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AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE COMMEMORATION OF THE 2025 WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

3 MAY 2025, NAIROBI, KENYA

Dear colleagues,

I join all media practitioners to commemorate this special occasion. Today we celebrate all media practitioners across the continent and beyond.

As we commemorate the 32nd edition of World Press Freedom Day following its proclamation by the UN General Assembly in December 1993, the African Union is organising this Roundtable to launch a programme on Democracy, Media and Socialisation. Let's remain active partners in shaping and advancing Africa's democratisation, peace, development and prosperity trajectory as defined in Agenda 2063.

In line with the democratic principles of inclusivity, accountability, justice, human rights, freedom and dignity, the media, among others, play a critical role in informing and educating polities on socioeconomic, political and governance issues that significantly impact their lives and livelihoods.

Responsible and ethical journalism is therefore essential in the age of digital media plurality and "citizen journalists", presenting tremendous opportunities for and challenges to ethical and fact-based reporting and information sharing, especially in increasingly polarised and conflict-affected societies.

This year's theme on the impact of artificial intelligence on press freedom and the media is therefore timely in galvanising our collective efforts to harness the benefits of artificial intelligence in improving the accuracy and timeliness of news reporting while addressing serious threats posed and exacerbated by artificial intelligence technology, such as propaganda, biased algorithms, disinformation, misinformation, hate speech, and deepfakes, among others.

The premium organ of the African Union, the Peace and Security Council (PSC), has been a lead player in working relentlessly in support of the Media. In September 2024, the Council historically underlined its full commitment to the protection of journalists and access to information by adopting the resolution on the Protection / Safety of Journalists in conflict situations. We will be partnering with Pan African media organisations such as the Federation of Africans Journalists to implement the PSC communique. Furthermore, in March 2025, the

PSC approved the establishment of a multidisciplinary Advisory Group on the impact of artificial intelligence on peace, security and governance in Africa.

Likewise, African Union organs like the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights continue to advocate for press freedoms and member states' implementation of instruments promoting media-friendly environments. Therefore, the African Union is a most valued partner of the media.

As the media adapts to the new technologies of today and tomorrow, the integrity of the profession and the highest levels of professionalism must continue to guide their work. We equally call on journalists to safeguard democracy and responsible reporting, digital citizens to verify the accuracy of the information they are exposed to, and partners to support media education programmes across the continent.

Our niche as the AU is to ensure that the fundamental freedoms associated with access to information, freedom of speech and freedom of expression, are promoted and protected everywhere in the African Continent.

The press must be champions of the freedom from want. The press should join hands with the AU in championing democracy, effective governance and most importantly the right to development.

We call on all stakeholders including AU member states to continue to guarantee access to information, freedom of expression, freedom of opinion and ensure the protection and safety of journalists.

In the spirit of Agenda 2063, let us continue to work together to promote democracy, good governance, and peace dividends on our beloved continent.

Thank you!