# Concept note

## UN-AU Africa Senior Media Dialogue 2017*

## *"The Role of Media in Africa's development, Women's Empowerment and its support to the Agenda 2063"*

## Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
## 16-17 November 2017

## 1. RATIONALE

The African Union Agenda 2063 will shape the way we think and act about the continent for the next five decades. By "we", one has to encompass first and foremost Africans themselves, the civil society, media from the continent and the diaspora, African institutions and bodies as well as the continent's organizations and international partners.

In its popular version, Agenda 2063 acknowledges communication and advocacy as the top "critical enablers" for achieving its continental transformation vision. The document also underscores the natural role of communication and therefore media in the process.

The first "enabler" calls for "*the continuous mobilization of the African people and the diaspora in various formations, effective communication and outreach, and sustained and inclusive social dialogue on Agenda 2063*".

Further in the document, the African Union's popular version of Agenda 2063 outlines the principle of "*ownership of the African narrative and brand to ensure that it reflects continental realities, aspirations and priorities and Africa's position in the world*".

The third enabler launches an appeal to "*build visionary and accountable leadership, democratic and developmental governance and institutions, through robust and transparent planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at all levels*".
Paragraph 73 of the 2014 United Nations Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/69/150), refers to Agenda 2063 and explains the crucial role of civil society, including the media, in the implementation of this Africa-driven and people-centred document. "*Substantively, the agenda envisions an inclusive society that is stable, safe and just for all Africans. (…) Its approach encourages collaboration and partnerships among Governments at all levels, civil society, **including the media,** the private sector, the African diaspora and international partners in harnessing Africa's resources for the development and shared prosperity of its people*".

**Communicating Africa's transformation: Media at the heart of Agenda 2063**

From the above, we can easily conclude that communication in its various forms as well as civil society and media are the watchdogs charged with tracking the progress made on the key components of Agenda 2063, the continental transformation framework.

At the outset of the implementation of the first Ten-Year Plan of Action, the enhanced engagement with the media community reporting on African issues will be paramount for the translation of generous concepts into the reality of the layperson in Africa who really wants the slogan "*The Africa we want*" to become his or her reality.

Media can play a central role in the promotion of a new narrative among the widest audience possible, by reflecting the transformative trend of the continent, by educating, raising awareness and ownership of the Agenda 2063. The mobilization of African will and capacities are critical for its implementation and its accountability for the commitments pledged in the document.

Over the past 10 years, the AU programmes and initiatives have shown considerable progress: African leaders are managing conflicts, championing democracy, embracing human rights, adopting sound macro-economic policies and increasing the space for civil society engagement. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) are some of the notable successes.

However, the perception at both African and global levels remains that nothing or too little is being done or has been achieved. A large proportion of the African population still does not understand or is not aware of the work of the AU and its NEPAD Agency and its impact on their lives. For example, the NEPAD initiative on drug harmonization in Africa impacts millions of lives on the continent and aims at providing reliable and affordable drugs, and considerably enhancing the quality of healthcare. However, this initiative is largely unnoticed.

That example, among others, demonstrates that the layperson does not necessarily connect the dots. One does not see or acknowledge enough the link between the NEPAD Agency's mandate and its impact on their daily lives. Another example is the groundwork the agency is doing to create home grown seeds to enhance the yield of African agriculture and its resilience. This program has also a silent or hardly visible impact on the populations.

This gap in transmission is largely due to poor and/or inadequate reporting on these issues largely due to a lack of interest in development issues, which are not a big seller with media. In many African countries this low level of interest and reporting bears consequences for the goodwill and popular support that the AU

needs to popularize and sustain its programmes of actions and especially its flagship Agenda 2063.

Understanding the urgent need and critical role of media, the African Media Initiative (AMI) has been engaging, over the last five years, media stakeholders and development institutions in Africa to help transform the media landscape in a way that lays more emphasis on development reporting and empowers them to take ownership of the discourse on the continent. This engagement has targeted media managers and owners (through the African Media Leaders Forum), media practitioners (through specialized trainings on development reporting, setting-up of communities of practice, awards for excellence in development reporting), and partnerships with key development actors (African Union, World Bank, AfDB, etc.).

In the same vein, AMI has conducted several studies across Africa on the state of African media. All of them point to alarming findings, including the fact that the media in Africa only dedicates a paltry 10% of its coverage to issues that really matter to Africans, either through a lack of interest or capacity to report on technical issues such as urbanization, agriculture, energy, business, elections, gender and security.

For the reasons explained above, it becomes clear why both the AU and the UN have highlighted the pivotal role of media in the implementation of Agenda 2063.

Therefore, the mobilization of media and engaging with them, including through the Senior Media Dialogue (see section 2 for the genesis) in a constructive and constant manner has never been more relevant than today. It is therefore proposed that members of the Advocacy, Information, Communication and Culture Cluster revive the Senior Media Dialogue platform by reconvening a meeting to discuss how the cluster could facilitate media coverage of Agenda 2063.

The proposed meeting will be a logical follow-up to the initial meetings held in 2009 and 2011 and falls fully into the objectives pursed by AMI over the last five years.

## 2. ORIGINS OF THE AFRICA SENIOR MEDIA DIALOGUE

The first Africa Senior Media Dialogue was held in The Vaal, South Africa, on 19th and 20th February 2009 and was organised by the Advocacy and Communication Cluster of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa. It resulted in **The Vaal Consensus** and the adoption of a series of recommendations (see attachment). The deliberations at The Vaal underscored the increasing role of the media in Africa's development and media's eagerness to expand coverage and provide a more balanced reporting on development issues and African affairs in general.

This forum also identified some of the general challenges faced by African media, which could explain the weak presence of the AU in the media. These include: lack of physical resources and specialized reporters on Africa, lack of access to free information, problems of understanding key and technical words and the Regional Economic Communities (REC's) tendency to prefer foreign media. In the Vaal, it was also established that the forum should be held every two years so that one can measure the improvements made on mutual commitments from the media on one side and the UN and the AU on the other side.

Following that recommendation, a second media dialogue was held in June 2011 in Maseru, the capital of Lesotho. The meeting came up with another document called the Maseru Declaration. At that time, the close cooperation between the AU Directorate of Information and Communication and the Advocacy and Communication Cluster of the United Nations Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa had just started and it was the first concrete outcome of that new partnership.

Following two days of extensive discussions, the participants in Maseru agreed to seek ways of strengthening the reporting skills of African journalists. NEPAD Agency officials expressed satisfaction with the nature of the dialogue as they felt it had improved their understanding of the information needs of the media.

Despite these two previous successful editions and the expectations created among all stakeholders for concrete actions and follow-ups, the dialogue went silent after 2011, mainly because of a lack of financial resources.

## 3. AFRICAN SENIOR MEDIA DIALOGUE 2017 THEME

### *"The Role of Media in Africa's development, Women's Empowerment and its support to the Agenda 2063"*

The proposed Senior Media Dialogue 2017 focuses on gender, which is another crucial element of Agenda 2063. One of its major goals is to "*achieve Gender Parity by 2020 in public and private institutions, and the removal of all forms of gender discrimination in the social, cultural, economic and political spheres. Agenda calls to mobilise a concerted drive towards immediately ending child marriages, female genital mutilation and other harmful cultural practises that discriminate against women*".

The AU agenda sets the aim that by 2063 "*Africa will have full gender parity, with women occupying at least 50% of elected public offices at all levels and half of managerial positions in the public and the private sector. The economic and political glass ceiling that restricted women's progress would have been shattered*".

It has been widely recognized that women empowerment is key to the success of any development policy. In 2014, the AU declared the Year of the Agriculture, a field where the female workforce plays the most important role. Agriculture itself is considered as the basis for development. Africa has to be able to provide food to its people and not rely on imports - $60 billion a year (as much as the Official Development Aid (ODA) and can and should be a net food exporter. Recently, Malawi showed to the world that right policies and governance can turn a country quickly from being import-dependent to a net food exporter in the span of a few years. The year of agriculture was already highlighting the importance of women in a vital sector of the African economies. The year 2015 went beyond by declaring 2015 the "Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063".

Therefore, empowering women in the sector of media could be a way to voice the specific needs of women and how to address them. The UN Women campaign "*He for She*" is also an opportunity to involve men in gender equality and women's empowerment. The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is placing gender issues at front and centre of development priorities.

In light of the above and at the outset of implementation of Agenda 2063 vision and objectives, the special focus on the gender in media is opportune, constructive and appropriate.

**4. PURPOSE**

The main objective of the "Africa Senior Media Dialogue" is to increase the understanding and support by media for African Union's Agenda 2063 priorities, by engaging the former as development partners and encouraging them to provide greater publicity to activities implemented in the region.

**First,** the Media Dialogue aims to achieve this goal by creating opportunities for media professionals to have direct contact and interface with senior officials and decision makers from the AU System (AUC, NEPAD, the RECs) and the RCM (UN system).

**Second,** the meeting seeks to encourage women's empowerment in the field of media as well as to sensitize male journalists to the importance of the "He for She" campaign so that they can also become better advocates for women's rights and empowerment.

**Third,** the proposed meeting will allow a rich debate between participants and promote cross fertilization of experiences as well as stimulate media interest in covering African Union's issues and activities.

The meeting will encourage active and regular engagement with media as full-fledged partners in development, moving away from past ad hoc patterns of engagement.


**5. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

The following are the specific objectives of the dialogue:

a. To devise a Plan of Action for implementing The Vaal Consensus and the Maseru Declaration;

b. To offer senior media professionals a framework for reflections on how their role as envisaged in Agenda 2063 can be translated into concrete activities;

c. To promote Agenda 2063 through training and strengthening the capacity of the African media;

d. To explore ways in which the strategic partnership between the AU and UN agencies, AMI and media partners can be enhanced;

## 6. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

a. Plan of Action for implementing The Vaal Consensus and the Maseru Declaration;

b. Recommendations for the Africa Senior Media Dialogue on promoting Agenda 2063, training and strengthening the capacity of the African media on communicating on Africa's transformation;

c. Recommendations for an enhanced partnership between the AUC, UN, AMI and key media partners, agencies and the African Development Bank (AfDB);

d. A report on the meeting's proceedings and an outcome document.


## 7. PARTICIPANTS

The dialogue will include local and international media as well as experts on issues relevant to the theme and to Agenda 2063 priorities. Participation could also be extended to press unions and journalism learning institutions.

### A. Media representatives

1. Gender balance: 50% women and 50% men
2. Geographical representation: up to 8 media representatives per AU regions, North, South, East, West, Central, Diaspora and international media reporting on Africa: 54 if budget allows
3. Language representation: 30% French, 50% English and 20% others
4. Seniority: 50% senior and 50% junior professionals
5. Professions: 50% Senior editors in Chief, Owners, Directors and 50% mid-range junior professionals
6. Media representations: Print, Radio, TV, and Internet based media. 25% each
7. Open to local media on invitation only (10 people)


### B. UN representatives:

1. DPI representatives (Africa section, UNIC,)
2. OSAA representatives from the advocacy branch
3. UNECA (communication, gender)
4. UNESCO
5. UN agencies and programmes: UNWomen, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP (nutrition), ILO, World Bank, etc.

6. Members of the Advocacy, Information, Communication and Culture Cluster of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa (RCM)

**C. AU representatives:**

1. Directorate of information and Communication (DIC) representatives
2. Women, Gender and Development Directorate representatives
3. NEPAD representatives
4. Bureau of the Chairperson / Deputy Chairperson representatives
5. African Peer Review Mechanism Secretariat

**D. REC Representatives**

Five of the eight regional institutions and organizations will be invited, namely the Union of Maghreb Arab (UMA), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), These organizations will be represented by their public relations/communications experts.

**E. Rapporteurs**

Two recruited locally, preferably bi-lingual

**F. Experts invited**

1. AU expert on women's rights and empowerment
2. UN Women expert from the "*He for She*" campaign
4. Expert from civil society/Academia/Private sector

**G. Organizers**

1. Main organizers: OSAA, AUC Directorate of Information and Communication, UNESCO / ECA, AMI., FAJ

2. Co-organizers: UN-DPI, NEPAD Agency

Remarks: the list of participants is subject to the agreement of all partners involved including the host government (Ethiopia). The invitations will be jointly sent by the AUC, AMI and OSAA and the draft concept note and tentative programme will be submitted to all partners (see section 7) for comments and approval.

## 8. FORMAT OF THE DIALOGUE – DURATION - LOCATION

A. Format

1. Short introductions by experts followed by Davos style debates
2. Working languages: English and French. Simultaneous interpretation

Remark:
A facilitator and consultant will be hired to manage the open discussions and write the final outcome document of the meeting. Rapporteurs for each session will be designated.

B. Duration

**Two days. November 16-17<sup>th</sup> 2017**

C. Location: Addis Ababa

The Africa Media Dialogue will be held in **Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 16 and 17 November 2017 at the ECA Headquarters.**

D. Thematic debates and open dialogue

The interactive discussions during the Africa Media Dialogue will alternate between thematic presentations by experts and participants. Practical experiences of countries and lessons learned from implementing AU programmes will be presented, followed by discussions.

During the different thematic sessions, participants will be encouraged to express freely their opinions in a Davos style discussion. The dialogue is designed to promote sustained interaction among the participants on the one hand and between participants and facilitators on the other hand.

E. Keynote speaker

A keynote speaker will be invited to give an in-depth analysis of one of the most pressing issues (to be decided) on the continent.

F. Rapporteur

A rapporteur for each session of the program will be designated among participants

The outcome report will be a compilation and summary of the sessions and will be drafted by the organisers.

G. <u>Audio recording</u>

- The two-days session will be recorded and the audio files will be made available to participants
- If budget allows, a 15 minutes film will be produced with the highlights of the Dialogue

H. <u>Evaluation</u>

A final evaluation and satisfaction survey will enable participants to express their views and assessment of the contents of the presentations, the facilitation and the overall organization of the Dialogue. The evaluation will be included as an annex in the outcome report.

I. <u>Circulation of documents</u>

Electronic versions of the documents will be available online on the different stakeholders' websites (AU/NEPAD/OSAA/ECA/UNESCO/AMI). Printed copies will be minimized as much as possible to conserve paper.

## 9. FORESEEABLE CHALLENGES

- Sustainability of the process
- Monitoring mechanism of recommendations