

Pan-African Women's Day 2025

Draft Concept Note

“Advancing Social and Economic Justice for African Women through Reparations”

I. Background

Pan African Women's Day (PAWD), observed annually on July 31st, marks a pivotal moment to celebrate the historic and ongoing contributions of African women to the continent's liberation, development, and social transformation. It also commemorates the anniversary of the Pan African Women's Organisation (PAWO), the African Union's (AU) Specialized Agency for gender equality and women's empowerment. As PAWO celebrates its 63rd anniversary, the 2025 commemorations take place against a backdrop of both progress and persistent challenges in advancing gender equality across Africa.

The theme for PAWD 2025, ***“Advancing Social and Economic Justice for African Women through Reparations”*** draws direct inspiration from the African Union's 2025 theme of the year: “Justice for Africans and People of African Descent Through Reparations.” This alignment underscores the urgent need to address the enduring legacies of colonialism, slavery, apartheid, and systemic exploitation that continue to shape the socio-economic realities of African women and girls.

African women and girls have disproportionately borne the brunt of historical injustices, including economic and social exploitation, land dispossession, and gender-based violence. These injustices are compounded by patriarchal norms and neo-colonial economic systems that perpetuate cycles of poverty and marginalization. Reparations, in this context, must be understood not merely as financial compensation but as a holistic process that restores dignity, addresses socio-economic disparities, and ensures gender-responsive governance. This involves meaningful representation of women in negotiations, policymaking, and governance, as well as the implementation of frameworks that protect women's rights and guarantee their full participation in decision-making.

The call for reparations is deeply rooted in the need for accountability, restitution, and restorative justice, which is especially critical for African women and girls in conflict-affected regions who face heightened risks of violence, displacement, and economic exclusion. The gender dimensions of reparations also extend to the need for investment in social policies, public services, and infrastructure that reduce and redistribute unpaid care work, ensure universal access to gender-responsive healthcare, and provide quality education for women and girls. Decolonizing education systems and revising curricula to

include positive social norms and accurate historical narratives are essential steps toward gender justice. Furthermore, addressing land dispossession and ensuring equal and ownership rights for women are critical components of reparative justice. Harmonizing customary and statutory laws is necessary to protect women's rights to land and natural resources.

The political and development landscape in Africa is characterized by both significant progress and concerning setbacks. While there have been important gains in women's leadership and participation in public life, recent years have also witnessed rising inequality and persistent poverty, which threaten to erode these achievements. Despite the presence of strong continental frameworks and instruments, progress toward gender equality and women's empowerment remains uneven, underscoring the urgency of the PAWD's call to advance social and economic justice for African women.

By centering the gender dimensions of reparations and addressing the structural barriers that perpetuate inequality, Africa can move closer to realizing the vision of a continent where women and girls are empowered, resilient, and able to fully participate in shaping their futures.

Pan-African Women's Day 2025 Commemorations

II. Objectives

The primary objective of PAWD 2025 is to advance the call for social and economic justice for African women through reparations and to commemorate and celebrate the historic and ongoing contributions of African women to the continent's liberation and development, marking the 63rd anniversary of PAWO.

The specific objectives are:

- To advocate for comprehensive reparative justice frameworks that address the unique and intersectional experiences of African women and girls, including historical injustices and economic and social marginalization.
- To strengthen the participation and leadership of African women in decision-making processes related to reparations, transitional justice, and policy reform, ensuring their voices and experiences shape outcomes.
- To raise awareness and build capacity among African women and girls, young women advocates, and grassroots communities on the importance of reparations, restorative justice, and gender equality as pathways to sustainable peace and development.
- To promote the ratification and harmonization of continental instruments such as the African Union Convention on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and

Girls (CEVAWG) and the Maputo Protocol, ensuring they are implemented in ways that prioritize gender justice and accountability.

- Celebrate PAWO's successes and perseverance.

III. Proposed Activities

To celebrate PAWD 2025, various activities will take place in collaboration with partners, throughout the month of July as follows:

- **National Townhalls on the PAWD Theme:** Throughout July 2025, PAWO National Representatives will organize in-person or virtual townhalls, featuring panel discussions with diverse stakeholders including women, girls, civil society organizations, and government officials. These events will serve as platforms for dialogue, knowledge sharing, and advocacy on issues central to the PAWD theme.
- **Main Celebrations Event:** On July 31, 2025, a high-profile event will be held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, bringing together PAWO Members from across the continent, AU representatives, development partners, civil society organizations, women and girls, among others. The event will feature panel discussions, storytelling sessions, exhibitions showcasing women-led initiatives, and a ceremony to recognize outstanding contributions by PAWO members.
- **Communication Campaign:** A coordinated social media campaign (#PAWD2025) will run throughout July, amplifying the achievements of African women and girls, promoting the national townhalls and main event, and engaging a broad audience on the PAWD theme through live updates, photo and video sharing, and interactive content.

IV. Date and Venue

The main event for the Pan African Women's Day Commemorations will take place on 31 July 2025 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, holds profound historical significance as the birthplace of the Pan African Women's Organisation. It was in this city in July 1962 that the first Pan African Women's Conference took place, uniting women from across newly independent African nations to lay the foundation for collective action, solidarity, and the advancement of women's rights on the continent. Hosting the main event in Dar es Salaam honors this legacy, reconnects participants with the origins of PAWO, and symbolically reaffirms the commitment to the ideals of Pan-Africanism and gender equality.

V. Resource Mobilization

PAWO national representatives are encouraged to collaborate with partners to mobilize resources for local celebrations, ensuring broad participation and impact across the continent.

VI. Contact Persons

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