



FIFTH EDITION OF THE AFRODAD MEDIA INITIATIVE
Media’s Role in Advancing Africa’s Position on Reparative Justice
Venue: The Capital Empire Sandton



1. Introduction

The African Forum and Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD) in partnership with the [African Monitor](#), [Institute for Economic Justice](#) (IEJ), and [the Stop the Bleeding campaign](#) (STBc) will host the fifth edition of the AFRODAD Media Initiative (AfroMEDI V) from 25th to 27th March 2025 in Johannesburg, South Africa. This flagship event will be themed *Media’s Role in Advancing Africa’s Position on Reparative Justice*.

The 2025 African Union (AU) theme demands justice for Africans and people of African descent who have struggled through the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism, land dispossession and exploitation, racial segregation, neo-colonialism, economic exploitation, looting of African heritage and resources, environmental destruction, as well as political and economic interference among other forms of injustice. Through AfroMEDI V, participating journalists will be capacitated to link reparations to global development processes and to prioritise in-depth reporting that advances Africa’s position on reparative justice with a keen focus on public debt and related issues including taxation, trade, labour (in the context of the STBc), climate finance, feminist debt justice and legal elements of debt.

2. What is the Problem?

AFROMEDI has been responding to the following challenges that African journalists face: (i) Challenge to understand some complex debt information and processes; (ii) Struggle to access information for well-grounded reporting on debt and related issues. Limited public disclosure of terms, interest rates, and repayment schedules, makes it difficult to assess the true cost and implications of borrowing. Therefore, media often lack access to comprehensive data on public debt levels, borrowing patterns, and debt servicing costs, hindering their ability to hold governments accountable; (iii) Limitations to humanise technical information in a way that makes sense and is appealing to their audience; and (iv) those who have sufficient capacity struggle with limitations to freely report on sensitive issues linked to Transparency, Accountability and Governance (TAG) including during election processes which play a crucial role in shaping and democratising the debt discourse.

3. Background Information

Africa is facing one of its worst sovereign debt crises that threatens to reverse years of development gains and historical debt relief efforts. From the African Debt Risk Map, countries like Sudan, Somaliland, Somalia, Ghana, Sao Tome & Principe, Congo Republic, Zambia, Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Angola, Central African Republic, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Chad, Eritrea, Djibouti, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Tunisia and Kenya are struggling from a heavy burden of debt. Some countries have been pushed to implement harsh policies and budget cuts from social investment to loan repayment, leading to unrest as countries are forced into positions of implementing deeply unfair and unpopular policies, sometimes leading to civil unrest as witnessed in Kenya and Nigeria in 2024.

Public debt, while an essential component of modern fiscal policy worldwide, presents unique complexities within African economies. Its genesis is intimately tied to the colonial legacy left by European powers, which has contributed to the accumulation of odious debt and the transfer of oppressive debt burdens to independent African nations, constricting their fiscal spaces. The exploitative practices and economic control of colonial powers during the colonial era resulted in the extraction of resources and the imposition of economic structures that favoured colonisers. Upon achieving independence, African nations inherited the burdensome debts incurred by the colonial powers, perpetuating economic dependency, and hindering development.

The reparations agenda in the 2025 AU theme aims to address historical injustices while tackling contemporary issues like systemic racism, economic exclusion, and Africa's marginalisation in global decision-making. The economic injustice is rooted in the current global financial system, which has historically promoted inequality, poverty, indebtedness, and neo-colonialism. It is dominated by international financial institutions, notably the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and global capital markets which are heavily influenced by philosophical positions that prioritise market liberalism, creditor dominance, and resource extraction.

AFRODAD (through AFROMEDI, the Media Debt Network Africa/ M-DNA), has been working with the media to set public debt and linked issues on the agenda as a priority. They have also played a key role in democratising the debt discourse, thus giving citizens the power to influence debt policy through electoral choices. Moreover, the STB campaign and various partners at national, continental and global levels have been advancing the movement for debt justice with the motto of positioning Africa as a Rule Maker and not a Rule Taker anymore. The role of the media in this campaign is crucial as they are empowered to set the agenda that works for the people of the continent. Moreover, together with feminist organisations, AFRODAD has been advancing the feminist debt justice movement and journalists have a crucial role to champion it.

4. Rationale

The media play a crucial role in shaping public discourse, influencing policy decisions and bringing attention to socio-economic issues. Therefore, empowering journalists to set an agenda that aims at ensuring accountability and keeping people informed on key processes remains crucial. Therefore, it is important to engage journalists in this process to ensure citizens are informed and engaged. In a nutshell, AFROMEDI will offer increased capacity to report on debt reparative justice, through humanising the issues, focusing on data-driven reporting, offering historical context of injustice and proffering policy solutions from interviews with technical persons in the civil society space.

AfroMEDI V will strategically link the AU's theme to current global processes and campaigns such as Financing for Development, South Africa's presidency of the G20, the Stop the Bleeding campaign and the feminist debt justice. This year presents Africa and journalists from the continent with an opportune moment to highlight these injustices and advance reparative justice within several key processes to reverse the course of historical injustices.

5. Objectives

- i. Empower journalist to link reparations to global development processes, thus guiding their reporting.

- ii. Raise awareness on the need to reform global financial institutions and their operating systems.
- iii. Encourage and guide journalists to strategically report on key moments and movements including elections in 2025.
- iv. Offer a platform for continuous engagement beyond AFROMEDI V.

6. Outcomes

- i. Increased reporting on debt and other socio-economic issues, including advancing reparative justice and the reform of the global financing system.
- ii. Debt prioritised in election debates, manifestos and interviews in 2025 elections in participants' countries.
- iii. Increased membership of the M-DNA.

7. Scope

This year, participants will be drawn from 34 African countries including Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

8. Contact Persons

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