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## PRESS RELEASE

### **AU Commission and UN Women Launch a Network of Reporters on Women, Peace and Security**

**Addis Ababa, 19 October 2016** – The African Union Commission (AUC) Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and UN Women have launched a network of reporters on women, peace and security, following a two-day capacity building workshop on gender-responsive reporting in conflict, post-conflict and fragile settings in Africa.

“We want you to be part of our voices in peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Be agents for change and bring visibility to issues of women’s participation in peace processes and conflict resolutions.”, H.E. Mme Bineta Diop, Special Envoy of the AUC Chairperson on Women, Peace and Security, told reporters as she launched the workshop.

“The media can create awareness on existing commitments, frameworks as well as gender inequalities. It can bring people together, offer alternatives to violence. It can hold states accountable for commitments. By moving beyond the traditional portrayal of women as victims, the media can change perceptions on women’s participation and leadership and bring stories of women’s activities in conflict prevention and peacebuilding to the fore.” Ms Letty, Chiwara, UN Women Representative to Ethiopia, the AU and the UNECA noted in her opening remarks.

“War and conflicts attract a lot of media attention. However, much of the focus is put on power politics and ego struggles [...]. What our people trapped in conflicts need from leaders is attention to human security issues that affect lives. They need a restoration of peace for efforts to be directed towards the building of schools, hospitals, ensure food security and conducive environments for active citizenship.” Ambassador Lazarous

Kapambwe stated, on behalf of the AUC Chairperson, H.E. Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma.

The workshop which started on Tuesday 18 October 2016, saw the participation of over twenty editors, journalists and bloggers, women and men from newspapers, radio, television and social media, covering conflict-affected countries and regions in Africa. Participants came from Burundi, the Central African Republic, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra-Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Tunisia, and Uganda.

A minute of silence was observed for late Ambassador Fatoumata Siré Diakit , a renowned Malian woman who dedicated her life protecting women and girls from all forms of gender-based violence.

The African Union declared 2016, “Year of Human rights, with particular focus on women’s rights”. This initiative which recognises media as a key partner in advancing the women, peace and security agenda, seeks to empower journalists to respect the dignity of women and recognise women’s contributions to social cohesion and lasting peace in their communities. It will be followed by an AU Peace and Security Council open session on the, “Role of the Media in Enhancing Accountability on Women, Peace, and Security Commitments in Africa.”

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