

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA P. O. Box 3243 Telephone 251 11 5 51 38 22 Cables: OAU, ADDIS ABABA

**REPORT OF AU - CSO PRE-SUMMIT
FORUM**

ACCRA - GHANA

19 - 21 JUNE 2007

A. Introduction

1. The AU-Civil Society Pre-Summit Forum was held from 19 - 21 June 2007 in Accra, Ghana. The Meeting was declared opened by the Chairman of the Executive Council of the African Union (AU) and Foreign Minister of the Republic of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo and attended by over seventy three (73) representatives of African Civil Society Organizations (CSOS), drawn from the Academia, Trade Unions, Professional and Social groups, as well as Youth and Women Organizations. Also in attendance were officials of the African Union Commission, the European Centre for Development and Policy Management (ECDPM), the media and foreign observers. The list of participants is attached as an Annex to this report.

B. Official Opening Ceremony

2. The Principal Coordinator of CIDO, Dr. Jinmi Adisa, delivered the opening remarks on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Professor Alpha Oumar Konare. He conveyed the greetings of the Chairperson to the participants and expressed hope that the Forum will be result-oriented and serve as basis for productive action. He reminded the participants of the rich agenda before them and urged them to embark on their mission with precision and logic in order to produce effective outcomes that will enrich the process of partnership between governments and the civil society community. He also called on participants to strive to enhance the process of public participation in continental governance and advance the progress of the African people in all spheres, a task he considered challenging but ennobling.
3. In his opening remarks, the President of the Pan African Lawyers Union and Chair of the session, Mr. Akere Muna, welcomed the Foreign Minister and all participants to the Forum and expressed hope that the discussions would advance the continent's progress. He also commended the African Union Commission especially the African Citizens Directorate for continuously ensuring that the civil society community is always in the picture of the Union's programmes and activities.
4. Declaring the meeting open, Ghana's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, observed that the establishment of the AU-CSO Pre-Summit meeting is an important element designed to give expression to the African Union's Constitutive Act. He believes that the Forum is now a veritable instrument of wider public participation in the affairs of the Union and an important avenue for appraising the

developments of AU's policies and programmes, as well as a barometer for gauging public mood and disposition and for highlighting areas of concerns. In addition, it is an important crucible for disseminating information and popularizing AU policies and programmes while obtaining feedbacks on them. H.E. Akufo-Addo believes that AU-CSO interface is unique and has no parallel elsewhere.

5. He listed some of the critical issues on the agenda of the Forum as including the appraisal of the progress made in the ECOSOCC process, AU-EU Joint Strategy and the African Union Government project. The Foreign Minister reminded the participants that the Accra Summit has been entirely dedicated to the Grand Debate on the Union Government and hoped that African leaders will use the opportunity to set the pace and pattern of integration in the continent. He urged the representatives of the civil society community to take advantage of the opportunity provided by the Pre-Summit to make essential input on the Union Government for the consideration of African Heads of State and Government at the forthcoming Summit. Akufo-Addo also stressed that whatever decision is taken by African leaders on integration, it will require the involvement of the African civil society community to implement as it will have consequences on every citizen on the continent.
6. H.E. Akufo-Addo also expressed Ghana's happiness to chair the AU at such a time when a momentous decision on African unity is to be taken and noted that as the first country in Sub-Saharan Africa to be independent and given the role of its first President, Kwame Nkrumah, in the actualization of continental unity, the country would always strive to be present at the fulfillment of this lofty idea if and whenever the African people decide on the course that must be taken. He however stated that integration is a process and not a stand-alone decision and that all African people have a role and constitutional responsibility to bring it to fruition. Accordingly, he urged the CSO community to stand shoulder to shoulder with African governments to shape the destiny of the continent in general and the African people in particular.

C. SESSION ONE

I. Briefings on Key Developments since the Last Pre – Summit

7. Briefing participants on AU - CSO agenda since January 2007, Dr. Adisa stated that the activities of the African Citizens Directorate for the period were focused on the institutionalization of ECOSOCC through effective

support and preparations for elections into post-Interim ECOSOCC General Assembly; mainstreaming of CSO activities through a programme of active engagement with sectoral professionals and social groups; harnessing civil society contributions and inputs into the evolution of a Joint AU-EU Strategy; enabling and enhancing civil society participation in the Union Government Debate; support for partnership arrangements with other regions and emerging powers; and consolidation of the Diaspora initiative; as well as capacity building for CIDO.

(a) Institutionalization of ECOSOCC

8. Dr. Adisa noted that the Commission as the secretariat of ECOSOCC had invested a great deal of effort in the institutionalization of ECOSOCC as an organ of the Union. He disclosed that following the decision of the last Summit in Addis Ababa in January 2007, to extend the mandate of ECOSOCC, the secretariat has been working hard to support key ECOSOCC organs including the Interim Standing Committee and the Credentials Committee to implement their mandate to conduct elections into the post-Interim ECOSOCC Assembly by 31st December 2007. The efforts have yielded significant results that would be fully discussed in the presentation of the Chairperson of the Credentials Committee, Hon. Saida Agrebi, during the examination of the ECOSOCC election processes.
9. He also clarified the relationship between ECOSOCC and CIDO. He noted that ECOSOCC is an advisory organ of the AU that provides a formal space to facilitate the expression of the views of non-state actors across a broad range of community concerns within the framework of the AU and contributes to AU operations. The further expression of the need to engage non-state actors, as AU seeks to constantly consult with the larger civil society on issues, is being coordinated by the AU Commission through CIDO. The efforts of CIDO are geared towards ensuring an inclusive and holistic articulation and aggregation of perspectives to issues. It is to be noted that both ECOSOCC and the Commission are organs of the Union but the role of the former is advisory, while the latter and its instrument, CIDO, serve as secretariat and executing arm of the Union. Specifically, CIDO's role as the secretariat of ECOSOCC has been established within this framework. Thus, the objectives and spheres of concern of ECOSOCC and CIDO are correlated and designed to be mutually reinforcing and complementary.

(b) Fostering Sectoral Partnerships: Trade Unions

10. Briefing participants on this agenda item, Dr. Adisa stated that the African Citizens Directorate has intensified efforts to mainstream civil society participation in the affairs of the Union in general and the Commission in particular. To this end, CIDO embarked on a programme of fostering partnerships between the Union and different sectoral and professional groups starting with the Trade Union movement in furtherance of the Commission's Strategic Plan. In this regard, CIDO, in concert with the Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OA TUU), convened the AU-OA TUU Partnership Forum in Accra, Ghana, from 3-5 April 2007, to share and exchange information on issues of critical importance to the AU, develop a more structured and institutional framework for association and an agenda for cooperation and action. The workshop was attended by top African Trade Union leaders who elected a nine-member Steering Committee to guide the process and to also highlight specific areas of cooperation in which OATUU could add value to the work of the AU. In addition, the Forum decided to hold a strategic workshop in late 2007 to develop the road map for this cooperation. It also deliberated on issues of importance, such as the funding of the Union, ECOSOCC and the proposals for Union Government. Dr. Adisa also informed that as a follow-up, CIDO plans to inaugurate the Ecumenical Forum in the second half of 2007.

(c) The Diaspora Initiative

11. Speaking further on the Diaspora initiative, Dr. Adisa indicated that efforts are at apace to develop and consolidate the Diaspora networks. National networks are being constructed in Europe as a basis for continental platform, while the South American network would be established in August 2007. In addition, the Commission has been actively engaged with the government of South Africa in preparation for the hosting of the African Diaspora Summit in South Africa in 2008. To this end, a series of national, regional and Diaspora consultative conferences have already been held in Pretoria, London and New York between March and June 2007, while others are expected to follow in Bahamas and Addis Ababa. In addition, regional consultations, expert meetings and a Ministerial Conference will be held between October and November 2007 as a lead up to the Summit. These consultative meetings are generating a wide momentum of support for the Diaspora process within and outside the continent, as well as creating awareness and conscientizing the populations of various continents and exploring strategies and procedures for facilitating effective

rules of engagement. A formal report on this process and its accumulated gains will be presented to the next session of Council and Summit.

12. He also highlighted the issues relating to Diaspora participation in ECOSOCC and underscored the need for formulation of regulatory procedures that conform to the Statute and the Constitutive Act, as well as to AU policy processes. Dr. Adisa believes that the time has come to establish appropriate criteria on Diaspora election and present them to the executive policy organs of the AU for endorsement.
13. Responding, some participants observed that the requirements for Diaspora participation in ECOSOCC cannot be less or more than that of continental participants. They reasoned that the African family concept is one of solidarity that enjoins us to be one with our brothers and sisters as our present and future is intertwined. This consideration must guide the process of political participation of the African Diaspora within the African Union.

(d) Criteria for Selection of CSOs to Pre-Summit Meetings

14. Making his presentation on this issue, Dr. Adisa noted that he had on several occasions outlined the criteria at various CSO gatherings, yet many people still feign ignorance of the criteria. He observed that the first criteria governing selection of CSOs was availability of resources as the total number that the AU can afford is usually between 35 - 40, including representatives of various departments in the Commission that may be required to brief participants on essential aspects of AU policies and programmes. Beyond this, other criteria for selection are: regional spread and balance; social diversity to reflect the different social and professional groups; the theme of the Summit - this is the most important criteria, for instance, where the Summit is on economic and trade issues, the focus will be on CSO networks in this area that can make appropriate recommendations and enhance the value of CSO participation. This group usually makes up about 15 - 25 of the total number of participants. Also, emphasis is given to CSOs with wide representation; catchment area for the Summit so as to take maximum advantage of location of the Summit and enhance the profile of grassroots CSOs in the area, while reducing cost. And since Summits rotate from one country to the other and between regions, it is believed that this advantage will eventually even out. Other considerations include gender balance in line with regulations and protocols of the AU and the physically challenged and disadvantaged, such as Persons Living with HIV/Aids.

15. Commenting on the criteria for selection, participants acknowledged the complexity of the issue, the requirement of a regulatory device and the need for inputs from divergent CSOs on an aggregated criteria, especially those of regional balance and social diversity.
16. Also, participants used this forum to commend the African Union Commission and in particular CIDO and the Economic Affairs Department for taking the pain to regularly brief the civil society community on various developments in the AU and urged that this tradition should be continued as it will further re-enforce the partnership between the AU and the African people.

(e) Partnerships and Relations with Emerging Powers

17. Dr. Adisa noted that a critical area of the Commission's work since the last Summit focused on international partnership relations with Europe, the Third World and emerging powers in Asia (Africa-China, Africa-India), as well as Turkey and South America. These efforts are being coordinated by the Bureau of the Chairperson in which CIDO is located and that CIDO has played a facilitating role in developing these relations through support to the Bureau of the Chairperson.

(f) Capacity Building for CIDO

18. The Principal Coordinator revealed that the issue of capacity building for CIDO remains work in progress as the Commission is currently focusing on shoring up the capacity of the department to enable it further deliver on its mandate and to facilitate greater and closer interaction and communication with non-state actors on AU policies and programmes, as well as develop the AUCSO agenda. Already, some new professional staff have been recruited, while efforts are underway to increase both professional and secretariat staff. It is expected that the Commission would intensify efforts to have the necessary and optimal complement of staff for the department.

II. SESSION TWO

(a) Progress Report on ECOSOCC and On-going Election Process

19. The Chairperson of the Credentials Committee of ECOSOCC, Mrs. Saida Agrebi, presented the report on ECOSOCC and the on-going election

process. The Chairperson stated that following the decision of the Executive Council to extend the mandate of the Interim ECOSOCC to 31st December 2007, the ECOSOCC Standing Committee (ISC) at its meeting in Cairo, Egypt, from 24-26 February 2007, decided to establish processes and procedures for fulfilling the mandate. Accordingly, the ISC adopted a work programme for the popularization of the ECOSOCC process and the holding of elections between June and December 2007. It also proceeded, in conjunction with the ECOSOCC Secretariat, to produce template containing conditions for eligibility for the elections which was posted on the AU and ECOSOCC websites, as well as circulated in national, regional and other media outlets. The template also invited interested CSOs to send applications for elections into the General Assembly.

20. So far, about two hundred and fifty (250) applications were received from CSOs in thirty-five (35) Member States of the AU. Mrs. Agrebi also indicated that at the time of this report, the ECOSOCC Credentials Committee was examining all the applications to ensure that they fulfill the eligibility requirements for membership as prescribed in the ECOSOCC Statute. The African Diaspora is also expected to elect representatives into the ECOSOCC General Assembly. However, processes for the election of Diaspora representatives will be delayed to enable the African Union Commission to formulate a framework document for the election of Diaspora representatives. The document, when eventually produced, would indicate the number of representatives that each region of the world will produce in order to fill the Diaspora slots and how they would be chosen.

21. She confirmed that the ECOSOCC General Assembly to be elected shall compose of one hundred and fifty (150) CSOs made up as follows:

- Two (2) CSOs from each Member State of the Union:
- Ten (10) CSOs operating at regional level and eight (8) at continental level;
- Twenty (20) CSOs from the African Diaspora (as defined by the Executive Council) covering the various continents of the world;
- Six (6) CSOs, in ex-officio capacity, nominated by the African Union Commission based on special considerations, in consultation with Member States.

22. Upon conclusion of its work, the Credentials Committee is expected to publish the names of short-listed civil society organizations in both the AU and ECOSOCC web sites and adequate provision would be made for appeals to enable aggrieved applicants to ventilate their grievances. Participants were also informed that election of national, regional and continental representatives will be done by an electoral college whose composition is yet to be determined but two options are currently under consideration, namely, an electoral college composed of all CSOs that submitted applications to the Credentials Committee or an electoral college made up of CSOs whose application satisfies the eligibility requirement for membership.
23. For avoidance of doubt, the Chairperson enumerated the criteria for eligibility for elections to the ECOSOCC General Assembly as follows:
1. Applicants must be national, regional, continental and African Diaspora CSOs without restriction to undertake regional or international activities;
 2. Objectives and principles must be consistent with those of the Union as set out in Articles 3 & 4 of the Constitutive Act;
 3. Must be registered in a Member State of the Union or meet the general conditions of eligibility for granting of Observer Status to NGOs;
 4. Show a minimum of three (3) years proof of registration as either an African or an African Diaspora CSO prior to the date of submission of application, including proof of operations for those years;
 5. Provision of annual audit statements by an independent auditing company;
 6. Prove that the ownership and management of the CSO is made up of not less than fifty percent (50%) Africans or African Diaspora;
 7. At least fifty percent (50%) of the resources of the organization must be derived from the contributions of its members; where external voluntary contributions or support have been received, whether directly or indirectly, the amounts or support and donors shall be declared in the application for membership, as well as recorded truthfully in the financial records of the organization;

8. Provide information on sources of funding for the preceding three (3) years;
 9. For regional and continental CSOs, proof of activities in at least three (3) Member States of the Union; and,
 10. Non-discrimination on the basis of religion, gender, tribe, ethnic, racial or political basis.
-
24. Commenting on the forthcoming ECOSOCC elections, participants applauded the efforts of the Interim Standing Committee and the Credentials Committee and observed that the process of elections was complex and intricate. However, some participants wanted to know the specific countries in which there was dearth of applications. A few participants requested that the process of eligibility for elections should take into account both political and technical requirements. They argued that while technical requirements were important, there is also a need to have CSOs with the required capacity to undertake the work of ECOSOCC.
 25. Others wanted to know the role of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as pillars of the AU and whether or not they have been involved in the process. They also requested for information about the Electoral College and who would be involved in the election of members to the General Assembly - will Member States be involved? A participant also observed that the report of the Cairo meeting dealt with process issues that had priority in the scheme of elections and wondered if the meeting also considered issues relating to the substantive agenda of the post-Interim ECOSOCC Assembly.
 26. The deadline for the submission of applications also attracted comments. Some participants wanted the deadline to be extended for countries where no applications were received and for the AU widely disseminate information on the process in these countries. In her response, the Chairperson of the Credentials Committee noted that the work of ECOSOCC was guided by the provisions of the ECOSOCC Statute. She reiterated the provisions and stressed that ECOSOCC, as a formal space for civil society expression within the Union, must be bound by the rule of law. She believes political considerations may be useful as indication of commitment but they cannot be used as eligibility criteria and that focus on political considerations also raises vital questions as to who decides what the considerations should be and how they are to be measured. She

confirmed that there are provisions in the Statute for the election of regional and continental CSOs through the auspices of the RECs.

27. Hon. Agrebi indicated that the Credentials Committee would want to complete its work before releasing information about who qualifies and from what country and which countries are ready for election or not. Consequently, the list of countries with dearth of applications will remain confidential till that time. On Electoral College, the Chairperson indicated that consultations were apace on the issue and the nature and shape of the Electoral College would soon be revealed when a final decision is taken.

(b) **Report on AU - EU Joint Strategy:
Post Accra Developments**

28. There were four presentations on this agenda item and they essentially focused on the African Civil Society Consultation in Accra on the AU-EU Joint Strategy; the CSOs Meeting in Bad Honnef, Germany and the Road towards Lisbon Summit; and the 8th AU - EU Ministerial Troika Meeting in Brussels on 15th May 2007.
29. On the first issue, The Executive Director of the Centre for Peace-building and Socio-Economic Resources Development and member of the ISC of ECOSOCC, Mr. Ayo Fagbemi, informed participants that as part of ongoing dialogue between the AU and the EU on the evolution of a Joint EU-Africa Strategy for Africa's development, CIDO convened an African CSO Forum in Accra, Ghana, from 26th - 28th March 2007, to provide opportunity for the African civil society community to play a role in shaping and structuring the process. Participants at the Forum were drawn from the Commission, CSOs representing the five (5) regions of Africa and the representatives of the European Centre for Development Policy and Management (ECDPM). The Forum discussed the five main themes of the proposed Joint Strategy namely: Peace and Security; Governance and Human Rights; Trade and Regional Integration; Key Development Issues and Shared Vision. Some of the outcomes of the Forum included the adoption of a follow-up process for effective engagement and collation of CSO inputs on the AU-EU Strategy, adoption of programme of action to support African CSOs' engagement in the process and appointment of an African research institute, CODESRIA, to produce policy papers and documents for the process. Other highlights of the various clusters are as follows:

30. **On Shared Vision**, the Accra meeting agreed that there is a wide range of opportunities and issues inherent in engaging with Europe but that the issue of Shared Vision cannot be discussed outside the frameworks that already exist in the continent, which captures the essence of Africa. The Forum urged that the Joint Strategy must be one of equal partnership, mutual respect and mutual accountability. It called on Europe to change the current mode of interaction with Africa in which Europe behaves as a senior partner. On its part, Africa needs to unlearn many things, including the syndromes of dependency that have developed over the years in order to play its role as a full and equal partner with Europe. In addition, the Accra meeting recommended the following seven priority areas which should underpin any joint strategy or relationship with Europe vis-à-vis a Shared Vision. These are:

- Pro-development policy for social equity and economic development;
- Satisfaction of basic needs anchored on socio-economic policies for human welfare;
- Respect for the values of democracy, rule of law, social justice, participation and citizenship;
- Regional integration and continental unity as the pillars of the partnership arrangement;
- Indivisibility of Africa as a single bloc;
- Strengthening of public institutions and services;
- Need for adequate infrastructure; and,
- The requirement of balanced integration into the world economy encompassing trade, labour movements and investments.

31. **On Peace and Security**, Mr. Fagbemi stated that the Accra meeting agreed that Africa's peace and security is intricately linked to development and recommended that the agenda of the AU-EU Strategy should include: development of a sustainable, predictable and continent-based funding mechanism to support conflict management and resolution; the inclusion of women in post-conflict management and peace negotiations; equal emphasis on conflict resolution and management, as well as post conflict reconstruction and development; need for the EU to control international arms transfer to prevent the escalation of future conflicts; negotiations on International Arms Treaty to fully reflect the existing standards of international human rights and humanitarian law; involvement of religious groups, youth and women in peace processes; and need to limit unhelpful external interventions to avert the recurring cases of proxy wars. The participants also agreed that the strategy must also emphasize and support a holistic early warning and early response system in Africa

involving state and non-state actors; as well as an obligation for joint pursuit and prosecution of mercenaries; and the need for multi-national corporations of European origin to observe and comply with international standards and best practices of corporate and social responsibility when operating on the continent of Africa, which in some cases were potential sources of conflict.

32. **Governance and Human Rights:** Accra consultations made far reaching recommendations on governance and human rights some which included: the need for the AU-EU Joint Strategy to influence the flow of aid to Africa to be jointly managed by the African Union Commission and the European Union Commission on the basis of equality and that such aid should be directed towards African private and productive sectors in order to guarantee economic development and sustainability; promotion of the effectiveness of constitutionalism and popular participation in governance; recognition and involvement of the Diaspora in the development scheme of the African continent; need to emphasize African's own identity, culture, values, dignity and traditions; necessity for AU to reinforce its follow up mechanism on implementation, monitoring and evaluation; and need to resist external dictation of policies to Africa. Others were the prioritization of AU's engagement with other regions of the world in order to foster synergy and avoid dissipation of energies on too many multilateral treaties.
33. **On Regional Integration and Trade,** Fagbemi informed that the Accra Forum agreed that, the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) are the central issue on trade and regional integration which the AU-EU Joint Strategy must address. Accordingly, the Accra consultation called on the AU to resist any pressure by the EU to sign the EPAs by the end of December 2007. Other recommendations on this issue include: need to extend the deadline for the conclusion of the negotiation on EPAs by at least three years to enable African governments to conduct independent impact assessment on them; need to reject reciprocal removal of tariffs until the full attainment of Africa's development benchmarks; Africa should have the sovereign right to regulate essential public services such as education, health, water and sanitation; the fast tracking of Africa's economic integration and increase in inter-African trade with emphasis on accelerated regional integration at the level of Regional Economic Communities; and need for the EU to support the harmonization of the RECs as building blocks for integration; as well as support the development of productive capacity of the African people.

34. Responding on the issue of EPAs, participants agreed that there was consensus in Africa on it and stressed that the continent's position is that it is not ready for EPAs. They urged African leaders to suspend the signing of the EPAs scheduled for December 2007 to enable them undertake impact assessments. They also expressed fear that the EPAs, if signed in December, would compromise the integration of the continent, as the tariffs set in the EPAs will no doubt undercut the common tariff regime existing in the RECs.
35. **Key Development Issues** were also discussed by the Accra consultation and participants agreed that the cluster was the least integrated in terms of how issues were knitted together and concluded that it looks more like some kind of a laundry list. It therefore recommended that the Key Development Cluster should be unbundled to give expression to genuine African developmental concerns.
36. There was also agreement on the fact that Africa's major priority is the need to build and retain human capacity. This underscores the necessity and urgency for Africa to ensure that education support is made part of the AU-EU Joint Strategy. Participants also reiterated the need to identify the factors responsible for human capacity bleeding and brain drain from Africa to other shores.
37. The Forum also recommended that the Joint Strategy should include concrete and visible projects such as the construction of intra-African rail lines from Cairo to Pretoria and Nairobi to Dakar to facilitate interconnection and free movement of peoples and goods.
38. Other recommendations were that the AU-EU Joint Strategy should include the provision of basic rights to all, such as education, health, water etc; cancellation of Africa's debts and redressing the imbalance in trade; and, inclusion of enforceable commitments by governments to protect and promote core labour standards as set out in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work to cover especially the vulnerable groups, such as women and children.
39. Finally, participants agreed to engage with European NGOs that are pro-Africa to advance the interest of the continent. They also agreed to redouble consultations with their respective constituencies on the Strategy and to continuously report back to the people on briefings and developments in the AU.

40. The Forum also called on the AU to ensure that the implementation of the AU-EU Strategy, when it eventually comes to fruition, does not stifle African cohesion, solidarity, cultures and institutions and that African CSOs and people should be fully involved in the process.

(c) Briefing on Bad Honnef Meeting

41. The report on CSOs meeting in Bad Honnef was made by Hussein Abdu of Action Aid and the representative of the European Centre for Development and Policy Management (ECDPM), Marie-Laure de Bergh. ECDPM is an independent foundation based in the Netherlands and engaged by the EU to follow-up EC's partnership agreements. Marie-Laure indicated that the first phase of consultations on the AU-EU Joint Strategy ended on 15th May 2007 with the adoption of an AU-EU Joint Strategy Outline by the 8th AU-EU Ministerial Troika. She believed that the first phase has been fruitful as over two hundred comments and forty position papers were received from internet consultations. Like their counterparts at the Accra Forum, European and African CSOs at the Bad Honnef Meeting criticized the on-going consultations on the ground that it does not provide sufficient time space for genuine and concrete consultations and that this was likely to affect effective participation of stakeholders.

42. Participants also criticized the methodology arguing that internet consultations did not provide equal access to all and they wondered what added value the Joint Strategy will bring. Notwithstanding these concerns, the participants agreed that the forthcoming Lisbon Summit should not be seen as an end but as the beginning of a process and that the CSO community should move away from mere consultations to involvement. They stressed that the Strategy must bring positive changes to Africa-Europe relations and reiterated the need for both parties to move away from the donor/dependent model that has characterized past relations. They urged that the parties should also move away from a fragmented to a unified relationship. On governance and human rights, the European CSOs supported African-grown initiatives, such as the APRM and urged that the Strategy should support African instruments on human rights.

43. They also indicated their resolve to monitor how the EU delivers on its commitments on key development issues and climate change. European CSOs also called for the extension of the deadline for the signing of the EPAs. Similarly, they underscored the need for the Joint Strategy to be conflict-sensitive and focused on human security as a fundamental basis

for peace and security. The Bad Honnef meeting also agreed to reinforce lobbying strategies in order to influence the process. It is expected that another Africa-EU CSO Forum will be hosted by a Portugal based NGO at the end of October 2007, as well as a youth convention.

44. On the Outline adopted by the Ministerial Troika, Dr. Awitor stated that it provides a basis for the elaboration of a full-fledged Joint Strategy that provides for a solid foundation for an ambitious and long-term strategic partnership between the EU and Africa which will deliver concrete positive results for the people in Africa and Europe. The outline also provides the framework for the future relations of the two continents and identified four objectives to be pursued, namely: to reinforce and elevate the EU-Africa political partnership to address issues of common concern; to continue to promote peace, security, sustainable development, human rights, regional and continental integration in Africa; to jointly address global challenges; and to facilitate and promote a broad-based and wide-ranging people-centred partnership.
45. In the ensuing discussions, participants agreed that there are some areas of convergence between the African and European CSOs, as well as a clear demonstration of commitment by both sides to the process. They however regretted the non-reflection of the issue of EPAs in the Outline, as well as the issue of EU agricultural subsidies. They also decried the non-inclusion in the Outline of debt cancellation and the International Convention on Migrants Rights.
46. Participants also agreed on the need to foster structured dialogue between African CSOs and the governmental experts currently negotiating the Strategy on behalf of Africa so as to avail the latter of civil society inputs. It was also agreed that CSOs should produce policy papers on key aspects of the Strategy to assist the AU negotiating team. In addition, they urged that a continental CSO meeting should be held before the forthcoming Portugal Forum in October 2007.
47. Laudable as an AU/EU Joint Strategy may appear, participants urged for caution and agreed that Africa must thread carefully in order not to repeat pitfalls that stalled the implementation of the Barcelona process which dragged on endlessly, hence the need for a shorter time frame for the implementation of the AU-EU Joint Strategy to allow effective control and monitoring of progress.
48. Participants were also of the view that Europe has had an upper hand in

its bilateral relations with African countries because the latter has always been divided and does not engage on the basis of a common position. They believed that the interest of the continent would be best served if it develops a common position on trade, resource management and debt cancellation. Accordingly, they stressed the need for Africa to move away from fragmented to a unified approach of engagement with other regions of the world, especially Europe which uses the continent's division to wrong-foot and overwhelm it with a deluge of bilateral treaties.

49. The Forum agreed that a joint strategy was a lofty idea but that Africa must be wary of the underpinning philosophies behind the partnership as Europe has always been driven by commercial considerations and self-interest in its relations with others. It is in this regard that the participants called on the AU to ensure that the forthcoming Youth Conference in Lisbon does not turn out to be another jamboree but one with verifiable and concrete outcome and results.

III. SESSION THREE

Independent Roundtable on the Union Government

50. In keeping with the AU-CSO Pre-Summit tradition, an Independent Roundtable was organized by a South African-based NGO, Afrimap, in conjunction with a coalition of Ghanaian NGOs, to discuss the African Union Government - the theme of the forthcoming Summit of African Heads of State and Government. The highlight of the Roundtable is that there is a clear consensus among African Civil Society Organizations for an accelerated continental integration that effectively responds to Africa's economic, political and social challenges. The CSO community believed that the acceleration of deeper continental integration of Africa needs to be achieved within a feasible, time-bound and realistic framework. The full text of the outcome of the Roundtable is attached to this report as an Annex.

IV. SESSION FOUR

(a) Presentation and Adoption of Report

51. The Report of the AU-CSO Pre-Summit was presented by the Lead Rapporteur and member of the Central Organization of Trade Unions, Kenya, Mr. Ismael Onyango Noo. Thereafter, it was unanimously adopted with minor amendments.

(b) Closing

52. The Closing Ceremony was presided by the Governance Adviser at the ECOWAS Secretariat, Professor Said Adejumobi, who invited the Chairperson of the ECOSOCC Credentials Committee and Member of the Pan African Parliament, Mrs. Saida Agrebi, to, as part of the closing ceremony, update the Forum with the outcome of the deliberations of her Committee which met on the sidelines of the Pre-Summit to shortlist eligible candidates for elections into the ECOSOCC General Assembly.
53. Mrs. Agrebi thanked the Chairperson for giving her the opportunity to brief the African civil society family on the work of the ECOSOCC Credentials Committee which also concluded its meeting this morning in Accra, Ghana. She informed the participants that the Credentials Committee considered over two hundred and fifty (250) applications received from African CSOs in thirty- three (33) Member States of the AU desirous of standing for elections into the 150-member General Assembly of ECOSOCC. Out of this number, seventeen (17) countries were deemed ready for elections, while the remaining twenty-six (26) countries did not produce any applications or the applications received were not considered eligible by the Committee and therefore considered not ready for elections. Hon. Agrebi indicated that in order to ensure that all Member States of the AU are represented in the ECOSOCC General Assembly, the Credentials Committee decided to extend the deadline for submission of application forms till 31st July 2007 to enable CSOs in the remaining twenty six (26) countries to apply following re-advertisement in national and regional journals by the Commission.
54. She also confirmed that although there were candidates for continental elections, only three (3) of the five (5) sub-regions had candidates for regional elections, namely, West, East and Southern Africa and noted that North and Central African sub-regions are not yet ready for elections. Hon. Agrebi also stated that provision has also been made in the electoral process to allow for appeals by aggrieved applicants. Affirming the credibility of the process, Hon. Agrebi reiterated that her Committee applied scientific and easily verifiable schemes in processing the applications. In addition, the Committee was guided by the criteria prescribed in Articles 3, 4 and 6 of the ECOSCC Statutes.
55. Delivering the Vote of Thanks on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr. Jinmi Adisa commended the participants for a

fruitful and rewarding meeting, noting that the participants had to work hard for three days to come out with the recommendations contained in the Pre-Summit Report, which he promised would feed into the Summit agenda. He, in particular, thanked the Secretariat, interpreters and other support staff for their inputs. He also expressed the Commission's appreciation to the Foreign Minister, Government and people of Ghana for the warm hospitality and successful hosting of the Pre-Summit in the spirit of "Akwaaba". Finally, Dr. Adisa wished all participants God's blessings and journey mercies to their various destinations and looked forward to seeing them at the next AU-CSO Pre-Summit.

56. Following the Vote of Thanks, Professor Said Adejumobi declared the Forum adjourned till the next Pre-Summit.

African Citizens Directorate (CIDO)
21st June 2007