

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

Press Release No: 000/2024

Date: 4th July, 2024

Venue: Addis Ababa

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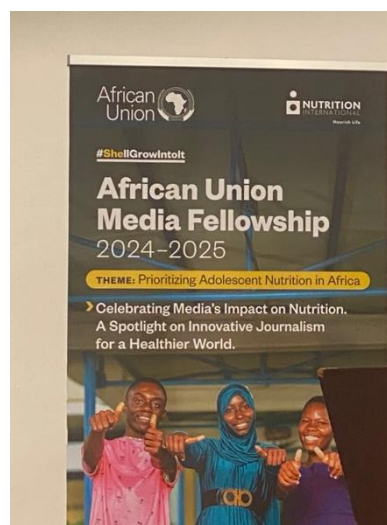
Date: June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Venue: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

### Growing Strong, Growing Smart, Empowering African Media to Champion Adolescent Nutrition

The African Union (AU) in partnership with Nutrition International, announced the launch of the AU Media Fellowship Award 2024-, focusing on the "Prioritization of Adolescent Nutrition in Africa." This transformative initiative empowers African media professionals to promote accurate and impactful storytelling using emerging technologies, with a specific focus on addressing iron deficiency anemia and malnutrition in adolescent girls. The launch event saw over 30 media practitioners convene for the annual media roundtable that precedes the African Union Summit 2023.

"African storytellers play a crucial role in shaping the continent's narrative," said  Director: **Professor Julio Rakotonirina**, the Directorate of Health and Humanitarian Affairs at the African Union Commission (AUC). "Through the AU Media Fellowship, we aim to empower media professionals to raise awareness about adolescent nutrition and contribute to positive change."



The fellowship aims to recognize journalists' contributions, enhance the quality of nutritional journalism and showcase innovative approaches to improve adolescent nutrition. Five selected fellows, representing each of the 5 African Union regions, will receive a USD \$3,000 to support their work during the fellowship, mentorship from nutrition experts, access to resources and a platform to publish their stories through media partnerships. Aligned with Agenda 2063 goals, the AU Media Fellowship seeks to address sociocultural barriers to accessing adolescent response services and gender-related barriers, by analyzing conditions of adolescent nutrition conditions in various regions and establishing connections with SDG 2030 objectives.

“A well-nourished adolescent is more likely to stay in school, learn and succeed, contributing to the development of their family, community and country,” said Joel Spicer, President and CEO, Nutrition International. “This fellowship aligns with our commitment to raising public awareness on the importance of nutrition, particularly in addressing issues like malnutrition and adolescent nutrition.”

He called upon African Union member states and the media to understand the difference between food and nutrition, noting that a food program fights hunger, while a nutrition program fuels growth, development and overall wellbeing. The integration of these two pillars enhances the health of individuals, communities and nations.

The African Union’s Information and Communication Directorate called on 35 AU Media Fellows to apply for the Nutrition Grant. This grant aims to encourage proposals aligned with the AU's campaign on adolescent nutrition, emphasizing its critical role in the physical, cognitive, and overall development of African youth. Selected projects will be shared across all AU platforms.

**For further information, please contact:**

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