

**PRESS RELEASE / No.104/ 2016****Africa's media and arts contributing to continent's Development**

**African  
Development  
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AU-ECA Conference  
of Ministers

**Addis Ababa, 4 April 2016–** The African Union Commission (AUC) and the Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) on Sunday convened a conversation with some of Africa's best thought leaders in the arts and media sectors to discuss their perspectives on the continent's transformation agenda. The event took place at the sidelines of the 9<sup>TH</sup> Annual Joint Meetings of the AU Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and integrated and ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic development holding at the Conference Center of the UNECA.

The round-table meeting, which was moderated by Mr. Eric Chinje, Chief Executive Officer of African Media Initiative, included Omar Ben Yedder, Group Publisher and Managing Director of leading publishing, events and communications company, IC Publications, Mulenga Kapwepwe, an influential figure in the Zambian arts and culture sector, Nigerian Media mogul Mo Abudu and founder of Ebony Life Television as well as Algerian singer and musician, Amazigh Kateb.

Chinje kick-started the discussion by saying the media had a responsibility together with the continent's creative industry to help transform and develop the continent.

"The problem lies as much with media as it does with governments, civil society and the private sector," he said, further stating that; "We will not see a sustained transformation in Africa without the full involvement of the media and creative industries."

The conversation centre on how the role of the media in Africa can be improved in as far as development was concerned.

Chinje said the media and those in the creative sector can engage governments and the African Union of developmental frameworks such as Agenda 2063 and others so they can fully understand and tell the story without missing gaps or links.

Mulenga Kapwepwe said governments and institutions should also engage the media on issues they are working on, in particular sharing their vision on development and related issues.

“Whether it may be the United Nations or the African Union, such institutions should engage the creative industries and the media in order to help execute the treaties and agreements signed by African countries,” said Mulenga.

The discussion drew attention to the necessity of creating awareness on important issues on the continent and how the African media can attract and interest amongst African citizens around the globe around such issues.

The panelists agreed that the media should not only concentrate on entertainment but also take a keen interest in development and transformational issues on the continent.

In a nutshell, all on the panel agreed that for Africa to experience real growth and transformation, its media must also be equally involved, tapping into political, social and economic developments on the continent. The ordinary person, they also agreed, should have a voice in developmental issues in their respect areas.

“Citizens should be a part of the implementation agenda and should participate in the decision-making processes of the continent,” Chinje said.

He said the media and arts industry is powerful and continues to influence the course of events the world over. Africa’s development agenda should tap into the creative ideas of such powerful voices that harbour equally powerful views and ideas on creating the Africa we want, Chinje concluded.

**Media Contact:**

**Esther Azaa Tankou, Ag. Director of Information and Communication, African Union Commission (AUC)/ Tel: +251(0) 911361185 / E-mail: [yamboue@africa-union.org](mailto:yamboue@africa-union.org)**

**For further information:**

Directorate of Information and Communication | African Union Commission | E-mail: [DIC@african-union.org](mailto:DIC@african-union.org) | Website: [www.au.int](http://www.au.int) | Addis Ababa | Ethiopia

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