



Media Advisory

Launch of the South African Chapter of the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) at UNISA in Pretoria on 18 and 19 November 2021

Theme: “Building Women’s Leadership to Accelerate Gender Equality Across Africa.”

Date: 17 November 2021

South Africa will become the 26th African country to launch a national chapter of the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) this week at UNISA, the continent’s largest open distance learning institution. AWLN is a ground-breaking movement of African women leaders, unveiled at the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York in 2017, under the auspices of the African Union Commission (AUC), the Office of the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the Federal Republic of Germany.

The creation of AWLN was an initiative spearheaded by African woman leaders, such as former President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the first President of the Pan African Parliament, Gertrude Mongella, the previous Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Deputy Secretary-General of the UN, Amina Mohammed, African Union Special Envoy, Bineta Diop, and former Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, Liberata Mulamula, amongst others.

AWLN has set out to create a continent-wide force contributing to Africa's transformation in line with the Global Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 and the Africa Agenda 2063. It seeks to enhance the leadership of women in the transformation of Africa with a focus on governance, peace and stability. Since its establishment, the network has comprised over 500 African women across generations and sectors. It has six key pillars:

1. Governance and political participation;
2. Peace and security;
3. Finance and women's entrepreneurship;
4. Youth leadership;
5. Agriculture; and
6. Social mobilisation.

It is implemented with the support of the Office of the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, UN Women, and the Federal Republic of Germany, through their representations in New York and Addis Ababa.

On Day One of the AWLN South Africa launch, **Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka** will provide the keynote address and case studies from Lesotho, Namibia, and Zimbabwe will help embed AWLN in South Africa. Day Two will be a closed meeting of the interim steering body to take this initiative forward.

An estimated number of 130 delegates are expected to attend the South Africa Chapter launch. A cross-section of South African participants will be drawn from Government, in collaboration with the UN Women South Africa Multi-Country Office,

the South African Women in Dialogue and UNISA Women's Forum. Expected attendees include representation from Women leaders in Academia, Civil Society, Business, Labour Federations, Politics, Rural Development Formations, Youth, Persons with Disability, among others; including those led by trans, intersex, and binary people and representatives from the rural-urban divide with a feminist transformative agenda.

This event will be live-streamed through the UNISA YouTube channel from 9:00 am to 5:30 pm on 18 November 2021. A virtual link will be provided. Invitees are requested to register in advance and share the link with as many people as possible through various platforms, institutions, and social media platforms.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/UnisaVideos/live>

<https://forms.office.com/r/rnaCY8yMXB> Registration for Virtual Participation

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For further inquiry, please contact

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