

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN

Paix-Travail-Patrie

**MINISTERE DE LA PROMOTION DE LA FEMME
ET DE LA FAMILLE**

SECRETARIAT GENERAL

COMITE D'ORGANISATION DE LA 64^{ème} EDITION DE
LA JOURNÉE DE LA FEMME AFRICAINE

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

Peace-Work-Fatherland

**MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT AND THE FAMILY**

GENERAL SECRETARIAT

ORGANISING COMMITTEE OF THE 64TH EDITION OF
PAN-AFRICAN WOMEN'S DAY EDITION



**64th EDITION OF THE AFRICAN WOMEN'S DAY
(31 July 2026)**

THEME:

**"Women's action for safe sanitation, peaceful
communities and better living conditions"**

Terms of Reference

1. Historical background of the African Women's Day (AWD)

Since the Congress of the International Democratic Women's Federation (IDWF), held in Vienna (Austria) in May 1958, African women felt the need to unite within a continental organisation capable of giving them a voice and defending their interests on the international stage. Among the prominent figures who contributed to this initiative was **Mrs Aoua Keïta**, a human rights activist and Mali's first female Member of Parliament, whose commitment significantly shaped the African women's movement.

In this regard, a Preparatory Committee was convened in Bamako (Mali) from 8 to 10 June 1962, with a view to defining the modalities for the creation of a pan-African women's organisation. The meeting brought together representatives from several African countries, including Angola, Cameroon, Dahomey (now Benin), Ghana, Portuguese Guinea (now Guinea-Bissau), Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Tunisia and Tanzania.

Following these proceedings, participants decided to organise a Constitutive General Assembly in Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) from 27 to 31 July 1962. This historic meeting led to the creation of the first continental organisation of African women, known as the “**African Women's Conference (AWC)**”, with the aim of promoting African unity, solidarity, peace, social justice and women's emancipation.

Twelve years later, at the first Congress held in Dakar (Senegal) in 1974, the African Women's Conference underwent a transformation to become the Pan-African Women's Organisation (PAWO), an umbrella organisation in charge of harnessing African women's efforts around the ideals of peace, development, education, health and social progress.

Though observed since 1962, it was at the Dakar Congress that 31 July was officially proclaimed as “**African Women's Day**”. This decision was subsequently endorsed by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which later became the African Union (AU).

Initially focused on liberation struggles, African unity and social justice, African Women's Day has gradually become a key platform for reflection, awareness-raising, advocacy and mobilisation around issues relating to women's rights, their empowerment, gender equality, education, health, participation in governance, the fight against poverty and sustainable development.

Today, African Women's Day is an important moment to celebrate the achievements of African women and to recognise their contribution to the continent's economic, social, political and cultural development. It is also an

opportunity for African States to renew their commitments in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

II. Context of the 64th edition of the African Women's Day

At the global level, this year's edition of the AWD is taking place in a context marked by:

- upsurge in armed conflicts, humanitarian crises, forced displacement of populations and climate change-related disasters, as well as inadequate sanitation infrastructure and the increasing number of health risks and emergencies;
- limited access to a healthy environment, potable drinking water and adequate sanitation services, which continue to have significant consequences on public health, food security, the environment and social cohesion. Women and girls remain the most exposed to these challenges, due to their key role in water management, family hygiene, household health and community development;
- implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, particularly SDG 5 on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, SDG 3 on good health and well-being, and SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions.

At the regional level, we can mention:

- continued implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063, particularly the achievement of the objectives of the African Women's Decade (2020–2030), aimed at strengthening female leadership in all development sectors;
- implementation of the commitments undertaken by African Union as part of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, which recognise the key role of women in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and crises management.

In Cameroon, AWD is being celebrated as part of the drive to implement the National Development Strategy 2020–2030 (NDS30), the National Gender Policy (2022–2030), the National Strategy to Combat Gender-Based Violence (2022–2026) and the Second National Action Plan for the implementation of United Nations Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2023–2027). This context is equally marked by numerous government initiatives in the areas of hygiene, access to potable water, sanitation, public health, environmental protection and local development.

III. Explanation of the theme

For this year's edition of the AWD, the theme chosen by the African Union, which Cameroon has adopted, is: **“Women's action for safe sanitation, peaceful communities and better living conditions”**. This theme is in line with the African Union's theme for 2026, which is: **“Ensuring the sustainable availability of water and safe sanitation systems to achieve the objectives of Agenda 2063”**, adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government at its 38th ordinary session held in February 2025 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The emphasis placed by African Union on water and sanitation for 2026 reflects the growing recognition across the continent that the sustainable management of water resources is essential for Africa's economic growth, industrialisation, job creation and social transformation. The achievement of the AU's broader vision, which is to build robust, competitive and climate-resilient economies, depends on the effective planning, development and management of water resources in Africa. In this context, African leaders have dedicated 2026 to water and sanitation, recognising that improving the sustainable availability of water and sanitation systems is essential to advancing inclusive socio-economic development and preserving the well-being and future of the continent's women and families.

The theme of the 64th edition of the AWD highlights the strategic role of women as actors of change in promoting sanitation, hygiene, environmental protection, community health and peace-building. It emphasizes that sustainable improvement in living conditions depends on the active participation of women. It recalls that women play a decisive role in community monitoring, dissemination of information, awareness-raising, social mediation, conflict prevention and the promotion of behaviours that foster health and peace. Their full and meaningful participation in the design of sanitation and peace solutions is an key factor in resilience and development.

This year's celebration of AWD is a unique opportunity to highlight the contribution of African women to the continent's sustainable development, while strengthening advocacy for their effective participation in peacebuilding and the building of fairer, more resilient and more inclusive societies, capable of improving people's living conditions. It is also an opportunity to mobilise government officials, regional and local authorities, civil society organisations, technical and financial partners, traditional and religious authorities and communities around concerted actions aimed at promoting a healthy environment, peaceful communities and inclusive development, while promoting women's leadership.

IV. OBJECTIVES

IV.1 General Objective

Promote women's action for safe sanitation, peaceful communities and better living conditions.

IV.2 Specific Objectives

- Improve women's and communities' access to potable water, hygiene and basic sanitation infrastructure;
- Strengthen women's participation in conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding bodies at local, national, and regional levels;
- Strengthen women's economic capacities;
- Raise more awareness among the population of the importance of sanitation, hygiene and environmental protection;
- promote women-led initiatives in the areas of sanitation, community health, environmental protection and social cohesion;
- Capacity building for women and girls in sanitation, hygiene and health promotion.

V. EXPECTED RESULTS

- Women's and communities' access to potable water, hygiene and basic sanitation infrastructure is improved;
- Women's participation in conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding bodies at local, national and regional levels is strengthened;
- Women's economic capacities are enhanced;
- People are increasingly sensitised to the importance of sanitation, hygiene and environmental protection;
- Women-led initiatives in the areas of sanitation, community health, environmental protection and social cohesion are promoted;
- Capacity building for women and girls in sanitation, hygiene and health promotion is strengthened.

VI. SUB-THEMES

- Women, Water and Sanitation;
- Women, Peace and Security: building safe and conflict-free communities;
- Living conditions, Equality and Social Justice;
- Combating GBV;
- Women's economic empowerment;
- Human security and resilience;
- Preventing community conflicts;
- Protecting women and girls from health risks, violence and humanitarian crises;

- Building women's capacities for safe sanitation, peaceful communities and better living conditions;
- Local governance, citizens' participation and women's inclusion;
- Protecting women and girls from conflict, humanitarian crises and forced displacement of populations;
- Women and sustainable development;
- Women and waste management;
- Women's health and well-being;
- Rural women and access to basic social services;
- Female leadership in promoting hygiene and community health;
- Women, peace and social cohesion: peaceful communities for sustainable development;
- Sanitation, public health and improvement of living conditions;
- Women, climate change and sustainable environmental management;
- Women's participation in environmental governance and local development;
- Women and hygiene education, sanitation and citizenship.

VII. ACTIVITIES

- The Minister's press briefing;
- Celebrations at the national level and across decentralised services;
- Communication activities (media coverage, radio and television programmes, programmes in national and local languages, interviews, conference debates, round-tables, educational talks, digital communication);
- Design, production and distribution of communication materials;
- Promotion of women's skills;
- Capacity-building sessions;
- Sports, cultural and leisure activities;
- Fairs and exhibitions;
- Excursions.

VIII. METHODOLOGY

The activities marking the 64th edition of the AWD will take place across the country, involving sector administrations, civil society organisations, the private sector, development partners, Regional and Local Authorities, the media and communities.

Celebrations will take place on 31 July across the country. All activities should be carried out in strict compliance with the institutions and ideals of the Republic, human dignity, patriotism, peace and living together in harmony.

MINPROFF's Regional Delegations must submit reports on the activities carried out in their respective regions, 15 days after the event at the latest.

