

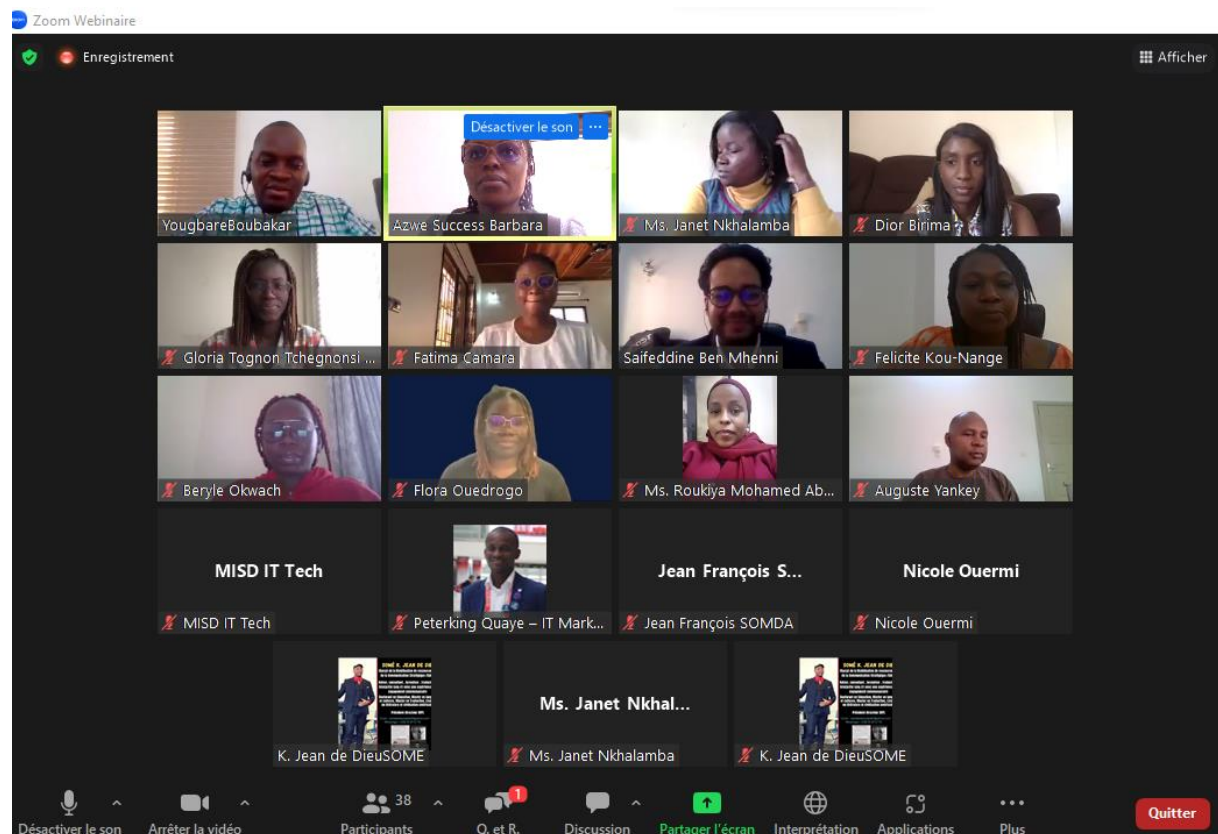
## DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

Press Release

Date: Thursday April 27, 2023

Venue: Online

### CELEBRATING THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF GIRLS IN ICT BY ENSURING ONLINE SAFETY FOR CONTINUED SKILLS DEVELOPMENT



*Panellists, discussants, and African Union CIEFFA staff at the webinar on the International Day of Girls in ICT*

The African Union International Centre for Girls and Women's Education in Africa (African Union CIEFFA) has convened a webinar with **“Digital Skills for Life: Online Safety to Ensure Continued Skill Development for Girls and Women”** to commemorate the annually celebrated International Day of Girls in ICT. The event, which took place online on April 27, 2023, brought together ICT experts from across the continent to discuss ways, not only to encourage girls to pursue careers in ICT fields, but equally to explore methods through which girls and women can safely upskill their competencies online.

The International Day of Girls in ICT is celebrated annually on the fourth Thursday of April and is piloted by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). The African Union CIEFFA recognizes the necessity of inspiring and encouraging girls to pursue a career in ICTs and to ensure they have the necessary technical skills, confidence, and support to achieve their goals as part of the development agenda. This year, the theme for the International Day of Girls in ICT titled “Digital skills for life” aligns perfectly with

axes three of African Union CIEFFA's Strategic Plan (21-25) - STEAM and skills development.

While opening the meeting, Mrs. Simone Yankey, Ag. Coordinator for the African Union CIEFFA stated that, *"It is, therefore, crucial that girls develop the ICT skills needed to be part of the fast-growing sectors not only to thrive in the future job market and to close the gender gap in the tech world and the overall gender digital divide but also to enhance their knowledge and capacity in regard to their right and protect themselves and others from harmful practices."*

With over 70 participants in attendance, the panelists and discussants were from different backgrounds including IT Experts, E-learning, Digital communication, Data sciences, Coding specialists, and African youth working in the ICT field. They took turns to explain the opportunities and challenges that exist for girls and women pursuing a career in ICT, expatiate on digital spaces and how can African girls and women use these spaces to upskill their competencies and pursue learning opportunities in their different domains, elucidate on practical ways can we promote and encourage girls and women's education in ICT, and elaborate on cybersecurity and cyberbullying.

The meeting recognized the work of the African Union CIEFFA in capacitating African youth in the area of ICT, and agreed to continue joint efforts and interventions to ensure girls access to skills development in ICT especially girls in the rural areas.

#### **African Union International Centre for Girls' and Women's Education in Africa**

The International Centre for the Education of Girls and Women in Africa (AU/CIEFFA) is a specialized institution of the African Union since 2004, dealing with women and girls' education following Decision Assembly/AU/DEC.44 (III). AU/CIEFFA is a specialized institution of the African Union under the Department of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI). The Centre aims to promote girls' and women's education with a view towards their full participation in the eradication of poverty and the edification of a peaceful world for sustainable human development. <http://cieffa.au.int>

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