

The Second Meeting of the ECA Committee on Human Development and Civil Society

Statement by Outgoing Chairperson

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I would like to express warm greetings to all of you on the occasion of the Second Meeting of the ECA Committee on Human Development and Civil Society. As I step down, I would like to thank you all for the honor to my country and the trust you have placed in me during my tenure as Chairperson. Chairing this Committee on Human Development and Civil Society (CHDCS) has been one of the greatest privileges of my career.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to do two things. Firstly, to give you an account of my stewardship during the inter-sessional period and secondly, to share a few valedictory reflections.

The present Bureau has served since 1999 and comprises representatives from government, civil society organizations, and the private sector. I am deeply grateful to all the members of the team and to the colleagues who assisted them. The theme of the meeting in 1999 "Popular Participation of Sustainable Social and Human Development" was intended to raise fundamental issues and challenges facing Africa. Special attention was paid to poverty eradication and the need to integrate the services of the public sector, the private sector and civil society organizations through the creation of solid partnerships in development.

During our sessions, reference was made to strategies for improving the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action for Social Development. The Committee also discussed the opening of the African Centre for Civil Society (ACCS) which was established in 1997 so as to enhance the legitimacy and acceptance of civil society and create an enabling and facilitating environment for their work.

Our Committee has been active in many other ways including formulating policy recommendations and monitoring the progress of the Arusha Declaration on Popular Participation. We have also provided guidance to the work of ECA by suggesting future directions of ESPD/DMD's programme of work and priorities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The theme of today's meeting "Participation and Partnership in Africa's development" is designed to encourage dialogue on key issues aimed at enhancing stakeholders participation in addressing some of the human development and governance challenges in Africa. The objective is to review best practices in promoting people's rights to participate in development; to examine current practices in promoting participation and partnerships in the promotion of ethical values and accountability in the public services; to review the special development requirements of countries emerging from conflicts, and to make special recommendations on how to harness the capacities of the private sector and CSOs to complement the efforts of governments toward addressing them;

and to review and examine the engagement of civil society in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic, especially people living with HIV/AIDS.

As a Bureau, we must all stand firmly on the principles of participation and partnerships as key pillars for addressing the development challenges in Africa. During the next inter-sessional period we must try to promote civic education as a vital tool in empowering citizens to participate and also assist in developing a strategy to promote awareness about the importance of participation and partnership in Africa's development. The Bureau should also facilitate sub-regional meetings to deepen discussions, seek to work closely with relevant UN bodies/agencies, and collaborate with other technical committees under the auspices of the ECA to devise strategies for effective stakeholder participation.

We look forward to a significant reporting of progress during the next inter-sessional period. As I hand over to my successor, I would like to wish the Committee well as they continue their valuable work.

I thank you.