

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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### **African Women Leaders Unite in Dakar to Shape Groundbreaking African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls.**

In a historic stride towards securing the safety and well-being of women and girls across Africa, women leaders from the continent gathered in Dakar, Senegal for the 4<sup>th</sup> African Women Leaders Consultation on the AU Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (AU-CEVAWG). This pivotal two-day consultation, co-organized by the African Union High-Level Presidential Initiative on Positive Masculinity in Leadership to End VAWG, the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN), and the Government of Senegal, marks a decisive moment in the fight to end violence.

The consultation forms part of a series of high-level multi-stakeholder engagements designed to collect input from African citizens, with a focus on women leaders, to help shape the AU-CEVAWG. Once adopted, the Convention will be a comprehensive African legal framework dedicated to preventing and eradicating all forms of violence against women and girls, affirming the continent's leadership in this global cause.

The two-day consultation brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including women leaders, traditional and religious figures, youth representatives, civil society organizations, and members of academia and business sectors from across Africa and the Diaspora. Their shared mission: to craft a robust framework that protects women's rights and promotes gender equality across the continent.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Bineta Diop, African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace, and Security, reiterated the significance of the AU-CEVAWG, calling Member States to take decisive steps to ensure its adoption. “This Convention will be a legal and institutional milestone in the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls across Africa,” she emphasized.

H.E. Mme. Maimouna Dieye, Minister of Family and Solidarities of the Republic of Senegal, echoed these sentiments, emphasizing the severe toll of violence on the physical and mental health of women and girls, which in turn stifles their development. She stressed that violence sustains a vicious cycle, tied to socio-economic challenges across the continent, and urged swift action to break this cycle, allowing every woman and girl the chance to achieve her full potential in a safe environment.

Dr. Coumba Mar Gadio, President of AWLN Senegal, underscored the urgency of addressing the alarming rates of violence across Africa. She called for greater visibility for the African Union campaign, emphasizing that the AU Convention is not only a crucial tool but also a legacy for future generations. “It is imperative that we take concrete action now,” she urged.

Discussions at the meeting covered the entire spectrum of violence against women and girls, focusing on male engagement, violence in conflict settings, and the roadmap for the Convention’s development and adoption. Participants agreed that a legally binding Convention would set clear standards for prevention, provide accountability mechanisms, and promote best practices across Member States.

Additionally, the meeting emphasized the importance of involving men and boys as active allies in the fight to end violence. By engaging all members of society, the AU-CEVAWG aims to foster a comprehensive approach to addressing the root causes of violence.

The meeting concluded with several key recommendations:

- Prioritize African-led, culturally relevant solutions for regional challenges.
- Strengthen enforcement to guarantee justice for survivors and ensure state protection from all forms of violence.
- Develop a concise, clear document addressing harmful practices and aligning with existing frameworks.
- Build a robust ecosystem involving diverse stakeholders for effective implementation, prioritizing youth engagement.

As Africa moves closer to the adoption of this groundbreaking Convention, there is hope that it will serve as a catalyst for change, creating a safer, more equitable environment for women and girls across the continent. The final draft of the AU-CEVAWG is expected to be adopted by February 2025, marking a new era in Africa’s commitment to ending violence against women and girls.



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