



**Governor's Commission on African Affairs
Strategic Planning Session (SPS I) Meeting**

*February 10, 2025
6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.*

Meeting Minutes

Commission Attendance: **Yes**

Chukwunonso "Vincent" Iweanoge – Chair

Dr. Alemseged Abbay – Member

Tope Adeyoku – Member

Adebowale "Shola" Ajayi – Member

Adedana Ashebir – Member

Njukang Asong – Member

Dr. Anyinke Atabong – Member

Fatmata Barrie – Member

Ian Campbell – Member

Dr. Sylvia Dasi – Member

Amsale Geletu – Member

Vacant – Vice Chair

J. Wyndal Gordon - Member

Dr. Jasmine Blanks Jones – Member

Dr. Terry V. Jones – Member

Dr. Natalie McCabe – Member

Nehdia Mumuni – Member

Yodit Negede – Member

Maroufath Ogooussan – Member

Dr. James Saku – Member

Ticia Umeh – Member

Maureen Wambui – Member

GOCI Staff:

Dr. Antwan Brown – Administrative Director of AA Commission, GOCI

Cheryl Madigan – Executive Assistant, GOCI

GUESTS:

Sylvie Bello, Lillian Aboagye-Nugba, Sebastian Teclar, Sewa Gunn, Anna Mwalagho, Keyna Anyiam, Joseph Lewis, Joanne Oport, James Sango, Jr, Maria Meka, Yeside Ojo, Deogratias Kawunde, Alexander Dosen, Folusho Dasyyva, Sandrine Ourigou, Halima, Dr. Chris Ademiluyi

I. Meeting Call to Order at 6:03 p.m.

Chukwunonso (Vincent) Iweanoge, Chair, Governor's Commission on African Affairs

II. Commission Roll Call:

Chukwunonso (Vincent) Iweanoge, Chair, Governor's Commission on African Affairs

III. Welcoming and Opening Remarks:

Chair Vincent Iweanoge thanked everyone for the work they provided last year. Thanked Governor Moore for declaring September as African Heritage month. He wants to see the commission getting out to the communities more and to let them know we are here to help.

IV. Adoption of Meeting Agenda and to Move #4 to #5:

Motion	1 st	2 nd	Vote	
Adjourned	Fatama Barrie	J. Wyndal Gordon	13Y-0N-0A	



- V. Department of Service and Civic Innovation: - Maryland Corps Service Year Option Presentation:**
Secretary Paul Monterio and Ayenew Walle talked about Maryland Corps Service Year Option program maryland.serve.
- VI: GOCI Opening Remark:**
Dr. Antwan Brown, Administrative Director, spoke about events. There has been a request to have African Heritage Month at Government House.
- VII: Review of the revised Executive Orders:**
Dr. Antwan Brown, Administrative Director, went over the new Executive Orders. The most recent changes are that the commission will eventually decrease to 15 members and the Chair and Vice Chair will be appointed by the Governor. He also asked the commissioners to look at section H to examine the countries listed and to bring any recommendations or corrections that might be needed.
- VIII: 2025 Strategic Plans - Open Discussion for Recommendations and Modifications:**
- a) Arts/Culture/Faith**
Commissioner Fatmata Barrie provided updates on the African Heritage Month planning. She also mentioned that they are looking to have some educational events. She asked if other commissioners would like to join this sub-committee. They will also be working with immigration issues and language access to help the communities understand what is happening and understand the information that is being provided.
 - b) Business/Economic Development**
 - a. Statewide Business Roundtable with the Governor and African Business Owners** - Chair Iweanoge spoke on how to start a business in Maryland, the public procurement process, register a business and getting it certified. He would like to bring the Government to the people.
 - b. Bridging the Gap Between the African Business Community and State Government Agencies** – Chair Iweanoge wants to bring the Department of Commerce, Department of Assessment and Taxation and Department of General Services together Statewide.
Governor's Trade Mission to Africa - There are ideas to have the Governor to do a trade mission to the Continent.
 - c. African Trade Fair in Maryland** – There are also ideas to have a Trade Fair. To bring business together for marketing.
 - d. Commissioner's Remark** - Commissioner Njukang Asong said there has not been an official sub-committee meeting. Commissioner Tope Adeyoku mention that the Africa Growth Opportunity Act is up for renewal and he would like to make it a priority to sensitize communities of African immigrant business owners about avenues through which they can capitalize on the tax and tariff free trade provision with the U.S. Trade policy has in place with about 35 African nations.



- c) **Education/Workforce Development** – Commissioner Terry Jones mentioned that there was not meeting near the end of last year, due to no quorum. He stated they would like to concentrate on language barriers, professional and educational credentials to be accepted.
- d) **Health** – Commissioner Anyinke Atabong that this sub-committee would like to do a Health Fair in September, having a Seminar with Maryland Medicaid, and advocating on Health Policies through legislation. They will start having monthly meetings. Commissioner Tope Adeyolu mentioned that he would like to plan an event in November.
- e) **GOCI and Commissioner's Remarks** - Dr. Antwan Brown asked the commission to plan events 3 to 6 months ahead of time. He mentioned that the commission should start funding raising for the events they want to hold. Commissioner Sylvia Dasi mentioned partnering with NGO's and sponsorships would go directly through them. Commissioner Fatmata Barrie spoke on immigration and ICE. Commissioner Tricia Umeh asked about the African House proposal and Dr. Antwan Brown said it will be put on the agenda for March's meeting. Commissioner Tope Adeyolu would like a shared drive to keep documents, mention a May 25th event, Afrobeat Festival, and he asked about posting events on the website. PDF's flyers can be sent to Cheryl Madigan and Tanaya Jones. He has created a poster of information with a QR Code for Tanaya Jones to proof. Commissioner Fatmata Barrie mentioned that the commission is creating a WhatsApp group. Dr. Antwan Brown will get clarity on this.

IX: Closing Remarks:

Chukwunonso (Vincent) Iweanoge, Chair, Governor's Commission on African Affairs

X. Adjournment:

Chukwunonso (Vincent) Iweanoge, Chair, Governor's Commission on African Affairs

Motion	1 st	2 nd	Vote	Adjournment: 7:27 p.m.
Adjournment	Tope Aodeyolu	Fatmata Barrie	12Y-0N-0A	