim Standing Committee. They nevertheless acknowledged the support they received from some members of the ISC, particularly from the Presiding Officer, Prof. Maathai, the Deputy Presiding Officer for North Africa, Dr. Fatima Karadja, Mr. Akere Muna, Mr. Hassan Sunmonu, Mr. Moses Kachima and of course, the Chairperson of the Credentials Committee, Hon. Saida Agrebi.

16. They explained that the timetable agreed to in Cairo with regard to advertisements and receipt of applications could not be fully respected as the deadline for the receipt of applications at the ECOSOCC Secretariat had to be shifted on three occasions at the request of CSO groupings and some African governments that prospective candidates needed more time to be able to collate and furnish the requisite documentation for candidature.

16. Ms Roguiai and Dr. Ikome indicated that during the extension period, civil society organisations responded positively as reflected in the impressive number of applications received at the Secretariat. During this period, the Secretariat prepared updates on preparations for the election process for the Presiding Officer and members of the Interim General Assembly. The Secretariat was also in constant communication with the Chairperson of the Credentials Committee who initiated two consultation meetings with the Secretariat in Addis Ababa on and 19 April 2007. It was during the meeting of 19 April 2007 that the Chairperson of the Committee directed that a meeting of the Credentials Committee should be convened in Tunis, Tunisia, from June 8-10 2007 to examine the applications that had been received at the Secretariat.

17. The ECOSOCC Secretariat also explained why the meeting of the Credentials Committee earlier scheduled for Tunis, Tunisia was postponed. They said although preparations for the

meeting started in good time, they ran into difficulties at the last moment as Ethiopian Airlines could not deliver PTAs to participants at their respective countries in time to enable them travel to attend the meeting. Therefore realising that there would be no quorum for the meeting if it held in Tunis during the said period, the Secretariat consulted with the Chairperson of the Committee, who directed that the meeting should be postponed. And upon further consultation with the Chairperson of the Committee and other members, an agreement was reached to reschedule the meeting in Accra, Ghana.

18. During his intervention, Mr. Mohammed Abdalgail commended the Secretariat for their achievements within such a short period of time. He observed that while some countries have sent an impressive number of applications, others have either not sent any applications, or have sent only a limited number. He therefore, proposed that the election process be started in those countries with enough applications while the date for the receipt of applications should be extended for those countries from which enough applications have not been received.

19. Expanding on the point made by Mr. Mohammed, the Credentials Committee Member, Mr. Ayokunle Fagbemi argued that an exception should be made for 'challenged countries' – countries that were in conflict (Sudan, Somalia, Cote d'Ivoire), those that were emerging from conflict (DRC) and others that had very important national processes running parallel to the ECOSOCC election popularisation exercise (Nigeria). He tabled a motion on the extension of the deadline for countries that have yet to send applications. The motion read as follows: "The Credentials Committee of the ECOSOCC of the African Union wishes to extend the deadline for the nomination of candidates, particularly in those countries that have not forwarded applications, to July 30 2007. The ECOSOCC Secretariat is mandated to re-activate the necessary publicity".

20. After debates, the motion was adopted with amendments to the effect that it should be broadened to include countries from which applications were received, but that did not have the required number of candidates meeting the criteria for eligibility. This was aimed at allowing for the representation of CSOs from all fifty three Member States as stipulated in Article 4 of the ECOSOCC Statutes.

## **II. PARTICIPANTS**

21. The following Standing Committee Members and resources persons attended the meeting:

1. Hon. Saida Agrebi (Chairperson of Credentials Committee, Representing North Africa)
2. Mr. Mohammed Abdalgail (Sudan, East African, Member of the Committee)
3. Mrs. Joyce Kganyago (South Africa, Southern African, Member of the Committee)
4. Mr. Ayokunle Fagbemi (Nigeria, Western African representative. Member of the Committee)
5. Dr. Francis Ikome (AU Commission Representative to the Credentials Committee)
6. Ms Nadia Roguiai (AU Commission Representative to the Committee)
7. Dr. Jinmi Adisa (PC-CIDO, Resource Person)
8. Mrs Yodit Rustom (AUC, Secretary/support staff)
9. Mr. Solomon Engida (AUC, Support Staff)

## **III. MEETING AGENDA:**

22. The agenda items for the meeting included the following:

1. Decision and roadmap on the ECOSOCC process by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Interim Standing Committee, Cairo, February 2007-06-24
2. Opening statement by the President of the Credentials Committee, Hon. Saida Agrebi
3. Statement by Representative of the AUC, Principal Coordinator, CIDO, Dr. Jinmi Adisa
4. Commission/ECOSOCC Secretariat's update on the execution of the Cairo mandate on preparation for elections – Ms Nadia Roguai and Dr. Francis Ikome
5. Examination of examination files
6. Date, venue and agenda of next Credentials Committee Meeting
7. Proposal on the date and venue of the next Interim Committee Meeting
8. Any other Business

#### **IV. METHODOLOGY OF WORK**

23. Members of the Credentials Committee in fulfilling Article 12 (2) of the ECOSOCC Statute were guided in their work by the prescriptions of relevant articles and clauses of the ECOSOCC Statute, particularly: Article 3 relating to the composition of ECOSOCC; Article 4 dealing with membership; Article 6 defining eligibility requirements; and Article 12 defining the mandate, composition and rules of procedure of the Credentials Committee. Serious attention was also paid to the Legal Advice provided by the AU's Legal Counsel with regard to application of the eligibility requirements stipulated in Article 6 of the ECOSOCC Statutes (see attachment 1). Overall, the Committee tried as much as possible to reconcile the need to strictly adhere to the eligibility requirements contained in Article 6 of the Statutes, with meeting the overall objectives of the ECOSOCC, including the need for inclusiveness and representativeness. In this regard, the Committee also agreed that in any country where at least two (2) CSO applicants met or provisionally met the eligibility requirements, such a country was classified as either ready or provisionally ready for the elections. This is in keeping with Article 4(a) of the Statutes that provides for two (2) CSO representatives per country.

24. The procedure adopted by the committee consisted of reviewing individual applications on a country by country basis against a verification template (outlining eligibility requirements to be met by candidates) prepared by the ECOSOCC Secretariat and agreed upon by all members of the Committee. Each member of the Committee had a copy of each application that was being reviewed, alongside the verification template, allowing all members a clear picture of the deposition of the candidates. Decisions on the eligibility or lack thereof, of each candidate were arrived at by consensus. The overarching principle that underpinned the work of the Committee was consensus and collective responsibility.

25. Applications were classified into three major categories: National, Regional and Continental. A number of applications were received from the Diaspora were received and classified accordingly. However, members of the Committee agreed that Diaspora applications could not be examined since the details of the Diaspora electoral process were still to be worked out. Meanwhile, to facilitate the selection process (for national, regional and continental elections) using scientific and verifiable schemes three sub-categories were identified. They were:

- 1) Qualified (Q)
- 2) Provisionally qualified (PQ) – that is, those whose definitive qualification was contingent on providing further supporting document (s) to help clarify a claim contained in their application
- 3) Not qualified (NQ)

26. In order to ensure and guarantee transparency and accountability, the Committee agreed that its deliberations and decisions would be subject to appeal by candidates through appropriate channels – within a well-defined timeframe.

## **V. STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON THE SELECTION EXERCISE**

27. The Committee examined two hundred and eighteen (218) applications received from thirty five (35) African member states of the Union, that is, from the five regions of the continent. Out of this:

- Fifty one (51) were found to be fully qualified; and
- Fifty one (51) provisionally qualified

In other words, a total of 102 applications are qualified and/or provisionally qualified candidates. Of the thirty five countries from which applications were received, twenty (20) were found to be ready or/and provisionally ready for national elections.

For regional elections, out of the five recognised regions of the continent, two – East and West – were found to be ready for elections.

At the continental level, out of the 26 civil society groupings that presented their candidatures for continental elections, 12 met the eligibility requirements. The Committee agreed that this number was representative enough and therefore that continental elections could proceed (see table below).

**CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**ECOSOCC ELECTION APPLICANTS' VERIFICATION STATISTICS (June 2007)**

No.	Country	Total No. of Applications Received	Qualification Status												Observation		
			National			Regional			Continental			Diaspora					
			Q	PQ	NQ	Q	PQ	NQ	Q	PQ	NQ	Q	PQ	NQ			
1	Algeria	13	2	1	10												Ready for election
2	Burkina Faso	6	1	4	1												Ready for election
3	Cameroun	12	2	3	5					1	1						Ready for election
4	Egypt	6	5	0	1												Ready for election
5	Ethiopia	14	3	4	3		1					3					Ready for election
6	Kenya	34	5	3	14		3		2	1	6						Ready for election
7	Madagascar	3	2	1													Ready for election
8	Malawi	4	3		1												Ready for election
9	Mauritius	5	2	2	1												Ready for election
10	Niger	6	2	4													Ready for election
11	Nigeria	24	8	10	3			2		1							Ready for election
12	Sudan	17	6	5	5	1											Ready for election
13	Tunisia	4	2	2	0												Ready for election
14	Uganda	4	1	1	2												Provisionally ready
15	Zambia	7	1	1	2			1		2							Provisionally ready
16	Côte d'Ivoire	7	1	3	1		1					1					Provisionally ready
17	Ghana	7	1	1	1	1			2			1					Provisionally ready
18	South Africa	6	1	1				2		1	1						Provisionally ready
19	DRC	6		2	4												Provisionally ready
20	Gabon	4		2	2												Provisionally ready
21	Angola	2			1					1							Re-advertise
22	Benin	3			3												Re-advertise
23	Botswana	1					1										Re-advertise
24	Burundi	1			1												Re-advertise
25	Cape Verde	1			1												Re-advertise
26	Chad	2			2												Re-advertise
27	Congo	1			1												Re-advertise
28	Gambia	1			1												Re-advertise
29	Mali	1	1														Re-advertise
30	Senegal	4		1				1	1			1					Re-advertise
31	Sierra Leone	1			1												Re-advertise
32	Rwanda	1			1												Re-advertise
33	Tanzania	3	1		2												Re-advertise
34	Togo	3			2			1									Re-advertise
35	Zimbabwe	4	1		1			2									Re-advertise
<b>Total</b>		<b>218</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>						

**VI. OBSERVED TRENDS AND COMMENTS**

28. No applications were received from CSOs in eighteen (18) African Union member states, translating to a 33.9 percent non-participation rate. Of the 35 countries that sent applications, the highest number came from Kenya (34); followed by Nigeria (24); Sudan (17); Ethiopia (14); Algeria (13); and Cameroon (12).

Overall, the quality of application files was poor, particularly with regard to the manner in which application forms were filled and also serious gaps in support documents provided – some of which lacked signatures, appropriate stamps and dates of issue. This explains why even some applications that were deemed as qualified are still required to provide some clarity regarding some supporting documents they tendered in (See table above).

29. Importantly also, the Committee realised that the most difficult criteria to be met by applicants were those regarding membership and membership contributions. Many classical NGOs met a good number of the other criteria, but were unable to scale through due to problems with their resource bases that were dominantly of external origins. Some of the NGOs, it was observed do not receive membership dues or are not membership based. In this regard, the groups that easily met the 50% membership and membership dues resource requirement were mostly social and professional associations – lawyers union, trade and labour / teachers' unions and others.

30. With the exception of Senegal and Zimbabwe, every other country that presented up to four (4) CSO applications was able to have at least two meeting the eligibility requirement, making such a country ready or provisionally ready for national elections.

31. With regards to regional trends, East African had the most impressive number and quality of applicants, as reflected in the fact that four countries from the region (Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Sudan) were found to be ready for elections. Although the number of applications received from West Africa was not as high as that from East Africa, five countries from the region (Nigeria, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, and Niger) were found to be either ready or provisionally ready for elections. In North Africa, with the exception of Libya and Morocco from which no CSOs applications were received, the other three North African countries that applied had the required number of eligible candidates and were accordingly classified as being ready for elections. For the Central African region, Cameroon was found to be ready for elections while Gabon and the DRC were classified as provisionally ready.

32 For the regional elections, two (East and West Africa) out of the five regions of the continent were found to be ready for regional elections. For the continental process, of the 26 applications received, 12 met the eligibility requirements and are qualified for elections – and this number is sufficient for continental elections to be held.

33. An important lesson learned from this exercise is that it requires more time and more hands than was provided for in the Accra meeting. Even more important is the fact that some applicant CSO groupings that are actually doing some good work in the continent and that are genuinely committed to advancing the AU/ECOSOCC mission and goals could not unfortunately, meet the core eligibility requirements contained in the ECOSOCC Statutes. The Committee wishes to draw the attention of the ISC on the need for the Eligibility Criteria into ECOSOCC to be further discussed for probable amendment by the competent decision-making bodies of the AU to facilitate future ECOSOCC electoral processes.

34. Finally, on the Diaspora, nine (9) applications were received and classified by the Committee. However, the Committee could not examine them, because the modalities for representatives of the Diaspora to the ECOSOCC and the criteria for their selection are still to be clarified by the Commission. Nevertheless, the Committee observed that the issue of Diaspora representation needed to be addressed urgently and also that when the issue would be subsequently addressed, applications from prospective candidates for Diaspora representation into the ECOSOCC would have to be vetted by the Credentials Committee, like those for national, regional and continental elections, although the criteria are most likely going to be different. The Committee argued that this was necessary to ensure equal and balanced treatment in the continental and Diaspora processes.

## VII. THE WAY FORWARD

35. **For countries and regions that are not yet ready for elections:** The election process needs to be re-advertise in countries and regions that did not apply and also those that applied but were found not yet ready for elections (deadline for this exercise should be July 30 2007). In all, 33 African countries and 3 regions are concerned.

36. **For Provisionally qualified candidates:** The ECOSOCC Secretariat was mandated to follow up on provisionally qualified candidates to send required clarification and support for claims made in their applications (deadline 15 July 2007).

37. **On the question of an Electoral College:** Three options were presented for further discussion: (1) limiting the electoral college to qualified candidates; (2) extending it to include those who applied, but were not qualified; and (3) Co-opting all members of the Interim ECOSOCC in each member state – whether they applied or not – to be part of the electoral college.

38. **On the next Credentials Committee Meeting:** It was proposed that, to give the Secretariat enough time to re-advertise the process, receive and collate applications, the next Credentials Committee meeting to examine new applications should be scheduled for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Week of August in a venue to be decided later.

39. **On Next Standing Committee Meeting:** In light of the implications of the outcomes of the work of the Credentials Committee on the agenda of the next meeting of the Interim Standing Committee, members of the Credentials Committee discussed a possible appropriate date and venue for the next meeting of the ISC. It was proposed that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Interim Standing Committee Meeting should take place in Yaoundé, during the last Week of August, shortly after the Credentials Committee Meeting. This proposal was made on account that Central Africa has yet to host any ECOSOCC event since its launch in 2005.