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Welcome Address by Dr. Jinmi Adisa, Director CIDO and Head of ECOSOCC Secretariat, Delivered to the 1st Extra-Ordinary Session of the Standing Committee of the 2nd ECOSOCC Permanent General Assembly, 11-14 August 2015, Nairobi, Kenya

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Your Excellency, Ambassador Zaddoxk Syongo, Representative of the Kenyan Government,

Mr. Joseph Chilengi, the Presiding Officer, ECOSOCC,

Members of the Bureau of ECOSOCC,

Members of the Standing Committee of ECOSOCC,

Colleagues from the African Union Commission,

Delegates of the African Civil Society Community,

Representatives of the Media and the Fourth Estate,

Distinguished Guests,

Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is with honor and delight that I welcome you all to this Extraordinary Session of the Standing Committee of the 2nd Permanent General Assembly of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union (ECOSOCC). This is, by and large, a technical meeting designed to build on the work that ECOSOCC Assembly and its various sub-organs have been doing since its inauguration here in Nairobi in December 2014 and to accomplish the set objectives of the Organ within the frame work of AU Council Decisions EX.CL 869(XXVI) of January 2015 and EX.CL 924 (XXVII) of June 2015.

This Extra-Ordinary Session of the Executive Organ of ECOSOCC has been convened at the initiative of the Presiding Officer to consolidate and accelerate the pace of work and enable the rapid institutionalization of the ECOSOCC Process.

In the course of the last AU Summit held in Johannesburg, South Africa from 7-15 June 2015, the Executive Council of the African Union took note of the Report of the ECOSOCC and the recommendations contained therein as well as the observations and comments of Member States. It then commended ECOSOCC for activities undertaken during the period under review and gave it two further immediate tasks including work on the building of ECOSOCC National Chapters and the active pursuit of a harmonized mechanism and clear criteria for the granting of AU Consultative and Observer Status to CSOs in Africa. This is over and beyond the duty set by the previous Summit to facilitate the filling of existing vacant posts in the ECOSOCC General Assembly to ensure wider representativity of the African Union family. These are some

but not all of the objectives of this meeting. The specific aims and objectives will be provided in detail in the Keynote Address of the Presiding Officer who will also propose ways and means of dealing with critical issues for the consideration of this Executive Organ.

Meanwhile the Secretariat in CIDO is happy that within a mere six months of its constitution, the activities and work of the 2nd ECOSOCC General Assembly has attracted the commendation of the Executive Organs of the AU. It is an aphorism “of the forest region” that the morning predicts the day. In this context, sky is the limit for the 2nd ECOSOCC Permanent General Assembly. The Secretariat exhorts the Members of the Standing Committee to work constructively to build on this illustrious beginning to reach a glorious afternoon and a night of paradise.

Key areas of focus should include the activation, formation and effective operationalization of Sectorial Cluster Committees as a compact with the wider African Civil Society rather than a club of ECOSOCC insiders or a baron complex of Cluster Chairpersons, the building of National ECOSOCC Chapters as a framework of accountability and interoperability with the wider Civil Society, establishing the framework of a harmonized criteria for CSO Consultative and Observer Status in the AU in close consultation with other AU Organs, mobilization of grassroots support for the prosecution of Agenda 2063 and building linkages with the Africa Diaspora, Member States, Parliaments and other units of the African Society.

It is the work of this august body, the Standing Committee, to set the pace for development in all these areas and to support the ECOSOCC General Assembly and the African Civil Society in the effective implementation of these programs. The whys and wherefores of this process is what the Standing Committee has come here to determine and develop. We all wish you wisdom, focus, enterprise and success in this endeavour.

I thank you all.