

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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AU Launches Continental Force: New Media Network to Amplify Women's Voices as WPS Agenda Marks 25th Anniversary



The African Union Commission's Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security (OSE-WPS) today officially launched the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Network for Media Professionals at the AU Headquarters. The launch follows a rigorous three-day meeting held from 29 September to 1 October 2025, under the theme: *"Strengthening Media Engagement to Amplify Women's Voices in Peace and Security Across Africa."*

The establishment of this Network is timely, coinciding with the global commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and the major upcoming milestones for the Beijing+30 agenda. This initiative marks a crucial step toward creating a sustainable media network dedicated to ensuring women's contributions to peacebuilding are central to the African narrative.

The meeting brought together twenty media professionals from across the continent, underscoring that the role of media in advancing the WPS agenda is critical for long-term success. This initial convening was a historic step to lay the foundation for a sustainable African Media Network on WPS, ensuring that the gains of the continent's peace and security agenda are sustained through continuous, accurate, and high-impact coverage.

In her closing remarks, H.E. Ambassador Liberata Mulamula, the AU Special Envoy on WPS, underscored this partnership, stating: "the media is our most strategic partner in the mission to amplify the voices of women and secure a peaceful continent."

Opening the meeting, Mr. Nuur Mohamud Sheekh, Spokesperson of the African Union Commission, welcomed the journalists, calling the gathering a "vital call to action." He highlighted that journalists are the "bridge between policy and people", urging participants to use their platform to challenge stereotypes, bring women's voices from the margins to the mainstream, and recognize women as powerful agents of change rather than just victims.

Mr. Gerald Mitchell, Deputy Head of Office of the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU), also emphasized the media's power to influence policy and inspire change. He encouraged journalists to focus on "accuracy with empathy," "visibility with responsibility," and "narratives for change" to ensure that women peacebuilders are acknowledged and protected.

H.E. Ms. Olivia Leslie, Ambassador of the Republic of Ireland to Ethiopia, reaffirmed Ireland's unwavering commitment to the agenda. "Gender equality and women's role in peace and security remain a key priority for Ireland and it is a privilege to work with AU Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, the UN Office to the African Union and UN Women on this agenda, especially as we mark the 25th anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325 this year," Ambassador Leslie stated. She added that the African Union "continues to show real leadership on WPS" and noted that Ireland has been a key partner with the AU Office of the Special Envoy on WPS and the UNOAU since 2019.

Over the three days, the media professionals had the opportunity to navigate the complexity of the African Union's mandate, explore the dedicated work of the OSE-WPS, and understand the Continental Results Framework (AU-CRF)—the definitive roadmap for tracking progress on WPS commitments. They met the power source of the movement, learning about the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN), which is instrumental in advocating for the creation of an ecosystem conducive to the emergence of a critical mass of women leaders at all levels in Africa and the Diaspora.

Crucially, participants tackled the new battleground of our time: fact-checking and countering misinformation and disinformation (MDM). Recognizing that MDM often specifically targets women peacebuilders, the journalists are now equipped with the tools to wield "accuracy with empathy," ensuring their reporting is not just truthful, but protective and empowering.

The African Union Commission expresses its deepest gratitude to the partners whose support was vital to the success of this meeting, including the Embassy of the Republic of Ireland to Ethiopia for their generous financial support, underscoring their unwavering commitment to the WPS agenda and the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) for providing crucial technical and logistical support.

The Commission also extends its appreciation to the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), the European Union (EU), and the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) for their active participation and valuable contributions to the success of the programme.

With the launch of the WPS Network for Media Professionals and the adoption of the Charter of Addis Ababa, these twenty journalists transform into a continental force ready to lead a necessary change in Africa's media landscape. This Network will ensure that the voices of women—the ultimate peacebuilders—are not marginalized, but are the defining sound of peace and security in Africa for the next 25 years. The African Union looks forward to a sustained partnership to strengthen media advocacy and accelerate the full implementation of the WPS agenda.

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