



ECOSOCC

Bringing people's power to the African Union?

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Provision for an Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) among the new organs of the African Union (AU) offers to bridge the distance between African governments and their peoples. Designed and implemented correctly, the Council could be an influential forum for the diverse voices of civil society. Greater popular involvement in government is a prerequisite for stability on the continent—particularly since governance is often weak, corruption endemic and democracy in a number of countries little more than a façade.

The essay considers comparative institutions at national, regional and international levels as examples of how ECOSOCC could work. We argue that its structure will have to take account of the varying strengths and weaknesses of social and economic actors in different parts of Africa, and between those from AU countries and other regions of the world. Ultimately, success depends on whether African civil society is ready and able to take the lead in this initiative. The paper concludes with a number of recommendations.

AU provisions

The Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU) provides for an Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) as “an advisory organ composed of different social and professional groups of the Member States of the Union”.¹ This institution is meant to give effect to the principle of “participation of the African peoples in the activities of the Union”² and recognition of “the need to build a partnership between governments and all segments of civil society”.³

Along with the Pan-African Parliament and the Court of Justice, ECOSOCC is one of the new structures intended to open the

intergovernmental system of the AU to greater oversight and accountability. All are still in the design stages, as the core administrative and decision-making bodies of the AU (namely the Assembly of Heads of State, the Executive Council of Foreign Ministers, the Commission and the Permanent Representatives Committee of Ambassadors) took first priority, and were only mandated in July last year.

Of the three, the Pan-African Parliament is furthest down the legal road, with its Protocol⁴ awaiting ratification by a simple majority of AU member states (27 out of 53 countries). Nine member states had ratified the Protocol by November 2002.

Besides the core AU structure, ECOSOCC received the most attention at the Heads of State Summit in Lusaka, 2001. The Lusaka Decision on the Implementation of the AU requested then secretary-general of the Organisation of Africa Unity (OAU), Amara Essy, to submit a “comprehensive report and recommendations” on ECOSOCC to the next meeting of the Council of Ministers during 2002.

The report had to cover:

- structure, functioning, areas of competence and relationships to other organs of the Union;
- procedures and criteria for selecting the members of ECOSOCC, including their terms of office; and
- the relationship between ECOSOCC and African regional non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and professional groups.⁵

This report was not completed in time for the 76th Council of Ministers Meeting held in Durban, 2002 just prior to the launch of the AU. At present a technical committee is being established that will look at the above and eventually draft a Protocol on ECOSOCC. At this early stage opinions on its composition and functioning differ widely. It is now unlikely that the protocol will be finalised in time for approval by the next Assembly meeting of Heads of State of the AU in Maputo in July 2003, as was the intention, and this will probably stand over to the next Assembly meeting in Madagascar the year thereafter.

Whether the current delay in creating ECOSOCC is politically motivated, or more likely a procedural bottleneck, is debatable. It is, however, an opportunity for civil society to shape its own future engagement with the AU before governments get around to doing it for them. And it is about time that African leaders were held to their professed commitments on this score, which have been set down in numerous OAU documents since the early 1990s.

OAU precedents

Popular participation became a catch phrase

at the OAU in response to the first wave of democratisation in post-Cold War Africa. In 1990 Heads of State signed the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation in Arusha, Tanzania, in the same year as their Declaration on the Political and Socio-Economic Situation in Africa and the Fundamental Changes taking place in the World.⁶ This led to an ambitious plan for greater integration into an African Economic Community (AEC), set out in the Abuja Treaty, 1991.

The treaty, which entered into force in 1994, states that the AEC:

shall establish relations of co-operation with African non-governmental organisations ... [and] with socio-economic organisations and associations including mainly, producers, transport operators, workers, employers, youth, women, artisans and other professional organisations and associations ...

Although these are not specified as civil society organisations, the list serves as a guideline for any definition of civil society contained in a draft protocol establishing ECOSOCC. This is because the Abuja Treaty remains in force, except in places where it contradicts the AU Constitutive Act.

Furthermore, the Lusaka Summit of 2001 decided that “in view of the establishment of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council in the Constitutive Act of the African Union, as well as of the Specialised Technical Committees that report to the Executive Council of the African Union, the ECOSOC provided for in the Abuja Treaty will cease to exist at the end of the transition period”, that is, by the time of the inaugural AU Summit in Durban during mid-2002.⁷

The Commission of the Abuja Treaty was a different animal to the ECOSOCC envisaged today by the AU, both in composition and function. The Abuja Commission comprised the cabinet ministers responsible for economic development, planning and integration of each member state, with participation from representatives of the regional economic

communities (RECs). The primary objective was high-level economic and social policy co-ordination rather than civil society participation. In the three sessions in which it met, during 1996, 1998 and 1999, the AEC ECOSOC prepared the framework for the Protocol on Relations between the AEC and RECs, and made recommendations on international trade negotiations with *inter alia* the European Union, (EU), the World Trade Organisation and the ACP-EU Convention.⁸

Despite the fact that civil society was not to be part of the Commission, the Abuja Treaty did pay lip service for the AEC to create mechanisms for consultation with both NGOs and socio-economic organisations⁹—an initiative that was also reflected in the so-called Kampala process of the early 1990s that established the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Co-operation in Africa (CSSDCA). The CSSDCA initiative would eventually culminate in a Solemn Declaration that OAU Heads of State adopted in Lomé, Togo during 2000. As part of its plan of action, the Lomé Declaration would “[e]ncourage the participation and contribution of the civil society in our states to the efforts to bring about further democratisation in our continent,”¹⁰ and decided to establish a Standing Conference, which would meet every two years during the OAU summit. The first such Standing Conference subsequently occurred in 2002 during the Durban Summit.

The Lomé Solemn Declaration also indicated that provision “... should be made for African Parliamentarians to make their contributions to the conference through the Pan-African Parliament, while representatives of civil society may forward their views and recommendations to the Standing Conference through the OAU General Secretariat.”¹¹ Nigeria and South Africa subsequently donated funds to the Secretariat that led to the creation of a CSSDCA co-ordination unit in Addis Ababa.¹²

In part fulfilment of its mandate to solicit

the input of civil society, the General Secretariat of the OAU hosted two large meetings of African civil society organisations (CSO) in Addis Ababa. The 1st OAU–Civil Society Conference was held 11–15 June 2001 with the theme ‘Building partnership for promoting peace and development in Africa’.¹³ The main objective of that conference was to assist in promoting a homegrown African civil society and to enhance its contribution to the fulfilment of the Union’s mission. A framework for co-operation between the OAU and CSOs was adopted, that included the decision to establish a civil society desk within the General Secretariat, subsequently located within the CSSDCA co-ordination unit.¹⁴

The 2nd AU–Civil Society Conference was held 11–14 June 2002 with its theme ‘Developing partnership between the OAU and the African civil society organisations’. During the meeting one of the working groups worked through a draft memorandum of agreement on commitments that African Heads of State were subsequently to agree to in Durban during the 2002 Summit (during the CSSDCA Standing Conference). This ‘improved’ version was subsequently adopted without discussion or debate by leaders during July,¹⁵ and speaks of providing “... appropriate conditions for effective participation at national and continental levels by civil society organisations, in particular women’s groups, trade unions, the youth and professional associations as envisaged in the Constitutive Act of the African Union.”¹⁶ Key to the provisions within the Act is, of course, ECOSOCC.

The memorandum includes a series of clear undertakings to standards of democracy, human rights and other issues that would, if implemented, have far-reaching implications for the continent and present efforts are under way to harmonise this with the intention to establish a peer review process in Africa.

Among other recommendations, the 2nd AU–Civil Society Conference established an

AU-CSO Provisional Working Group (PWG) composed of 20 representatives from civil society from across the African continent.¹⁷ The terms of reference for the working group are to:

- prepare criteria for accreditation and affiliation of African CSOs across the continent;
- participate in the formulation of possible modalities relating to the participation of civil society in ECOSOCC and other relevant AU organs;
- develop a code of conduct and ethics for CSOs;
- assist the AU in the elaboration of a plan of action relating to CSO activities and contributions to the OAU/AU and forging networks; and
- assist in resource mobilisation and popularise the AU.

Armed with a two-year lease of life, this group met in Ghana towards the end of 2002 and will again meet in Cairo during March 2003 and has an important task in shaping the future engagement of the AU with civil society at a general level. The most burning issue is: to what extent will civil society engagement occur through ECOSOCC alone? The obvious danger is that ECOSOCC could serve to co-opt and marginalise NGOs—particularly those engaged in the more sensitive areas such as advocacy in support of anti-corruption and the advance of democracy, conflict prevention and human rights issues—thereby closing off their ability to seek accreditation and observer status to those AU structures that deal with good governance, democracy, human rights and peace and security issues.

The existing system on 'Criteria for granting OAU observer status' was adopted in Cairo during 1993¹⁸ and the Organisation subsequently granted observer status to a number of CSOs as well as concluding memoranda of understanding and co-operation agreements with others. However, the rights of observers and partners were limited and the criteria for accreditation narrow and restrictive. As part of his programme for reform, then OAU

secretary-general Salim Ahmed Salim had proposed closer and more systematic collaboration with African civil society to the Council of Ministers and Summit in Harare in 1997—a theme subsequently also reflected in the Constitutive Act establishing the AU.

Comparative models

The traditional response to these questions is to seek comparative examples to inform the future of ECOSOCC, as we briefly do below, first looking at the UN Economic and Social Council, then at the EU Economic and Social Committee and finally at the French *Conseil Économique et Social* and its African variants.

UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) established by the UN Charter, Article 55(a-c) is presumably the model on which the AEC ECOSOC was based. It is the principal organ of the UN used to promote economic and social development, as well as human rights. It receives reports from the many UN agencies working in these areas, such as the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP).¹⁹

UN ECOSOC has 54 members elected for three-year terms by the General Assembly. Seats on the Council are allotted on the basis of geographical representation, with 14 African, 11 Asian, 6 East European, 10 Latin American and Caribbean and 13 Western European and other seats. The Council meets annually for four weeks, with a high-level session attended by National Cabinet Ministers, Chiefs of UN agencies and other senior government officials. There are a number of subsidiary Functional Commissions and Committees that carry out the policy-making work of the Council.²⁰

The Council is not primarily a vehicle for civil society engagement with the UN, in the sense that its voting members are government representatives. However,

through the Council Committee on NGOs, UN ECOSOC consults with over 2,100 registered NGOs. These organisations are allowed to send observers to the high-level session and submit written statements to ECOSOC.²¹

EU Economic and Social Committee (ESC)

In contrast to the UN system of indirect consultation with NGOs through ECOSOC, the EU's Economic and Social Committee directly represents the various economic and social components of organised civil society. Like a parliament, the ESC is an assembly of representatives. It is a consultative body established by the 1957 Treaty of Rome.

The ESC is based on a corporatist model of government, in which multiparty democracy is supplemented by tripartite negotiations between government, business and organised labour. With views that are sometimes diametrically opposed, the traditional social partners, Group I 'Employers' and Group II 'Workers', subject issues of EU economic and social policy to consensus-building discussions, which deepen the legitimacy of EU decisions. In addition, Group III 'Various Interests' are represented, including professional bodies, women's organisations, consumer groups, environmental lobbyists, small business, farmers' associations, academics and NGOs.

The ESC has the power to issue three types of opinion:

- opinions on matters referred by the EU Commission, the Council and the European Parliament;
- own-initiative opinions, which allow the Committee to express its views whenever it deems it appropriate; and
- exploratory opinions in cases where the Commission has asked it to consider a matter and make specific suggestions.

Specialised study groups, usually assisted by four experts, are set up under six sections, namely: (1) Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion; (2) the Single Market, Production and Consumption; (3) Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society; (4) Employment, Social Affairs and

Citizenship; (5) Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment; and (6) External Relations. Temporary ad hoc committees may be set up for other topics.

As befits a representative assembly, the ESC has 222 members—more than four times the size of the UN ECOSOC. Members are proposed by their national governments and appointed by the Council of the EU for a renewable term of four years. They live and work in their home countries and attend committee meetings in Brussels. The number of members from each country is based on population size, with 24 members each for the UK, France, Germany and Italy; 21 members for Spain; 12 each for Austria, Belgium, Greece, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden; 9 each for Denmark, Finland and Ireland; and 6 members for Luxembourg.²²

French Conseil Économique et Social (CES)

Forerunner of the EU Economic and Social Committee, the French *Conseil Économique et Social*, grew out of 19th century political thought on social justice and organising society around industrial production. A decree passed on 16 January 1925 established the *Conseil National Économique*, consisting of 47 representatives of industrialists, trade unions and the state, chaired by the head of government. Membership was expanded to 260 in 1936 and the *Conseil* was granted additional powers to arbitrate economic disputes and draft industrial agreements. The institution was formalised by the 1946 French Constitution and was given its current name of *Conseil Économique et Social* (CES) by the 1958 Constitution.

The CES now has 231 members who meet in plenary twice a month. Significantly, more than two-thirds of the council members (163/231) are designated by the organisation to which they belong, who then notify the prime minister of their choices. These members include 69 trade union representatives; 65 representatives of industry, trade, agriculture and professional groups; 19 members of co-operatives and mutual benefit societies; and 10 members of

family associations. The French government appoints the remaining 68 members, including 40 technical experts in economic, social, scientific and cultural affairs.²³ With this composition, the *Conseil* is able to perform the dual functions of providing non-governmental expertise in policy making and acting as a representative forum for negotiation and buy-in from diverse social and economic actors.

African examples at national level

Several Francophone African countries inherited their own versions of the CES. While at first glance they may be the same as the French model, in reality these copycat institutions have tended to be less vigorous and independent. For example, in the Republic of Guinea the 45 *conseillers* of the CES are appointed by presidential decree, as is the secretary-general.²⁴ The president of Burkina Faso appoints the president of the CES in that country.²⁵ In Algeria, the head of the *Conseil National Economique et Social* (CNES) is also a presidential appointment.²⁶ President Wade of Senegal shut down his own country's version of the CES in 2001 as part of a constitutional review process that could see the functions of the CES and that of a second house (senate) merged.

South Africa has its own experiment in corporatist democracy in the form of the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC). This is a "representative and consensus-seeking forum for social dialogue on national economic policy".²⁷ Four groups representing government, business, organised labour and "organised community" (women, youth, disabled and civic organisations) meet annually for a consultative summit of around 300 delegates.

Established in 1995, the Council played an important role in the fraught area of labour law reform in the mid-1990s, most notably on the Labour Relations Act, the Basic Conditions of Employment Act and the Employment Equity Act. The fatal flaw of these negotiations, however, was that they tended to favour organised labour and big

business interests at the expense of the vast informal sector, small business and the unemployed. These three atomised groups have proved difficult to organise or represent at national level. Yet they cannot be ignored in a country with a conservatively estimated 29.4% unemployment rate²⁸—an issue even more germane elsewhere on the continent.

Key considerations

While the brief review provided earlier would indicate that the most relevant and appropriate example to draw upon is the EU Economic and Social Committee, this does not mean that the continent could wholesale import systems evolved to serve the European socio-economic context. The AU needs to customise and improve on the EU model, rather than adopt it as a blueprint—and would clearly have to be much more modest in its ambitions.

Function and powers

The key question in terms of the functions and powers of ECOSOCC is the relative weight that is to be attached to the advisory function on the one hand, and that of representivity on the other. The larger the organisation and the greater the focus on representivity, the more difficult the advisory function becomes. In practice, the manner in which ECOSOCC would invariably function would be that a small board or executive committee would coordinate and run the Council, while the work would be conducted among the members of ECOSOCC divided into different departments.

The French CES, for example, consists of nine departments, namely: social affairs; labour; regional development and town and country planning; environment; finance; external affairs; production, research and technology; food and agriculture; and economic affairs. ECOSOCC may be inclined to organise itself along the specialisation reflected in the seven technical committees, and/or the portfolios of the Commission and the other organs within the Union.²⁹

The power of ECOSOCC lies in the fact that, as a structure of the Union, it has the 'right to be heard' and its submissions taken into account.³⁰ The advisory function of ECOSOCC could also be strengthened to include a monitoring and oversight role if the draft protocol were to include provision to revise the ECOSOCC powers after a period of five years—in line with the professed desire of African leaders to institute a system of peer review. A similar clause is contained in the Protocol to the AEC Treaty establishing the Pan-African Parliament, to allow for a strengthening of its powers in the future. The Pan-African Parliament protocol also provides for another innovative feature that could be copied by ECOSOCC, namely an initial small composition (five MPs from each African country) during an interim period that would be expanded at a later stage.

Another way to give ECOSOCC 'teeth', would be to link it to the reporting system of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights—implying that the latter body simultaneously table its reports to the Assembly of the Union and to structures such as ECOSOCC and the Pan-African Parliament. Currently, the Commission submits reports directly to the Assembly of the AU, which then adopt them more by way of process than substance. Requiring these reports to go through ECOSOCC would open them to greater transparency and public scrutiny in the politically sensitive area of human rights violations.

Composition

Any discussion that seeks to bridge the gap between the state and CSOs must seek to define what it means by the latter. Without clearly defining our understanding of what constitutes civil society in the African context and what we want ECOSOCC to do, we will not move the debate forward. For its part, the AU has thus far adopted an inclusive approach that would seek to include political parties, intermediate associational and autonomous voluntary social community, labour, the business sector, etc. As the AU CSSDCA Unit points out:

[W]hile the idea of 'civil society' in liberal democratic discourse emphasises certain intrinsic characteristics, notably voluntary participation, and separation and autonomy from the state, most organisations in Africa in reality only embody these characteristics to varying degrees. The boundaries between state and civil society are often blurred and overlap in most countries, and individuals are known to play roles in both sectors, since CSOs tend to be largely dependent on other segments of society (including the state) in terms of financial and human resources. Internal organisational relations within some organisations may also not be fully participatory or democratic. Thus separation, autonomy and voluntariness as intrinsic values of civil society remain largely a question of degree.³¹

The traditional more narrowly defined sectors of civil society, which includes organised labour, business and professional groupings, are all fraught with problems in the African context. In many African countries, less than 10% of the labour force is employed in the formal economy.³² For example, in 2001 in Cameroon, over 84% of total employment was in the informal economy. In 1997, in Ghana 89% of working age people were self-employed in the informal economy and only five per cent of the labour force of Côte d'Ivoire was in formal wage employment, of whom almost half were employed by the public sector. In sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, the informal economy contributes 41% of GDP.³³

When viewed through the European lens, African civil society—trade unions, professional bodies, specialist NGOs, etc.—is extremely weak. The AU will have to create opportunities to strengthen these organisations. Ideally far greater weighting should be given to grassroots organisations and rural constituencies, such as women's savings clubs, traditional leaders, small business and agricultural groups to reflect more accurately the true composition of

African civil society. But how to do this in practice and what practical contribution this will make to the core advisory function also has to be considered.

This indicates that the composition of the AU ECOSOCC will have to be very different from the tripartite (with special interest groups tacked on) European model. Specifically, if the AU is to live up to the promise to engage more with women in civil society, it should consider that 84% of all African women working in the non-agricultural sector are in informal employment.³⁴ The agricultural sector also obviously requires a greater slice of representation in Africa than in Europe, as it is by far the most important source of employment.³⁵

Regional vs. national membership

Two proposals are being mooted for how ECOSOCC membership should be composed in terms of geographical representation. One interprets Article 22 of the AU Constitutive Act, that ECOSOCC be “composed of different social and professional groups of the Member States of the Union” as prescribing the EU model whereby each member state is allocated a proportion of seats, based on GDP or population size, for nationally based CSOs. The alternative is that membership be allocated on a sub-regional basis, with equal representation for the five regional blocs recognised by the AU, namely Southern, East, North, West and Central Africa.

There are foreseeable disadvantages to allocating seats strictly proportionally (i.e. along population/GDP lines) among member states. First, the AU is based on the multilateral principle of equal representation for each member state, irrespective of size. Tensions arise when dominant member states are afforded greater representation, for example, in the newly constituted Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Seats were distributed between ECOWAS member states on the basis of population size, which resulted in 35 seats for Nigeria, 8 for Ghana, 7 for Côte d’Ivoire, 6 for Burkina Faso,

Mali, Niger and Senegal and 5 each for the other eight member states. Not surprisingly, Côte d’Ivoire raised objections to this system and refused to participate.

On the one hand, it may be necessary to weight membership of ECOSOCC towards the smaller countries, in the interests of building civil society in places where it is weak. On the other hand, the overall strength of the institution will stand or fall on the participation of the robust civil societies of subregional giants like South Africa and Nigeria.

Second, the independence of ECOSOCC would be better served if members were not chosen by or through their own governments. A subregionally based membership would allow CSOs, particularly in countries with repressive or intolerant governments, to rise above the heat of national politics.

A possible compromise is to design a formula that allocates at least one member from each of the 53 member states of the AU and an additional 10 members from each subregion, reflecting all the sectors of civil society (i.e. trade unions, business and professional associations, agricultural groups, women’s organisations, NGOs, etc). This would bring ECOSOCC to a manageable yet representative size of 103 members. Ideally, the 50 national members should be appointed by national coalitions of civil society in each country, and not by their governments. The chairman of the AU Commission could play a role in ensuring fair cross-sectoral spread of civil society representatives by appointing some of the subregional members.

Based on the adoption of the clusters around which the seven technical committees are based, adding in two additional areas for democracy/human rights and peace and security issues (a total therefore of nine clusters), each of Africa’s five regions would have a single representative per cluster (therefore nine times five), plus provision for various professional and other associations. Due note will have to be taken of language and gender in this process.

Conclusion

CSOs are not states and there can be no pretence that ECOSOCC wishes to appropriate for itself powers and functions equivalent to those of the member states of the AU. But African government is, on much of the continent, little more than a façade and the claim to legitimacy of many self-appointed dictators is shallow. At the same time, few countries on the continent have national civil society structures and professional bodies that could serve as a representative basis for CSO interaction with ECOSOCC within a continental organisation. These considerations complicate and cloud easy solutions to the issue of composition.

What is clear from this first cursory presentation of the debate is that the two issues of CSO accreditation to the various structures of the AU and the establishment of ECOSOCC should be separate. Furthermore, executive political control or direction of CSO engagement or selection to both should be avoided if civil society is to bring any additional value to the table. Otherwise CSOs will simply mouth government views.

What ECOSOCC needs most is a champion to get it off the ground. After all, it was the enthusiasm of the South African parliamentarians, and Speaker of the National Assembly Frene Ginwala in particular, that built momentum around the Pan-African Parliament. While the South African government is keen to mobilise this country's well-developed civil society to draft a national position on ECOSOCC for submission to the AU Summit in Maputo in July 2003, this idea has yet to be taken up with much enthusiasm by key players such as the Congress of South African Trade Unions or the NGO Coalition. South African initial enthusiasm to host ECOSOCC has waned considerably in recent months, as the government's continental ambitions and engagements have taken concrete form, moving its focus away from 'soft' to 'hard' power consideration, reflected in a concerted drive to work towards the

resolution of conflicts and the establishment of the AU Peace and Security Council.

Naturally the driving force behind ECOSOCC should be African CSOs themselves, and not governments. It remains to be seen whether CSOs will use this window period to their best advantage, to push for further democratisation of Africa.

Notes

- 1 Constitutive Act of the African Union, 2000, Article 22.
- 2 *Ibid*, Article 4(c).
- 3 *Ibid*, Preamble.
- 4 Protocol to the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community establishing the Pan-African Parliament, 2001.
- 5 AHG/Dec. 1 (XXXVII), Decision on the Implementation of the Sirte Summit Decision on the African Union, paragraph 7(a).
- 6 AHG/Dec. 1 (XXVI).
- 7 AHG/Dec. 1 (XXXVII), par 7(b).
- 8 Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA), Background to economic and social councils of the United Nations and OAU/AEC, unpublished paper, 15 January 2003.
- 9 Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community, Abuja 1991, Articles 90 & 91.
- 10 Par 14.
- 11 Par 15.
- 12 Originally the unit reported to the assistant secretary-general Political Affairs, but following a recent internal restructuring within the Interim Commission, the unit now reports directly to the interim chairman.
- 13 The conference was also part of efforts to implement the programme of reform and renewal that the secretary-general of the OAU submitted to the Sessions of the Council of Ministers and the Summit in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1997, which included the strengthening of OAU-Civil Society collaboration.
- 14 The framework for AU-Civil Society Co-operation was adopted at the 74th Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers, held in Lusaka, Zambia, in July 2001.
- 15 Heads of State and Government First Standing Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Co-operation in Africa (CSSDCA), 8-9 July 2002, Durban, South Africa, OAU/Civil 3(2), Memorandum of Understanding on Security, Stability, Development and Co-operation in Africa.
- 16 Part II, sub-par (w).
- 17 Three representatives from each region of Africa, two from the African Diaspora and three sectoral representatives. In 2004 a more formalised steering committee will be elected.
- 18 Decision AHG/192 (XXIX).

- 19 UN Economic and Social Council website, <www.un.org/esa/coordination/ecosoc/about.htm> (accessed 15 January 2003).
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 The ESC: A bridge between Europe and civil society, <www.ces.eu.int> (accessed 15 January 2003).
- 23 French CES website, <ces.ecritel.net/ces_dat2/english/en1.htm> (accessed 15 January 2003).
- 24 Government of Guinea website: <www.guinee.gov.gn> (accessed 15 January 2003).
- 25 Government of Burkina Faso website: <www.primature.gov.bf/republic/cescomp.htm> (accessed 15 January 2003).
- 26 Algerian Government website: <www.cnes.dz> (accessed 15 January 2003).
- 27 NEDLAC website: <www.nedlac.org.za> (accessed 15 January 2003).
- 28 Official unemployment rate according to Statistics South Africa, *Labour Force Survey*, September 2002.
- 29 The Ministerial level deals with:
- rural economy and agricultural matters;
 - monetary and financial affairs;
 - trade, customs and immigration matters;
 - industry, science and technology, energy, natural resources and environment;
 - transport, communications and tourism;
 - health, labour and social affairs;
 - education, culture and human resources.
- The other structures of the AU include the Assembly, Executive Council, the Pan-African Parliament, the Court of Justice, the Commission in Addis Ababa, the Permanent Representative

Committee, and three financial institutions (African Central Bank, African Monetary Fund and the African Investment Bank).

Those CSOs engaged with democracy, human rights, conflict resolution and related aspects would wish to interact with the Commission and the various structures of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) including its Summit, Council, etc., once established. The PSC will include a Panel of the Wise and a Military Staff Committee. The Commission consists of units working on:

- Peace and Security
- Political Affairs
- Infrastructure and Energy
- Social Affairs
- Human Resources, Science and Technology
- Trade and Industry
- Rural Economy and Agriculture
- Economic Affairs

- 30 At the same time ECOSOCC would not have the exclusive right to be heard since each individual sub-structure or organ of the Union will inevitably retain the right to engage or call on submissions and hearings from whom it may desire.
- 31 Concept Paper on AU–Civil Society Collaboration, developed by the CSSDCA unit for the first meeting of the PWG in Ghana, October 2002, p 4.
- 32 International Labour Office (ILO), *Global Employment Trends*, January 2003, p 76.
- 33 Ibid, p 80.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Ibid.