



**Governor's Commission on African Affairs  
SPS-I Commission Meeting**

*January 26, 2026  
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.*

**Meeting Minutes**

**Commissioners Attended:**

Tope Adeyoju– Member  
 Adebowale “Shola” Ajayi - Member  
 Njukang Asong – Member  
 Adedana Ashebir – Member  
 Dr. Anyinke Atabong – Member  
 Fatmata Barrie – Member  
 Dr. Jasmine Blanks Jones – Member  
 Dr. Sylvia Dasi – Member  
 Chukwunonso “Vincent” Iweanoge – Chair  
 Dr. Terry V. Jones – Member  
 Dr. Natalie McCabe – Member  
 Maroufath Ogooussan – Member  
 Maureen Wambui – Member

**Commissioners Absent:**

Amsale Geletu – Member  
 J. Wyndal Gordon – Member

**GOCI Staff:**

Dr. Antwan Brown – Administrative Director  
 Cheryl Madigan – Executive Assistant

**Guests:**

Dr. Garrick Beauliere

**I. Meeting Call to Order at 6:05 p.m. and Commission Roll Call:**

Chukwunonso (Vincent) Iweanoge, Chair of the Governor’s Commission on African Affairs

**II. Motion #1 - Adoption of the Agenda:**

Motion	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Vote
Motion to adopt the agenda.	Natalie McCabe	Sylvia Dasi	10Y – 0N – 0A

**III. Motion #2 - Approval of 09/09/2025 Special Call Meeting Minutes**

Motion	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Vote
Motion of 09/09/2025 Special Call Meeting Minutes.	Dr. Terry Jones	Maureen Wambui	11Y – 0N – 0A

**IV. Opening Remarks:**

Chair C. Vincent Iweanoge greeted everyone. He stated that this meeting is the start of planning for the new year to make the governor proud and their people proud. One major plan is to plan for the Maryland 250 Commission.



Dr Antwan Brown thanked the commission for everything they do. He would like the commission to think big about the Maryland 250 celebration and to continue with the same events they did last year. He stated the need to reset the committees, since a new executive order is in effect and there are only 15 commission members.

**V: Mission & Vision Statements:  
Suggestions:**

Commissioner Adedana Ashebir – Mission – something mentioned last year to ABC. Amplifying, building bridge, and C?

Commissioner Anyinke Atabong – Mission – Promoting health equity, economic empowerment, educational advancement, and cultural preservation for African and African-diaspora communities through advocacy and collaboration.

Commissioner Fatmata Barrie – The Commission on African Affairs serves as an advisory body committed to advancing the dignity, safety, and full participation of African immigrant communities. In a time of heightened barriers to migration, legal status, and family unity, we work to elevate community voices, inform equitable policy, and strengthen collaboration between government and residents to ensure that African immigrants and their families are seen, supported, and able to thrive.

Commissioner Natalie McCabe – Works to advance the social, economic, cultural, and civic well-being of people of African descent. Maybe add something like...we elevate the voices of African and African-descended communities, promotes equity-driven policies, and fosters inclusive engagement that strengthens families, neighborhoods, and institutions.

Commissioner Tope Adeyoju - Our commission is dedicated to ensuring the African residents in Maryland are well informed about impactful government policies, resources, and opportunities so that no Marylander is left behind.

Commissioner Maureen Wambui – Mission - To promote equity, representation, and opportunity for African communities in Maryland through advocacy, collaboration, and policy engagement, leaving no one behind.

Chair Iweanoge asked the commissioners to brainstorm and submit their suggestion to EA Cheryl Madigan, and they will go over them as the next commission meeting.

**VI: Committees:**

Chair Iweanoge asked to go over the committee members listing and all commissioners provided confirmation of what committee that chose to work on. Chairs of the committees with decide later on the Vice Chairs of the committees.

**a) Business & Economic Development:**

Commissioner Njukang Asong stated that the committee hasn't met yet but should meet within the next two weeks. He has great ideas for this year.

**b) Community (Arts, Culture, Faith):**

Commissioner Fatmata Barrie spoke on the Working Group for the African Heritage Month.

**c) Education:**

Commissioner Terry Jones had nothing to report and that the committee will need to schedule meetings.

**d) Health:**

Commissioner Tope Adeyoju stated that they would like to continue with the Nourish to Flourish event.



**VII: Working Groups:**

**a) African Heritage Month:**

Commission Fatmata Barrie stated they need to schedule the meetings. They will then discuss ideas and bring those ideas to the commission at the next meeting. They want to plan for the Proclamation passed through legislation. They are working with Delegate North and would like all commissioners to join at the African Night in Annapolis to support this.

**b) Maryland 250 Celebration:**

Chair Iweanoge suggested that the AHMC working group take on this task. The commission will bring their ideas to the next meeting. Commissioner Adedana Ashebir mentioned few ideas that were discussed last year, which was a cookbook, which would include recipes from community members, oral history interviews from community members, and Jollof Wars between the counties.

AD Dr. Brown stated that public members of committees and working groups need to be vetted by GOCI. Commissioners will need to lead these committees and working groups.

**VIII: By-law Discussion:**

AD Dr. Antwan Brown asked to postpone this discussion. He would like to send the commission the actual document first for review, which Chair Iweanoge agreed.

**IX: New/Old Business:**

Commission Adeyoju – Create 11 x17 poster about the commission and distribute through the counties and would like a status on responses to meeting requests with the Governor through the portal. He would like to list upcoming events on GOCI’s website. Commissioner Blanks Jones wants to make sure the commission includes all members of the African communities. She would like the commission to work with small groups of community members. She asked if there was a follow-up on the delegation in Delaware and asked if they could explore a trip to Africatown in Philadelphia. Commissioner Dasi would like a status on the GOCI newsletter and status on database on African immigrants. Dr. Brown requested content from the commission and Commission Dasi and AD Dr. Brown will work on the database. Commissioner Wambui would like to know how they can help with legislative bills.

**X: Closing Remarks:**

Chair Vincent provided a quick recap of action items that will need to be addressed.

- a) Submit Mission and Vision statements.
- b) Work on members of the committees and choose Vice Chairs for the committees.
- c) Obtain procedures on having community members to work on committees and working groups.
- d) African Heritage Month to bring ideas for the MD250 event.
- e) Provide data for the newsletter.

**XI. Adjournment:**

Motion	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Vote
Motion to adjourn at 7:27 p.m.	Fatmata Barrie	Sylvia Dasi	14Y - 0N - 0A