

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

Press Release No: /2022

Date: 1st Sept 2022

Venue: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.



African Women Leaders Network national chapters commit to accelerate engagement and mobilization of women.

The African Women Leaders' Network (AWLN) has concluded a three-day retreat of its National Chapters and Youth Caucuses, convened to strategize on expanded pathways on women mobilization, advocacy and enhanced action on gender equality and women's empowerment. The retreat convened in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, brought together the current thirty (30) National Chapters of the women's movement that deliberated on among other key issues, the strengthening of the AWLN National Chapters, including the establishment of governing systems at the Continental and Regional levels; resource mobilization; and enhanced synergies among the members through mapped out key activities for joint implementation.

The retreat held on the 29th to 31st August 2022, was also a platform for the members to share experiences of successful strategies in advancing the priorities of National chapters and the youth caucuses. The retreat reviewed the governance structure of AWLN, its Constitution and operational modalities at the continental level and made recommendations on their localization and strengthening linkages with the National Chapters.

In the last five years, AWLN has grown significantly leading to the establishment of 30 National Chapters across the continent, with six new national chapters currently completing their respective preparatory activities for the official launch in 2022. The existing National Chapters are implementing their Action Plans developed in the context of their national priorities and aligned to the six priority areas of AWLN's core intervention centered around empowering rural women and agriculture; Political participation; peace and Security; Youth leadership; Financial Inclusion; and Social mobilization".

The Youth Caucuses, through their flagship initiatives, have seen the young women establish Intergenerational dialogues and mentorship platforms to ensure young women effectively and meaningfully participate in leadership roles of the network. With a growing membership of young women leaders from Africa and the diaspora, with its members drawn from the civil society, political sphere, private sector, and academia, the Youth Caucuses have been instrumental in leading innovative ways to support the implementation of AWLN's activities.

Despite progress made across the continent on gender equality and women empowerment, the picture remains mixed as implementation continues to fall far below levels that would allow transformative participation of women. African countries are also lagging in terms of gender equality in public service, executive positions, the judiciary and private sector leadership. Women's leadership and representation in public and private sector decision-making bodies is still low.

African Union Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security Mrs. Bineta Diop, equally in her capacity as the AWLN Co-convener, underscored the relevance of the retreat in ensuring the voices and ideas of the African women and girls are amplified in the strategies and actions plans developed, for more impactful delivery of the commitments made on women empowerment. She stated, "from this retreat we have great outcomes that will lead to enhanced collaboration among national chapters; we now have a roadmap and innovative strategies to strengthen the AWLN National Chapters; we have discussed avenues for funding and technical needs to enhance the capacities of the national chapters; and we have shared best practices from the various work the National chapters are doing. This has been a timely and successful retreat."

UN Women Special Representative to the African Union and the UNECA Mrs. Awa Ndiaye Seck reiterated the commitment of the UN Women to fully support the realization of the goals of AWLN. "We will continue to support AWLN as women's movement and its National Chapters that are doing a lot of work in convening, mobilizing, advocating, and influencing women and the women's movement. Individually and collectively, we want to amplify, scale-up, and raise women's profile and propelling them to higher levels of leadership roles and gradually increase the pool of women leaders on the continent and at the decision-tables in the realization of the AU-UN joint frameworks on peace and security and development", she stated.

The African Women Leaders Network National Chapters were also received at the African Union Headquarters by the Deputy Chairperson, African Union Commission, Dr. Monique Nsanzabaganwa; the Deputy Chief of Staff in the Cabinet of the Chairperson Amb. Alex Ratebaye; and Amb. Josefa Sacko, Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment, who addressed them virtually.

Note to Editor.

The African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) was launched in 2017 under the leadership of the African Union Commission (AUC) and the United Nations (UN) through the Office of the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security (OSE) and UN Women. AWLN seeks to enhance the leadership of African women in the transformation of the continent, in line with the Africa Agenda 2063 and the Global Sustainable Development Agenda 2030.

For further information please contact:

Doreen Apollos | Information and Communication Directorate | African Union Commission | **Tel:** +251 115 517 700 | **E-mail:** ApollosD@africa-union.org | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Information and Communication Directorate, African Union Commission | **E-mail:** DIC@africa-union.org
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