

AU seeks collaboration with media on peace, security

DAKAR, SENEGAL - The second high level media workshop on the African Union Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) started on Friday (21 December) in Dakar, Senegal, with the theme *Promoting the culture of Peace through Media*.

Representing the African Union (AU), Professor Abdoulaye Bathily, AU's special envoy on the Mbororo issue, deplored the few resources African nations invest in peace and security efforts and urged the media to act as spokespersons for the continent, especially for peace and human security.

Highlighting the theme of the workshop, Bathily emphasised that the culture of peace should be disseminated sustainably "into societies, our spirit and our daily routine".

"This should be transmitted to future generations to prevent conflicts" he added.

Speaking on behalf of the Ministry of Defence of Senegal, Col. Abdurahim Kebe encouraged the collaborative work between the AU and the media to actively promote a culture of peace in all African communities, as it would be sure to trickle down to the general population.

The opening ceremony was attended by Cheikh Tidiane Gadio, chairman of newly launched Pan-African Institute of Strategies (IPS).

Speaking about the crisis in Mali and the African response to it, Gadio stressed the need for a more unified political approach to conflicts on the continent. He pointed out the shortcomings in tackling the Mali crisis were a regional issue, rather than a continental one.

Over the next three days, participants in the workshop and more than 60 media practitioners, will discuss the functioning of the AU in terms of peace and security, its architecture and its different components in terms of crises prevention and resolution, notably through the African Standby Force (ASF).

The workshop will also provide participating journalists who specialise on issues of peace and security with reliable information aimed at increasing their understanding of the complexity of these issues, as well as ameliorating the factual media coverage of the AU's peace and security efforts.

Launched in November 2011, the APSA media workshop aims to reinforce dialogue between the AU and the media by popularising the many mechanisms of the APSA, conflict prevention and early warning practices.