



Concept Note – AFRODAD Media Training (AFROMEDI) II

1. Introduction

[African Forum and Network on Debt and Development](#) (AFRODAD) is a Pan-African organisation committed to assisting the long-term development of the continent through its contribution to finding sustainable solutions to Africa's challenges in debt, resource management and financial development. The organisation has been in existence for twenty-five (25) years, and it has been working with various partners and stakeholders including Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), governments, media, Members of Parliament (MPs) and others, to advocate for accountable and transparent public debt management, debt cancellation, and efficient mechanisms for the mobilisation and utilisation of domestic including the use of international public finance in Africa.

AFRODAD believes in the power of media to positively influence society when issues are effectively reported to contribute to decision making processes and improving citizens' wellbeing. Journalists play an extremely critical role in taking information beyond shelves to various stakeholders. A considerable number of citizens lack access to information despite this being a constitutional right. Therefore, journalists' increased awareness and prioritisation of public debt management would translate to increased quality and quantity reporting thus adequately informing citizens and challenging power holders on any decisions that do not prioritise people. The media fraternity also has the potential to play an outstanding role in creating and shaping public opinion and strengthening society. This sword-arm of democracy that acts as watchdogs can protect public interest against malpractice through creating public awareness and challenging societal vices.

It is in this line that AFRODAD and partners are hosting the AFRODAD Media Initiative (AFROMEDI) to build capacity of journalists on Debt and Development with integrated and practical sessions that will strengthen participating journalists' reporting skills on debt and related issues. Participants will be drawn from 20 African countries and their selection was guided by their debt sustainability status which assesses macroeconomic circumstances and the ability to service debt according to the debatable IMF Debt Sustainability framework.

The selection prioritises countries considered to be in debt distress and in high risk of debt distress (**Congo, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, Guinea, Ghana, Kenya, South Sudan, Togo and Zambia**). The intention is to enable journalists from these countries master their context and their role in contributing to an improved public understanding of the public debt status in their respective countries and what could be the appropriate policy contributions they can bring to this effect. For countries under moderate to low risk of debt distress (**Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Mali, Malawi and Senegal**), the aim is to support reporting that should enable countries to continue maintaining and indeed improving their current debt sustainability status. The choice of countries equally reflects the current conflict dynamics in Africa which exerts pressure on public spending and is always likely to worsen the debt sustainability status of countries. As it stands, **Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Chad, Nigeria and**



South Sudan are faced with longstanding conflicts which have serious implications on borrowed resources as they affect the quality of the economic environment required for proper investment of borrowed resources or cause the diversion of such resources to finance conflict. The choice of countries has also been guided by the need for a fair gender, regional, and linguistic representation between Francophone, Anglophone and Lusophone Africa.

During the AFROMEDI II, we will launch the Media-Debt Network Africa (M-DNA), a platform to bring journalists together who focus on reporting on development finance issues from across the continent.

2. Current debt landscape

Africa is threatened with a debt crisis: two decades after debt restructuring under HIPC & MDRI. Gross government debt which reflects the total liabilities for countries to be debt free has been on a consistent rise in the African continent and for all regional economic communities for more than 20 years. It rose from about 192 billion USD in 2000, to over 1.5 trillion USD in 2020. This is way above the revenue earning potential for the region which stood at 43.2 billion USD and 457 billion USD during the same period. This is a clear indication that African countries have been borrowing above their earning potential – a situation that has been compounded by the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

Attempts to deal with this predicament beyond Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative (HIPC) and Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) include (i) the [Debt Service Suspension Initiative \(DSSI\)](#) which postponed debt payment up to December 2021 to permit countries save up resources to combat the adverse effects of covid19; and (ii) the [G20 Common Framework](#) for Debt Treatment Beyond DSSI which has only received a timid response for debt restructuring. The IMF has also issued 650 billion USD worth of [special drawing rights \(SDRs\)](#) which African countries are receiving only 5 percent with about 100 billion SDRs still expected to be recycled for the benefit of low-income countries through IMF channels such as Poverty reduction and Growth Trust and Resistance and Sustainability Trust. As it stands, these initiatives still leave much to be desired in terms of dealing with Africa's debt predicament. This calls for action within the media community to contribute to policies geared towards ensuring debt sustainability in Africa.

3. Background & Rationale

In the recent past, AFRODAD hosted media training sessions in various countries such as Lesotho, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zambia. This is in line with AFRODAD's belief in the power of media to positively influence society when issues are effectively reported to contribute to decision making processes and improving citizens' wellbeing. Journalists play a critical role in taking information beyond shelves to various stakeholders.

A considerable number of citizens lack access to information despite this being a constitutional right. Therefore, journalists' increased awareness and prioritisation of public debt management can potentially translate to increased quality and quantity reporting thus: (i) adequately informing citizens and (ii) challenging power holders on any decisions that do not prioritise people. They have the potential to play



an outstanding role in (iii) creating and shaping public opinion and strengthening society. They are (iv) the sword-arm of democracy that acts as watchdogs to protect public interest against malpractice through creating public awareness and challenging societal vices.

As a pan African organisation there is a need to scale up capacity building to a continental level while comprehensively connecting national, regional, continental and global aspects of public debt, their interconnectivity, and their ripple effects on economies and mostly, on citizens. The maiden AROMEDI I was in June 2021 in partnership with Action Aid, Oxfam and other national partners hosted a [Pan African Media Conference](#) that attracted four hundred and nine (409) journalists from various African countries. The conference is now transitioning into an in-depth educational workshop that will ensure extensive transfer and use of knowledge relevant to champion a new debt movement that positions “[Africa as Rule maker not Rule taker](#).”

4. Objectives

- Contributing to journalists’ existing knowledge and understanding of debt management and related financing issues in Africa.
- Exchanging innovative and effective techniques for monitoring and reporting on public debt and related issues.
- Launching a network of journalists who can adequately report on debt management and related matters at national, regional, and continental levels.

5. Outcomes

- Increase in the number of media publications on debt management issues.
- Debates and discussions on public debt issues.
- Increase in the number of media players joining the network of journalists on debt and related issues.

6. Partners

- Angola- [ASSOCIAÇÃO JUVENIL PARA O DESENVOLVIMENTO COMUNITÁRIO DE ANGOLA \(AJUDECA\)](#).
- Cameroon- [African Development Interchange](#) (ADIN), Plateforme d'Information et d'Action sur la Dette (PFIAD).
- Chad- [Cercle de Réflexion et d'Orientation sur la Soutenabilité de l'Economie Tchadienne](#) (CROSET).
- Gambia- [Action Aid Gambia](#), [Gambia Press Union](#).
- Ghana- [Africa Centre for Energy Policy](#) (ACEP).
- Malawi- [Malawi Economic Justice Network](#) (MEJN).
- [Nigeria, Africa Network for Environment and Economic Justice](#) (ANEEJ).
- [Laboratoire de Recherche Economiques et Monetaires](#) (LAREM).
- [Stop the Bleeding Campaign Campaign](#) (STBC).
- Togo- [Amis de la Terre- Togo](#), [ITUC-Togo](#).



- Uganda, [Southern and Eastern Africa Trade Information and Negotiations Institute](#) (Seatini), [Uganda Debt Network](#) (UDN), [Youth for Tax Justice Network](#) (YTJN)
- [Zambia- Centre for Trade Policy and Development](#) (CTPD), [Consumer Unity Trust Society](#) (CUTS-Lusaka), [Caritas Zambia](#).
- [Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development \(ZIMCODD\)](#), [Transparency International Zimbabwe](#) (TI-Zimbabwe), [Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association](#) (ZELA).

7. Method & Modules

→ **Method**

Each module will be presented by 2 facilitators to allow consideration from various aspects and well-informed deliberations. There will be a group project to be completed by the end of the workshop. Sessions will be interactive.

→ **Modules**

- Public debt vulnerability and evolving landscape.
- Understanding public debt, its linkages and effects on citizens.
- Strengthening democratic practices towards effective public debt management: Role of media
- The role of the African media community in projecting Africa as a rule maker, not rule taker in international development finance.
- Overview of the Stop the Bleeding Campaign.
- Making debt and tax work for women.

8. Date, Format & Venue

Sessions will be held on 21st - 23rd March 2022 in Nairobi Kenya and in other countries namely Angola, Chad, Cameroon, Gambia, Kenya, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. All physical sessions will be open to virtual participation.

9. Contacts

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