



---

**Governor's Commission on African Affairs  
2<sup>nd</sup> Quarterly Commission Meeting**

*May 15, 2025  
6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.*

**Meeting Minutes**

**Commissioners Attended:**

**Chukwunonso "Vincent" Iweanoge – Chair**  
**Tope Adeyoju – Member**  
**Ian Campbell – Member**  
**Adebowale "Shola" Ajayi – Member**  
**Adedana Ashebir – Member**  
**Njukang Asong – Member**  
**Dr. Anyinke Atabong – Member**  
**Fatmata Barrie – Member**  
**Dr. Sylvia Dasi – Member**  
**Dr. Jasmine Blanks Jones – Member**  
**Yodit Negede – Member**  
**Maroufath Ogooussan – Member**  
**Maureen Wambui – Member**

**Commissioners Absent:**

**Dr. Alemseged Abbay – Member**  
**Amsale Geletu – Member**  
**J. Wyndal Gordon – Member**  
**Dr. Terry V. Jones – Member**  
**Dr. Natalie McCabe – Member**  
**Nehdia Mumuni – Member**  
**Dr. James Saku – Member**  
**Tricia Umeh – Member**  
**Vacant – Vice Chair**

**GOCI Staff:**

Lawrence Walker – Executive Director, GOCI  
Gregory Yancey – Chief of Staff, GOCI  
Dr. Antwan Brown – Administrative Director of AA Commission, GOCI  
Cheryl Madigan – Executive Assistant, GOCI

**GUESTS:**

Janis Hagey

**I. Meeting Call to Order at 6:11 p.m. and Commission Roll Call:**

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

**II. Welcoming and Opening Remarks:**

Chair Vincent Iweanoge thanked everyone for their work so far. He stated that he has learned a lot from his one-on-one meetings with the commissioners. He will be having monthly meetings with each subcommittee. Every two weeks he will be providing an update on his activities and would like the commissioners to do the same.



**III. Postponement of the Approval of Minutes:**

Motion	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Vote
Postpone the Approval of the 03/03/25 Minutes.	Tope Adeyoju	Maureen Wambui	10Y-0N-0A

**IV. Adoption of Meeting Agenda:**

Motion	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Vote
Adoption of the Agenda	Adedana Ashebir	Tope Adeyoju	10Y-0N-0A

**V: GOCI Opening Remark:**

Lawrence Walker, Executive Director of GOCI would like commissioners to bring back feedback from their communities. He went over the new Executive Orders, especially pertaining to the seats on the commission, which are going from 21 seats to 15 seats. He would like the commissioners to address two to three of the top Governor's priorities that they chose in the survey. Commissioner Adeyoju would like the 2024 and 2025 survey results sent to everyone. Director Walker spoke about the celebration of the MD250.

AD Antwan Brown reminded everyone that the African Heritage Month is only 112 days away. The commission will need to complete the SOP for each event and submit their budgets by June 1<sup>st</sup>. They will need to find sponsorships for these events. He spoke briefly about Robert's Rules, which our meetings are run by this and recommended that the commissioners buy the book. He asked the commissioners to submit documentation for the upcoming annual report.

**VI: Subcommittee Reporting:**

**a) Community (Arts/Culture/Faith):**

Commissioner Fatmata Barrie tabled discussion. She wants to see who will be staying on as a commissioner. Commissioner Jasmine Blanks Jones informed us that there was a discussion about submitting a request for a proclamation for the 35<sup>th</sup> Kunta Kinte Heritage Festival on September 13<sup>th</sup>. She also spoke about having interns on the subcommittees. Commissioner Yodit Gedamu suggested having interns on the Workforce Development subcommittee. Director Walker was in favor of this idea. Chair Iweanoge has already spoken with the president of the Prince George's County Community College, and they are on board with this idea.

**b) Business/Economic Development**

Commissioner Njukang Asong said that they met a couple of times since the last commission meeting. They would like to plan a town hall, have a table or stand at an African event, business seminar, business network event and by the end of the year to have a community event, which we would like to partner with the police department, fire department, or other department within the state. Commission Gedamu would like to bring in the idea of importing and exporting within the state and incorporate it in one of the events the commission is planning. Commissioner Dasi said this might be addressed at one of the town hall meetings they plan to have. Chair Iweanoge mentioned the Department of Commerce



<https://commerce.maryland.gov/softlanding>. Director Walker suggests the commission start contacting state agencies to line up speakers for their event. It would be a good idea to get information from the APAA-SAAA conference.

- c) **Education/Workforce Development** – No update provided.
- d) **Health** – Commissioner Anyinke Atabong said they met on April 16<sup>th</sup>, and they are planning a Health Fair, and the theme will be “Food for Medicine”. Eating healthier to target chronic diseases. They are targeting African food stores and food vendors. They want to have a dance performance of the African culture, high blood pressure screening, diabetes check, possible mammograms and panel discussion. They are looking at least 150 people to attend this event, which will run from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. AME Reid Temple is secured for the event and to be held on September 6<sup>th</sup>. They want this to be a recurring event. Commissioner Tope Adeyoku informed the commission that they could be on the Medical Mondays podcast, which they are having a multi-part series on sustainable food production and encouraging health eating and living. They have granted the subcommittee to be on the podcast once or twice a month.

## VII: Workings Groups:

- a) **Maryland 250** – Commissioner Adedana Ashebir stated 2025 theme is about engagement and empowerment of our community and she suggests the theme for 2026 to be “Elevating African Excellence”. This would highlight the contributions of Africans from 1776 until now. Ideas could be a cookbook, oral history, or gala dinner. Director Walker informed the commission that Maryland 250 celebration is a priority of the Governor. The commission can tie into local county and municipal events. It can be a part of an event the commission is already planning but incorporate the Maryland 250 into the event. The themes include culture, history and civics. Commissioner Gedamu suggested each county have an African food fair and people vote on the best recipes and then the best recipes be placed in a cookbook, which will highlight their dishes, culture, and restaurants. Commissioner Adeyoku said there is an African Food festival happening between June 8<sup>th</sup> and June 18<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Sylvia Dasi proposes to contribute to the State Archives. Commissioner Jasmine Blanks Jones suggested reaching out to a digital organization for community archiving.
- b) **African Heritage Month Celebration** – Commissioner Fatmata Barrie stated the planning committee is meeting the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of every monthly, which the last meeting was held on April 18<sup>th</sup>. She stated that AD Brown will help them with the budget, request for the proclamation, assisting the acceptance of the Governor attendance for the event, and finding a venue. They would like to have 200 to 300 people attend this event. They need to work on the wording of the proclamation. They had a discussion to raise funds for events and scholarships for high school seniors. They will inquire about support from embassies. Creation of a calendar for events. Commissioner Dasi asked for reservation links for the events.



**VIII: Public Events:**

- a) AD Brown spoke about Commissioner Wambui and Commissioner Barrie that had speaking engagements. Commissioners attended the Afro Thrive event where they planted vegetables.
- b) Commissioner Adeyoku announced weekend of May 25<sup>th</sup>, African Real Estate Expo in Gaithersburg.
- c) AD Brown asked the commissioners to forward the event flyers to him, Tanaya Jones and Cheryl Madigan and GOCI will get them out on social media.

**VII: Closing Remarks:**

Chair Vincent Iweanoge thanked GOCI for all that they do and the commissioners that attended the meetings. He asked the commissioners to submit questions or anything from the community to Dr. Brown. He will continue his one-on-one meetings with the commissioners. Commissioner Wambui asked that everyone share their events via email. Need to clarify how the public can serve on subcommittees.

**X. Adjournment:**

Motion	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Vote
Motion to adjourn at 7:55 p.m.	Fatmata Barrie	Adedana Ashebir	11Y-0N-0A