
**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY MRS. WYNNE MUSABAYANA
HEAD OF COMMUNICATION: AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

**AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE ADDIS ABABA STUDY TRIP FOR THE THIRD COHORT OF
THE AFRICAN UNION MEDIA FELLOWSHIP**

11 MARCH 2026

H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf: Chairperson of the African Union Commission
H.E. Ambassador Willy Nyamitwe- Ambassador of the Republic of Burundi
Ms Margaret Muigai Edwin- Director of Communication and Public Information,
Africa CDC
Representative of the German Embassy.
Representative of the EU mission to the African Union
AU Media Fellows
Staff members of ICD and the wonderful youth volunteers and interns who are supporting us

Chairpersons, ladies and gentlemen

It is a great honour for me to be your master of ceremony at this very important occasion, where we are welcoming the third cohort of the African Union Media fellowship.

The programme started in 2022 with Cohort 1.0. which was followed by the second cohort in 2023-24.

Today, we are honoured to welcome 22 outstanding media practitioners representing 18 African countries, selected from an exceptionally competitive pool of over 100,000 applicants. Their presence here reflects both the immense interest in this initiative and the remarkable talent that exists across the African media landscape.

Over the next 16 months, the fellows will benefit from the guidance and experience of three distinguished mentors, who will accompany them throughout this journey of professional growth, learning, and collaboration.

The achievements of the previous cohorts have already demonstrated the programme's impact. Cohorts One and Two have collectively produced nearly 250 high-quality pieces of content, spanning print, broadcast, and digital platforms. This cohort is therefore joining a programme with a short but proud and continuing pedigree.

Excellences, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Across our continent, the media play a vital role in ensuring that Africa is not only seen, but is truly understood and appreciated -most importantly by Africans themselves. Through their work, journalists and other content creators inform and educate our societies, help frame the world around us, and stimulate public debate

on the issues that shape our collective future. They safeguard democratic values by speaking truth to power, monitoring the implementation of decisions, and helping citizens assess how far the development needle is moving.

In doing so, media professionals also contribute significantly to the global body of knowledge about Africa. This is particularly important in the digital space, where our continent remains underrepresented. The stories told by African journalists help ensure that Africa's realities, innovations, and aspirations are accurately reflected and widely accessible.

As a Directorate, we have engaged extensively over many years, with media professionals across the continent and beyond. In these conversations, a few requests have consistently emerged:

- One of them is access to information, which is a public good and an enabler of the aspirations and goals embodied in Agenda 2063,
- Another is access to key decision makers.
- Yet another request has been for capacity building in a rapidly evolving media landscape.

The AU Media Fellowship Programme responds to all three of these major requests, by supporting journalists and content creators as they navigate the changing dynamics of both continental and global information ecosystems.

Excellences, ladies and gentlemen

This fellowship is fully aligned with the AU's priorities. It is a strategic response to the direction and decisions of our Member States. It finds its mandate in the 2017 decision of the 2nd African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Communication and Information Communication Technologies, where Ministers called for stronger engagement with African journalists and recognition of their role in advancing Agenda 2063.

The programme also gives practical expression to key African Union legal and normative frameworks, one of which is the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which affirms the right of every individual to receive information and disseminate opinions within the law.

Another is the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa, which underscores the obligation of public institutions to ensure transparency and access to information. In this regard, we make information accessible, including through digital platforms that empower journalists to produce accurate, informed, and impactful content.

The media fellowship initiative also aligns with the broader vision of the African Union under Agenda 2063: i.e. that of an Africa that is prosperous, united, and peaceful - driven by the energies, talents, and voices of its own people and with a strong voice in global affairs.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are pleased with the continued support of our valued partners, the European Union and GIZ. And we are also very encouraged to note that the relevance of this programme has not gone unnoticed within the AU family, with the Africa CDC sponsoring 5 of the fellows here, who will focus on public health and health reporting.

The fellowship is designed to equip journalists with the tools, networks, and knowledge necessary to tell Africa's development story with depth and credibility. Through the programme, fellows produce and distribute high-quality content across multiple platforms, reaching diverse audiences. It serves as a platform to strengthen developmental journalism, enhance storytelling capacity, and promote the use of emerging technologies in telling Africa's story.

It provides a unique space for professional growth - complementing both formal journalism training and field experience - while allowing fellows the time and mentorship needed to pursue thoughtful, in-depth reporting. The fellowship encourages solutions-oriented, evidence-based, and human-centred storytelling, while also fostering direct engagement with key actors in Africa's development landscape.

Participants gain exposure to global media practices and trends through study tours. They benefit from access to the African Union's extensive knowledge resources and receive support for in-depth reporting through dedicated grants. Equally important, the programme deepens fellows' understanding of the African Union itself - its structures, institutions, treaties, policy frameworks and work - equipping them with the context needed to effectively interpret and report on continental development processes.

Above all, the programme embodies one of the core values of the African Union Commission that speaks to putting Africa first. The stories produced by the fellows are about Africa, by Africans, and ultimately for the advancement of Africa.

In conclusion, it is important to emphasize that, far from marking the end of our engagement, the conclusion of this 16-month mentorship programme will mark the beginning of a longer-term relationship. As opportunities and resources allow, we will continue to invite fellows to cover key events and will remain available to support their requests for information. We are already doing this with fellows from Cohorts One and Two.

The result will be a strong community of media practitioners who report on Africa's development journey from a position of knowledge, context, and informed understanding.

Once again, welcome Cohort 3.0 to the African Union.

I thank you

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