



The 3rd Africa Media Convention

The African Media We Want: Enhancing Freedom, Innovation, and Sustainability in a Dynamic Media Landscape

The Africa Media Convention (AMC) is organised annually by UNESCO Addis Ababa Liaison Office to AU and UNECA, the African Union and the media stakeholders in Africa, as a collaborative platform to reflect on the fundamental role of journalism on the continent, celebrate the fundamental principles of press freedom and deliberate on measures to safeguard media freedoms. It also focuses on promotion of access to information, the safety of journalists and media viability in AU Member States.

The AMC was conceived in 2021 by the East African Editors Forum, UNESCO Liaison Office to AU and UNECA and UNESCO National Office in Da-es salaam. It emerged out of a growing need to engage with all the African media stakeholders in addressing the unique challenges and opportunities facing media in the digital age. Recognizing the critical role of a free and vibrant press on the continent, the inaugural AMC was convened in 2022 in Arusha, Tanzania, bringing together media stakeholders from across Africa and the African Union Commission

Slated for May 15-17, 2024, in Accra, Ghana, the third AMC will be hosted by the Ministry of Information, Ghana journalists' association and in partnership with several media stakeholders in Ghana. The objective is to provide an annual platform for deep diving into several thematic areas pertinent to the Africa media landscape.

Background

AMC emerges as a pivotal forum for advancing media freedom, innovation, and sustainability across the African continent. Stemming from the esteemed World Press Freedom Day, observed annually on May 3rd, the convention serves as a nexus for journalists, editors, policymakers, academics, civil society and media development partners to convene and deliberate on pertinent issues shaping the media landscape in AU Member States. With a rich history rooted in safeguarding press freedom and journalistic integrity, the AMC has evolved into a beacon of collaboration and capacity-building, rotating across African countries to address evolving challenges and opportunities in the digital era.

The focus of the first edition was on safeguarding press freedom and the safety of journalists, reflecting the ongoing threats faced by many working in the field. The success of the inaugural event underscored the need for a regular platform for dialogue and collaboration. Thus, the AMC was established as a yearly event, rotating in the regions across the continent.





Key recommendations that have been taking forward from the first edition include the annual assessment of the status of press freedom, access to information and the safety of journalists, whose recommendations informed the establishment of the Pan Africa Media Lawyers Network.

Furthermore, the Arusha declaration called on the African Media stakeholders to develop a framework for an effective media coalition to enhance collaborative efforts among journalists, media, professional organizations and CSOs to enhance relationships and promote professionalism, media freedom, safety and security of journalists in Africa. In doing so, to coordinate with all the African media stakeholders and organise the Africa Media Convention as an annual event in commemoration of the WPF to be hosted in an African regional location on a rotational basis.

Thus, the 2nd edition, held in the Southern African Region in Lusaka, Zambia, in 2023 - a week after the annual World Press Freedom Day. The convention built on this momentum by focusing on the theme of press freedom as a driver for all other human rights. It highlighted the importance of a free media in promoting good governance and fostering a healthy democracy.

Recognising the role of the African Union in promoting a viable media in Africa, key recommendations from the 2nd edition referenced the mandate of the AU-STC on Communication and Information Communications Technology (C-ICT STC) and welcomed the African Union, its bodies and Regional Economic Commissions to co-host and support the Annual Africa Media Conventions. The AU was further requested to build the capacity of the African media practitioners and the industry at large, in line with the Africa digital transformation strategy. Furthermore, the African Union and its bodies were called to partner with the Africa Media stakeholders, in carrying out the annual assessment of the status of press freedom, access to information and safety of journalists in AU member states.

AMC Impact on the African Media Landscape

Since its inception, the AMC has galvanized efforts to address multifaceted challenges facing African media. Building on its legacy, the upcoming edition in Accra promises a dynamic program centred around key thematic areas. These include media sustainability, climate change and environmental journalism, media freedom, public broadcasting in the digital age, the fitness of journalism school curricula, and the intersection of Africa media with artificial intelligence (AI). Each thematic area is meticulously designed to foster dialogue, spark innovation, and drive actionable recommendations. Notably, the AMC will feature a dedicated social agenda, including a youth innovation hub and networking opportunities, to cultivate the next generation of media leaders and promote cross-sector collaboration. Through robust engagement and strategic partnerships, the AMC endeavours to catalyse transformative change, ushering in a new era of media excellence and resilience in Africa.

Furthermore, fair compensation by big tech, access to digital data held by social media platforms, encouraging new investment in media, and driving newsroom innovation stand as





key pillars in ensuring media sustainability, fostering a balanced ecosystem that supports journalistic integrity, financial viability, and technological innovation. Within the thematic area of climate change and environmental journalism, the AMC will delve into four focus areas: climate science and impacts, policy and governance, adaptation and resilience, and mitigation and sustainable solutions. By exploring these dimensions, the convention aims to elevate the role of media in raising awareness, fostering accountability, and advocating for sustainable practices amidst the climate crisis. Additionally, the AMC will prioritize social programs to enhance participant engagement and foster lasting networks. These initiatives include a dedicated youth innovation hub, offering hackathons and mentorship programs, as well as structured networking sessions to facilitate meaningful exchanges and collaborations.

AMC-III represents a pivotal milestone in the collective journey towards a vibrant, inclusive, and forward-thinking media ecosystem in Africa. Through its thematic focus areas, social programs, and targeted outcomes, the convention seeks to empower stakeholders to address pressing challenges, harness emerging opportunities, and chart a course towards a more resilient and innovative media landscape. As the AMC continues to evolve and expand its impact, it remains steadfast in its commitment to advancing media freedom, fostering innovation, and promoting sustainable development across the African continent.

Objectives of the AMC/WPFD

- (i) To galvanize efforts that address multifaceted challenges facing African media
- (ii) To evaluate the status of press freedom, access to information, safety of journalists and media viability in Africa
- (iii) To defend the media from attacks on their independence
- (iv) To promote public interest media
- (v) To pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives in the exercise of their profession.
- (vi) To inform citizens of violations of press freedom - a reminder that in dozens of countries around the world, publications are censored, fined, suspended and closed down, while journalists, editors and publishers are harassed, attacked, detained and even murdered.
- (vii) It is a date to encourage and develop initiatives in favour of media viability in Africa, press freedom, access to information and to assess the state of press freedom in the digital era.
- (viii) Acts as a reminder to governments of the need to respect their commitment to press freedom and is also a day of reflection among media professionals about issues of press freedom and professional ethics.





3rd AMC KEY THEMATIC AREAS

1. Media Sustainability: Building Resilience

- a) **Newsroom Leadership and Management:** Strategies for navigating the digital age, including revenue diversification, audience engagement, and talent management. The workshops will be coordinated by The Africa Editors Forum (TAEF) to equip newsroom leaders with practical tools for financial planning, digital content strategy, and building high-performing teams.
- b) **Fair Compensation by Big Tech:** Addressing the challenge of big tech platforms profiting from journalistic content while offering minimal financial returns to news organizations. Discussions will explore potential solutions like copyright reforms, content licensing agreements, and advocacy for fair revenue sharing models, including the [Principles for Fair Compensation for Big Tech and Journalism](#).
- c) **Access to Digital Data Held by Social Media Platforms:** Ensuring transparency and accountability for social media companies. The convention will examine approaches to gain access to crucial data for investigative journalism while safeguarding user privacy and promoting responsible use of social media platforms.
- d) **Gender Balance in Media Leadership:** Promoting a more inclusive media landscape by empowering women journalists. The AMC will explore strategies for tackling the underrepresentation of women in media leadership and decision-making roles.
- e) **Media Innovation and Entrepreneurship:** As the media landscape continues to evolve, there is a growing need for innovation and entrepreneurship within the industry. AMC will highlight emerging trends, technologies, and business models that are reshaping media production, distribution, and consumption. Participants will explore opportunities for media entrepreneurs to drive innovation and sustainability in the digital age.

2. Climate Change and Environmental Journalism: Climate change is one of the most pressing issues of our time, with far-reaching implications for societies and ecosystems across Africa. AMC will examine the role of media in covering climate change and environmental issues, fostering public awareness, and holding governments and corporations accountable for their environmental policies and practices.

- a) **Climate Science and Impacts:** Explore the scientific aspects of climate change, exploring topics such as the greenhouse effect, rising global temperatures, extreme weather events, and their impacts on ecosystems, agriculture, water resources, and human health. Provide awareness on regional variations in climate change impacts and vulnerabilities, highlighting disparities in adaptation and mitigation efforts.





- b) **Policy and Governance:** Evaluate media performance in analyzing existing climate change policies, agreements, and governance structures at the local, national, and international levels.
- c) **Adaptation and Resilience:** Africa's strategies and practices aimed at building resilience to climate change impacts, particularly in vulnerable communities. It will encompass efforts to mainstream climate adaptation into development planning, implement nature-based solutions, enhance disaster preparedness and response mechanisms, and support community-based adaptation initiatives.
- d) **Mitigation and Sustainable Solutions:** How can the media hold authorities accountable on implementing mitigation measures aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and transitioning towards low-carbon and sustainable development pathways. It includes discussions on renewable energy technologies, energy efficiency, carbon pricing mechanisms, sustainable transportation, circular economy principles, and nature-based carbon sequestration solutions.

3. Media Freedom in Africa: Safeguarding Freedom of Expression

- a) **Safety of Journalists:** Strategies for protecting journalists from violence, harassment, and intimidation. The AMC will explore tools and best practices for physical and digital security, as well as legal frameworks for upholding journalists' rights. Delegates will explore ways of strengthening the <https://safetyofjournalistsinafrica.africa/> platform to enhance its effectiveness.
- b) **Online Harassment and Trolling of Women Journalists:** Strategies for managing online abuse and threats against women journalists. The convention will provide participants with tools and resources for digital security, psychosocial support, and legal recourse mechanisms.
- c) **Media and Democracy:** A free and independent media is essential for the functioning of democracy. AMC will explore the relationship between media and democracy in Africa, including the role of the media in fostering civic engagement, promoting political accountability, and facilitating informed public discourse. Participants will discuss the challenges facing democratic governance in the region and the role of media in addressing them.
- d) **Media Capture and Self-censorship:** Examining the rise of media capture by governments and special interests. Discussions will focus on strategies to resist political interference, promote media independence, and foster a culture of investigative and critical journalism.
- e) **Media Regulation and Governance:** Effective media regulation is essential for promoting media freedom, protecting journalists' rights, and ensuring ethical standards in journalism. AMC will address key issues related to media regulation and governance, including the role of regulatory bodies, the need for transparent and accountable governance structures, and the impact of regulatory frameworks on media pluralism and diversity.

4. Public Broadcasting in a Digital World: Adapting for the Future





- a) **Redefining Public Service Broadcasting:** Examining the role of public broadcasters in the digital age. Discussions will explore strategies for engaging audiences, leveraging digital platforms for content distribution, and ensuring financial sustainability.
- b) **The Future of Content Creation:** Innovative approaches to content production for a diverse audience. The convention will look at the rise of multimedia journalism, audience-driven content creation, and the use of digital tools for storytelling.
- c) **Combating Disinformation and Misinformation:** Strategies for public broadcasters to promote fact-checking and media literacy. Sessions will equip public broadcasters with tools and techniques for identifying disinformation, promoting factual reporting, and fostering trust with audiences.

5. Fitness of Existing Journalism School Curriculae

- a) **Preparing Students for the Digital Media Landscape:** A critical evaluation of current journalism education to ensure graduates are equipped with the necessary skills for a digital world. Workshops will focus on integrating data journalism, digital storytelling, social media verification techniques, and entrepreneurial skills into journalism curriculums.
- b) **Safety and Security Training for Aspiring Journalists:** Preparing young journalists for the risks associated with working in a challenging media environment. The AMC will explore the integration of digital security training, conflict sensitivity, and trauma management into journalism education.
- c) **Media Literacy and Civic Engagement:** Empowering journalism schools to build media literacy capacity among students and the broader public. Panels will discuss strategies for fostering critical thinking skills, promoting source verification, and encouraging responsible media consumption habits.

6. Africa Media and AI: Revolutionizing Storytelling

- a) **Leveraging AI for Investigative Journalism:** Exploring the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools such as data analysis and pattern recognition for investigative journalism. The convention will discuss ethical considerations surrounding AI usage in newsrooms and strategies for mitigating potential biases.
- b) **AI-Powered Content Creation and Distribution:** Examining the impact of AI on content creation and distribution. Sessions will explore the use of AI for automatic captioning, translation, and content personalization, and the implications for human journalists.
- c) **Ensuring Equitable Access to AI Tools:** Addressing the digital divide and promoting equitable access to AI tools for African journalists. The AMC will explore initiatives to bridge the technological gap and invest in building local capacity for AI-powered journalism

7. Social Agenda





- a) **Youth Innovation Hub:** There will be a dedicated space within the AMC venue set up as an innovation hub for young participants interested in media innovation and climate action. This hub can host various activities such as hackathons, design thinking workshops, and mentorship programs aimed at fostering innovation and entrepreneurship.
- b) **Networking:** AMC III will offer delegates opportunities for bilateral and group networking within the official programme, including visits to important sites around Accra.

Expected Outcomes

- a) Strengthened collaboration between media stakeholders across Africa.
- b) Development of actionable recommendations for media sustainability, enhanced media freedoms, safety for journalists, and improved journalism education.
- c) Enhanced public awareness of the importance of media freedom, media literacy and digital competencies.
- d) A renewed commitment to promoting innovation and responsible use of technology in African media.

Target Audience

- a) Journalists, editors, and media executives from across Africa.
- b) Media development organizations, advocacy groups, and civil society representatives.
- c) The African people as they are the media’s number-one stakeholders
- d) Government representatives/Polymakers with a focus on communication, information, and technology.
- e) Academics and researchers specializing in media studies and communication.
- f) Representatives from international organizations and donor agencies.

Call to Action

The 3rd Africa Media Convention invites all stakeholders to join this critical dialogue. By working together, we can build a more vibrant, sustainable, and innovative media landscape for Africa. The convention welcomes proposals for panel discussions, workshops, paper presentations, and poster sessions that address the thematic areas outlined above. Proposals should be submitted by April 20, 2024 to info@africamediaconvention.com

