

# EAST AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS' FORUM

*Strengthening Civil Society in the Integration Process*



## 9<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING





<b>EVENT</b>	<b>9<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> – 31 <sup>st</sup> March, 2017	<b>Start Date &amp; Time</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> March, 2017 0945hrs
<b>Location</b>	Corridor Springs Hotel, Arusha – Tanzania	<b>End Date &amp; Time</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> March, 2017 1100hrs
<b>Chairperson</b>	Morris Odhiambo	<b>Secretary General</b>	Zaa Twalangeti

## **MIN/1/AGM/2017: OPENING CEREMONY (WELCOMING REMARKS AND OPENING PRAYER)**

The meeting was called to order at 0945hrs by the Governing Council Chairperson (Mr. Morris Odhiambo) and the meeting started by a word of prayer from Alfred Niwamanya. The president welcomed EACSO members and partners to the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting and thereafter requested participants to introduce themselves. After introductions, the Chairperson welcomed the Secretary General of the Governing Council (Mr. Zaa Twalangeti) to Read the AGM Notice.

## **MIN/2/AGM/2017: READING OF THE AGM NOTICE**

The AGM Notice that was published on 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2017 was read and presented by Mr. Zaa Twalangeti (Secretary General of the Governing Council) and the AGM formally convened.

## **MIN/3/AGM/2017: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

The Agenda of the 9<sup>th</sup> AGM were read by Martha Makenge (Program Coordinator). A motion to have the Agenda of the 9<sup>th</sup> AGM be adopted with minor inclusions was moved by Masheti (CCGD-Kenya) and seconded by Mwananawe (Rwanda).

The adopted Agenda included:

1. Opening Prayer
2. Reading of the AGM Notice
3. Adoption of the Agenda
4. Recognition of Dignataries and Introductions
5. Brief Remarks from Commonwealth Foundation
6. Silence and Tribute to departed members
7. Communication from the Chairperson



8. Reading and Confirmation of minutes of 8<sup>th</sup> AGM (2016)
9. Governing Council Reports (Annual Reports 2016, Report of the GC, Report of the Treasurer)
10. Tabling and adoption of the EACSOF Reviewed Constitution
11. Election of the New GC Members (2017-2019)
12. EACSOF Assessment on the Participation and Transparency Tool (PATT)
13. Hand-over Ceremony
14. New Board and Secretariat Meeting
15. AOB

## MIN/4/AGM/2017: RECOGNITION OF DIGNITARIES & OBSERVERS

The chairperson invited the partners present to introduce themselves and state their interest in the meeting.

**Commonwealth Foundation:** Mr. Belisario stated that Commonwealth Foundation committed to support EACSOF on a long term basis. He acknowledged that it has been a journey as they have now supported three AGMs. He indicated that their main aim is to strengthen capacity of EACSOF to represent CSOs in EAC. He appreciated that EACSOF has gone through challenges due to group dynamics brought about by diverse interests from different parties. He further appreciated that these challenges are always expected in networks. He also reminded participants that it is always important to be reminded of the common goal when they meet to debate as this will assist to ensure sanity and objectivity. Mr. Belisario also reminded participants that there very many friends/partners (not only in Africa but also in Europe) that are really willing to support.

He emphasised that with their core mandate of supporting capacity of CSOs in Policy reforms, Commonwealth has supported EACSOF Secretariat to conduct national consultations to ensure reforms in the constitution (efforts that resulted in the Revised Constitution – 2017). In this regard, he thanked the Task Force on Constitutional Reform for the work well-done. In addition, Commonwealth Foundation has also supported several AGMs including the 9<sup>th</sup> Session. He proceeded to thank the Secretariat for the mobilization and making the 9<sup>th</sup> AGM a success. He also wished EACSOF members the best in the deliberations in the AGM. Finally, he reminded members that the 9<sup>th</sup> AGM was his last as he was now transitioning out of Commonwealth Foundation.



**Foundation for Civil Society:** Ms. Sylvia started by indicating the Foundation has focused on supporting CSOs in Policy advocacy. In this regard he indicated that they are now supporting EACSOF Tanzania. In addition, the Foundation has also supported public awareness on integrations process. This has been through partnership with local CSOs to develop material as well as supported studies that inform gaps for capacity development.

**National NGO Council (Tanzania):** Mr. Ismael started by thanking the Chairperson and the Executive Committee for extending the invitation to the Council for the second time to attend the AGM of EACSOF. He mentioned that the Council has assisted in the development and registration process of the EACSOF Tanzania Chapter.

In addition, he mentioned that one of the key roles of the Council is to ensure supportive/conducive operating for CSOs in Tanzania. Further, he emphasized that the Council has been in the forefront on discussions concerning Burundi situation, hunger and drought in the EAC, democracy and rule of laws in the EAC. Moving forward, he advised that EACSOF and CSOs must take it upon themselves in a collaborative manner to ensure that these issues are addressed.

**Prof. Chris Maina (Former EACSOF President):** He started by congratulating the GC for ensuring that EACSOF continues to deliver on its mandate at the EAC level. He indicated that members need to appreciate the fact that the early stages of EACSOF development had serious challenges including lack of office space, Constitution and Secretariat. In addition, he stated that during his tenure he managed to ensure that the three key pillars (the Office, Secretariat and Constitution) were put in place in the first three years. He also recognized that the initial developments would not have been possible without the support of Trade Mark East Africa (TMEA) and other partners. Prof. Chris reminded members that the amendments to the Constitution should be taken as initiatives to enable the Constitution move with the changing dynamics. The amendment to the constitution is good as they have assisted EACSOF to move with time. Finally, he expressed his appreciation to the entire team and membership of EACSOF.

**Recognition of Partners not present:** The Chairperson stated that EACSOF still recognizes the contributions and support by various partners including KEPA, OSIEA, TMEA and the EAC Secretariat.



## **MIN 5/AGM/2017: SILENCE & TRIBUTE TO DEPARTED MEMBERS AND PARTNERS**

The Chairperson called upon members to relay information concerning demise of any member or partners.

Members paid tribute to the following departed members and partners:

- ✚ Late Willy Kimani (Kenya)
- ✚ Late Alex (Policy Forum TZ)
- ✚ Late Hon. Hafsa Mossi – (Burundi – EALA member and Chairperson of EALA Women Caucus)

## **MIN 6/AGM/2017: COMMUNICATION FROM THE PRESIDENT OF EACSO**

The President started by reminding members that the EAC region is going through some fundamental challenges. He also acknowledged that a number of efforts are ongoing to address the situation. The role of the CSOs in all these challenges is to ensure collaborative strategies (among the CSOs themselves but also between CSOs and State actors) to try to address these issues. For instance, these efforts are seen when humanitarian CSOs work hand in hand with State agencies. Specifically, In Kenya the Red Cross and other agencies have continued to complement government in addressing disasters. To make this a reality for all CSOs, there is need to develop clear strategy and a working platform between Government and CSOs to address the issues.

He also emphasized that the other important item to note was the operating space for civil society. This has over the past years increased the tension between governments and CSOs in the EAC Partner States. He indicated that a lot of efforts have been put into ensuring a more secure and conducive environment for CSOs. However, he noted that in most Partner States, the efforts have not resulted into better outputs. To ensure that basic principles are upheld across the region, the Chairperson stated that EACSO has partnered with different development Partners to engage in evidence based policy advocacy with the aim of developing a CSO Bill that will ensure harmonization of laws across the region. In this regard, EACSO has conducted a study with support from both KEPA and Westminster Foundation for Democracy. The Study was validated by regional CSO leaders and a regional task force was nominated to take the agenda forward to EALA for adoption. He, however, indicated that EACSO need to go beyond the EAC and find out how to engage the regional Body (African Union) to ensure conducive operating environment in Africa. To do this EACSO need to explore ways of partnering with CSO networks in the SADC and ECOWAS regions for synergy.

The Chairperson also emphasised the need to strengthen local level groups such as CBOs, youth groups and women groups as they are critical in empowering the citizens and ensuring public participation in governance. These groups



assist bridge the gaps on socio-economic gaps. He stated that if no efforts were put in place to ensure their survival, then cases of insecurity, unemployment and poverty are likely to increase. He added that it's also key to continuously create awareness for citizens and local groups on issues of EAC integration.

## **Deliberations:**

- a) **Burundi situation:** Some members raised concerns about intervention of EACSOF and other CSOs on the Burundi Situation. The Chairperson stated that it was already agreed by the Governing Council one of the Burundi GC members would be given the opportunity to make a presentation on the current situation and thereafter the General Assembly will nominate a team to deliberate and would convey feedback on how best EACSOF and other CSOs may intervene.
- b) **Food security and the youth bulge in EAC:** Members also raised concerns on how EACSOF can position itself to address issues that arise as a result of food insecurity and youth bulge in the region. The Chairperson reported to members that the GC had already made a resolution that thematic groups will be formulated according to the Strategic Plan to enable each group tackle the regional concerns.

**South Sudan membership to EACSOF:** The Chairperson reported that it has been a challenge to get an apex body for CSOs in South Sudan. Secondly, he pointed out that most of the CSOs are mainly humanitarian in nature and therefore EACSOF has been trying to reach out to both humanitarian and the ones engaged in policy advocacy. Mr, Odhiambo also pointed out that this is one of the tasks that the new GC will have to take over to ensure representation of the S. Sudan.

- c) **CSO engagement In EAC:** Concerns were raised on the commitment of the EAC on the Consultative Dialogue Framework. Inadequate funding, unavailability of the Secretary General and slow update of recommendations were pointed out as indicators of non-commitment by the EAC. In this regard the Chairperson advised that as CSOs are using the CDF as an opportunity for engagement in the EAC, they may also explore other available avenues such as engaging other EAC organs directly. Mr. Odhiambo pointed out that EACSOF has already seen the benefits of using alternative avenues. He stated that EACSOF has engaged East Africa Legislative Assembly (EALA) on an alternative engagement framework between EALA and CSOs. This has resulted into a series of initiatives including the regional study on CSOs' operating environment. The findings of the study is expected to be shared with EALA – General Purpose Committee with the aim of coming up of a regional CSO Bill.



## MIN 7/AGM/2017: CONFIRMATION OF 7<sup>TH</sup> AGM MINUTES

The minutes of the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting were read by the Secretary General of the Governing Council (Mr. Zaa Twalangeti). Mr. Alfred Niwamanya (Uganda) moved the motion to confirm the minutes with minimum corrections. The motion was seconded by Janet Munywoki (Kenya) as true records of the 8<sup>th</sup> AGM

## MIN 8/AGM/2017: MATTERS ARISING

The following matters arose from the Minutes of 8<sup>th</sup> AGM.

### **Deliberations:**

**Report of the Treasurer:** Concerns were raised about the 2015 Treasurer's Report/Financial report that remained unsigned. The Secretary General gave clarification stating that the Financial report was never signed since there were still some pending/unresolved issues but efforts were already underway to ensure that the same were resolved. The Executive Committee had already initiated talks with OSIEA team to rectify the issues.

### **Action Points:**

- ✚ All AGM Minutes must have page numbers for easy reference.
- ✚ The secretariat together with the GC need to develop a status Report which will also be presented at every AGM to track/monitor status of implementation of key action points
- ✚ The communication from the Chairperson shall be in written form and shall form part of the AGM documents.

## MIN 9/AGM/2017: TABLING AND ADOPTION OF THE REVISED CONSTITUTION

The Brief amendment report was presented by Alfred Niwamanya (Rapporteur of the Constitutional Review Task Force).

He reported that the process included national consultations which culminated into the regional consultation held in Nairobi where national review reports were consolidated into a regional report. The Task force also presented the first consolidated draft to the GC for further review. After consultations, the second consolidated report was developed by the Task Force. The Final Report presented mainly highlighted key amendments in the following core areas:

- Character of EACSO
- Membership
- Conflict Resolutions
- Relationship between National chapters and Secretariat



## **Action Points**

After deliberations, the General Assembly resolved as follows:

- ✚ That the GC will develop rules and regulations governing gender representation as well as guidelines for reporting by national chapters to the secretariat.

The Motion to adopt the Constitution was moved by Stephen Odongo (Uganda) and seconded by Agnes Rogo (FIDA - Kenya)

## **MIN 9/AGM/2017: REPORT OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**

The Reports presented included: a) Financial/Audit Report of 2016; b) Annual Report; and c) Governing Council Progress Report

### **Financial Report**

Ms. Jane Nalunga (Treasurer) started by reporting that the main challenge that the Secretariat continues to face included collection of membership subscription fees, sustainable resources to run projects as well as lack of a full-time accountant to assist in financial management. She indicated that even though there have been a number of commitments from some traditional partners such as Commonwealth Foundation amongst others, the same support has not been adequate to enable adequate administrative support. She however said that to this end the Governing Council have successfully engaged in consultation with Action AID – Denmark for support. The support is likely to assist bridge the gaps in the secretariat.

The Audit Report was presented by Kasegenya & Company Certified Public Accountants. The main highlights from the report was that there were amounts that were still unpaid and therefore recorded as payables. Most of these included the administrative support. The other key highlight was that the secretariat followed the basic book keeping rules and regulations.

### **Deliberations:**

The General Assembly urged the new GC to ensure that the thematic groups are established to enhance thematic resource mobilization.

GC to develop Final and Audit Committee to strengthen accountability

GC to assist mobilize resources to employ full-time staff (Finance Officer/Accountant)

Members need to pay subscription fees to chapters and send the required an agreed % to the secretariat. In the spirit of this the following proposals were made:





- ✚ **Proposal 1:**All EACSOF members to contribute membership fees of USD 50 and Annual Subscriptions of USD 100
- ✚ **Proposal 2:** All EACSOF members to contribute membership fees of USD 50 and Annual Subscriptions of USD 250
- ✚ **Proposal 3:**All EACSOF members to contribute membership fees of USD 50 and Annual Subscriptions of USD 50

**Appointment of New Auditors:** Martha reported that the NGO Board had directed EACSOF to out-source and table before the Board a new Audit Company. The General Assembly had either to continue with the current Auditors for one more year before selecting a new firm or let the GC go through the new list of pre-qualified firms and appoint one from the same list.

**Action Points:**

- ✚ **Subscription fees:** It was resolved that all EACSOF members to contribute membership fees of USD 50 and Annual Subscriptions of USD 100. Further, it was agreed that the national chapters will retain 50% and send 50% to the secretariat. The deadline for contributions was agreed to be end of April, 2017. This motion was proposed by Mwananawe and Seconded by Nahashon. The General Assembly therefore made a resolution that only fully subscribed members will be allowed to attend the Next AGM. The General Assembly also resolved that the past arrears on subscription may be paid to the secretariat on a voluntary.
- ✚ **Auditors:** The General Assembly resolved to extend the contract of the current audit firm until the next financial year. The General Assembly further directed the Secretariat to provide a list of pre-qualified audit firms for approval by the Governing Council.

**GC Report and Annual Report**

The GC report and Annual Reports were presented by Zaa Twalangeti and Martha Makenge respectively. The two reports mainly highlighted on the implementation of the Strategic Plan, Constitutional Review process, Financial Report, way forward on Burundi situation, resolution of pending financial issues with OSIEA. The reports also highlighted the support from Action AID –Denmark which had been approved, the engagement in the CDF, Outreach and Visibility.

**Burundi Situation:** Janvier Bigirimana presented to the General Assembly the current status of conflict in Burundi. Among his key highlights were muzzling of the media and CSO, continued forced exiled, harassments of human rights defenders, killings, and forced disappearances. He also urged members of EACSOF and other CSOs to provide support to the situation.



**Civil Society Operating Space:** Masheti made a brief presentation on the engagements towards addressing the shrinking civil space. His presentation included the study done in partnership with Westminster Foundation for Democracy. He pointed out the engagement led to the appointment/nominated of regional task force who were expected to refine the guidelines for the regional Bill. He pointed out that what remained was for the General Assembly to make a resolution to enable the task force and the new GC take the discussion forward and to get the buy-in of the EALA.

**Action Points:**

- ✚ The Secretariat need to send the Reports to all delegates before the AGM to enable them go through the documents for more fruitful deliberations
- ✚ The Secretariat to send 2017 Action Plan to the delegates to provide an opportunity for them to track successes and implementation.
- ✚ The General Assembly nominated the following team to hold consultation on how EACSOFF may intervene in the Burundi situation and report to the GC. The team included **Masheti Masinjila** from Kenya, **Elizabeth Ampairwe** from Uganda, **Petro Aham** from Tanzania, **Louis Busingyie** from Rwanda and **Janvier Bigirimana** from Burundi.
- ✚ The General Assembly made a resolution to enable the Secretariat and the task force to take forward the Regional CSO Bill agenda.



## MIN 10/AGM/2017: ELECTION OF GOVERNING COUNCIL



### **Tanzania Caucus.**

The Chairperson provided guidelines for election and thereafter declared the Governing Council officially dissolved. Delegates retreated into their respect country caucus to nominate new GC members. The results were as follows:

Country	Executive Committee	GC Member
Rwanda	Marie Immaculee Ingabire– President	Mwananawe Aimable
Tanzania	Zaa Twalangeti – Vice President	Saida Amour Abdalah
Uganda	Jane Nalunga – General Secretary	Richard Kimbowa
Burundi	Manirankunda Godefroid - Deputy General Secretary	Janvier Bigirimana
Kenya	Janet Munywoki– Treasurer	Peter Kiama

## MIN/11/AGM/2017: HANDING OVER

### **Deliberations**

After the elections, the new GC members took office formally. The ceremony was climaxed by the handing over of official documents by the former President to the current President. Thereafter, the General Assembly congratulated the GC members. The Assembly requested the new GC to:

- ✚ Ensure that issues of accountability are improved
- ✚ Work closely with the outgoing team for technical support
- ✚ Develop monitoring tool to measure the rate of integration
- ✚ Ensure respect for the Constitution



- ✚ Improve on structures and resource already put in place
- ✚ Take care of the Secretariat (as a matter of Priority) and specifically hire a CEO and Finance officer



***Incoming President Ms. Ingabire Immaculee***

### **Incoming President's Speech:**

Ms. Immaculee' started by thanking the General Assembly but specifically her fellow delegates from Rwanda who saw the potential in her and nominated her as the first lady President of EACSOF. She stated that her priorities will include capacity building of the secretariat to ensure sustainability as well as to ensure improved communication between the secretariat and national chapters and/or the Governing Council.

Secondly, she emphasised that the GC will work closely with the secretariat to strengthen resource mobilization and further to explore collaboration and synergy building EACSOF and EASSI to maximize on outputs. In addition She indicated that her priority will also be to ensure that within one year, EACSOF get the observer status at the EAC. She also emphasised on the need to reach out to the grass root CSOs on issues on EAC integration process.

Finally, she requested the out-going president to work closely with the secretariat and the executive committee to ensure continuity.

### **Certificates to out-going GC Members:**

The handing over ceremony was also marked by appreciation of the former GC member. Each of the former GC members was awarded a certificate of appreciation. The Certificates were given to the members through the current President.



## Appreciation to Commonwealth Foundation:



*Plaque received by Mr. Belasario*

Ms. Martha Makenge started by appreciating the support EACSOF has received from the Commonwealth Foundation. She emphasised that the Foundation remained faithful to their support despite the political and structural challenges that the Secretariat had been going through. She also appreciated the Foundation for supporting not only the Strategic Plan but also the Constitutional Review Process and the several AGMs. Finally, she requested Ms. Immaculee' to assist handing over the Gift that the Secretariat had to Mr. Belasario.

## MIN12/AGM/2017: AOB

Members raised the following additional matters:

- ✚ The need for EACSOF to build synergies with other institutions working on similar area.
- ✚ Attention was brought to members concerning the EASSI event to be held in Uganda on the EAC Gender Barometer. The General Assembly were told to make time and resources to attend the event as it was aimed at sharing strategies and practises of the SADC member states on gender commitments.

## Closing Remarks

The President thanked members for making time to attend the 9<sup>th</sup> AGM. She also thanked all the partners in the room and specifically expressed gratitude to Commonwealth Foundation for continuous support.

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## **Adjournment**

There being no other business, the AGM was adjourned at 1100hrs to pave way for closed meetings of the Governing Council.