**OPENING REMARKS BY AMB. DR. SAMWEL W. SHELUKINDO,** **PERMANENT SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND EAST AFRICAN COOPERATION DURING THE POPULARISATION AND AWARENESS RAISING WORKSHOP ON ECOSOCC NATIONAL CHAPTERS, SCHEDULED ON 29TH AUGUST 2023,**

**DAR ES SALAAM**

***Mr. William Carew, Head of the Secretariat of the African Union Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC);***

***Your Excellency Ambassador Innocent Shiyo, Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania to the African Union;***

***Representatives of the ECOSOCC General Assembly;***

***Ambassador Sallah Hammad, Head of the Secretariat of the African Governance Architecture- and Africa Peace and Security Architecture (AGA-APSA);***

***Distinguished Officials of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania;***

***Distinguished Representatives of different AU Organs here present; Representatives of the Civil Society Organizations;***

***Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen.***

**Good morning!**

It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, to welcome you to our beautiful city of Dar es Salaam, and to our country, the land of Kilimanjaro and Spice Islands of Zanzibar. Indeed, we, the Tanzanian people, take a great deal of pride in the comfort of our country and its habit of serving as a home for all African people.

In the same vein, I wish to take this opportunity to extend our heartfelt appreciation to the African Union Economic, Social, and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) for choosing Tanzania as one of the first five countries to spearhead the formalisation of the National ECOSOCC Chapters. I trust that the choice of Tanzania for this meeting was done as a result of our government’s efforts in supporting the work of Civil Society Organisations.

It will be recalled that in February 1990, in Arusha, Tanzania hosted the International Conference on Popular Participation in the Recovery and Development Process in Africa. This conference gave birth to a critical instrument, **‘the 1990 African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation’**. The promulgation of the Charter further opened spaces for discussions that lead to the establishment of ECOSOCC. Subsequently, in September 2008, in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania hosted the launch of the First Permanent General Assembly of ECOSOCC, a decisive step in the AU’s efforts to consolidate civil society into the institutional architecture of the Organization. All these clearly demonstrate the importance that the government of the United Republic of Tanzania attaches to the civil society organizations.

***Excellencies,***

***Distinguished Guests,***

***Ladies, and Gentlemen***

It is undeniable fact that, our continent is confronted with a myriad of challenges including climate change, poverty and protract underdevelopment, governance deficit and protracted conflicts, just to mention a few. These challenges are too many to be addressed by governments alone. In this respect, civil society organizations and private sector should play a key role.

It is against this background that in July 2004, the African Union established the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) through Article 5 of its Constitutive Act. ECOSOCC was created to provide platforms that resonates with our values of inclusivity, participatory governance, the promotion and protection of human rights and collaborative and sustainable development. We firmly believe that the collective expertise and diverse perspectives of Civil Society Organisations are essential for introducing solutions that are relevant, sustainable, and impactful.

***Excellencies,***

***Ladies, and Gentlemen***

Among the numerous functions of ECOSOCC is to bridge the gap between civil society organizations, the African Union as well as its member states so as contribute to the effective translation of objectives, principles and policies of the AU into concrete programmes while promoting popular participation.

***Distinguished Guests,***

***Ladies and Gentlemen***

This workshop therefore, is very important. Firstly, it provides an opportunity for Civil Society Organisations in Tanzania to familiarize themselves with this framework, discuss its potential, and chart a roadmap that aligns national priorities with the broader aspirations of the African Union. The Tanzanian Interim National Chapter of ECOSOCC stands as a main pillar of this engagement, bringing together Civil Society Organisations working tirelessly for governance, democracy, human rights, and gender equality. The formalization and operationalization of the ECOSOCC National Chapters is, a significant step in amplifying the voices of Civil Society Organizations across Africa. Indeed, the newly adopted National Chapters Framework provides a structured mechanism through which Civil Society Organisations can work closely with the African Union and contribute to the growth and development of our continent.

Secondly, the importance of this workshop lies in the opportunity it provides for Civil Society Organisations to engage directly with the African Governance Architecture (AGA) Secretariat, and subsequently with other important organs of the African Union. This approach ensures that efforts do not remain fragmented, but rather, they interweave to create a tapestry of shared goals and collective achievements.

Therefore, as we embark on this journey of knowledge exchange, empowerment, and collaboration, let us remember that the strength of our continent lies in its people. It is the voices of the civil society, the visionaries and the advocates that fuel the progress we seek. Tanzania stands ready to play its part, not just as a host to this workshop, but as an active participant in the shaping of our collective destiny.

Tanzania under the able leadership of Her Excellency Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, the President of the United Republic of Tanzania attaches a great importance to the work of civil society organizations which have been supporting our developmental endeavours. The role of Civil Society Organisations in today’s development is crucial to realise participation of citizens in all projects and programs aimed at increasing economic growth. To this effect, this workshop, among others is crucial to enhance collaboration so as to collectively address issues of mutual interests. Therefore, as we are looking forward to improving civil society participation and partnership with the African Union, This workshop will create a dynamic momentum towards a productive and effective Civil Society Organisations.

***Excellencies,***

***Ladies, and Gentlemen***

In conclusion, I would like to once again, extend our sincere appreciation once to ECOSOCC, the AGA-PASA Secretariat, the European Union, and Expertise France for working together to organise this workshop and to all participants for their dedication to our continent's betterment. I encourage the Tanzanian civil society organizations participating in this workshop to take advantage of this opportunity to consolidate their engagement with the AU organs in driving the agenda of our citizens at all levels.

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, therefore, wishes to re-affirm and reiterate its unflagging commitment to fostering a vibrant and robust engagement with Civil Society Organisations across our nation; our support to ECOSOCC in many areas of engagements; as well as to the operationalisation of the ECOSOCC National Chapter for Tanzania to ensure that the voices of African Citizenry are well reflected into the work of the African Union.

With this short remarks, I declare this workshop officially open, and I wish you fruitful outcomes.

**I thank you for your kind attention.**