



## INFORMATION NOTE

### UN, ECCAS and their partners mobilized against hate speech in Central Africa

**Douala, 25 October 2021** - From 26 to 29 October 2021, Douala, the economic capital of Cameroon, will host a regional forum to raise awareness and build the capacity of media practitioners to prevent and combat hate speech in Central Africa. The event is organized by the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) Commission, in collaboration with the Cameroonian government, the United Nations Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa (UNCHRD-AC), the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office in the DRC (UNJHRO), the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the UNESCO Office for Central Africa.

The forum targets mainly journalists from professional organizations and will provide an opportunity to review the different hate words generally used in the media by participants from Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, and Chad.

Beyond this overview, the Douala Forum will focus on the different situations with regards to the dissemination of hate messages, their meaning, as well as on the tools to prevent and combat them. Presentations will be made by the different speakers to edify and draw the attention of participants on the impact of hate speech, which is also considered as an attack against tolerance, social cohesion, national unity and diversity. Group work will reinforce reflections on specific aspects and facilitate discussions on the development of a regional strategy to prevent and fight against hate speech by the media in Central Africa. Participants will draw inspiration, among others, from the United Nations strategy and Plan of action to Combat Hate Speech. Journalists from the subregion would also consider adopting an ad hoc self-regulatory instrument aimed at committing them to prioritizing freedom of expression at the service of peace, particularly through media productions that emphasize constructive criticism.

The United Nations and its partners stand ready to accompany the media in this perspective and to support ECCAS in achieving its objectives regarding the development of a regional strategy against hate speech in Central Africa which is one of its key priorities for 2022. Following this workshop in Douala, a second Forum (communication regulatory bodies) is planned in Ndjamena (Chad) and a third one in Kinshasa (DRC) regrouping media practitioners, regulatory bodies and other key actors to refine and adopt the regional strategy.

#### Note to the media

In response to the alarming rise in xenophobia, racism and intolerance, violent misogyny, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia around the world, the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres launched the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action to Combat Hate Speech on 18 June 2019. This is based on the realization that over the past 75 years, hate speech has been a harbinger of the atrocious crimes that have followed it, including genocide, such as in Rwanda, Bosnia or Cambodia.

The United Nations Hate Speech Strategy and Action Plan provides strategic guidance to the UN system to combat hate speech at the national, regional, and global levels. The objectives are two-fold: first, to strengthen the efforts of UN entities to address the root causes and drivers of hate speech, and second, to help the UN system respond effectively to the societal consequences of hate speech. The Douala Forum is part of this effort. The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA, François Louncény Fall, is expected to take part in the opening ceremony as well as representatives of the ECCAS Commission and national and international partners.

#### Contacts presse:

**Norbert N. Ouendji:** Head of Strategic Communications and Public Information Unit/UNOCA – [ouendji@un.org](mailto:ouendji@un.org)  
**Placide Ibouanga Ndinga:** Head of Service of Communication/ECCAS - [placide.ibouangandinga@ceeac-eccas.org](mailto:placide.ibouangandinga@ceeac-eccas.org)