

**News**

# Former First Lady of Two African Nations, Graça Machel Launches Pan African Women in Media Network

Network of women journalists will work with Graça Machel Trust

By Stacy M. Brown  
(NNPA Newswire Contributor)

In an effort to transform the narrative and negative perceptions of African women and children, Graça Machel, the former first lady of two African nations, recently established a first of its kind Pan African Women in Media Network (WIMN).

The network of women journalists will work in conjunction with the

Graça Machel Trust. “The Graça Machel Trust’s women’s rights program is based on our aim to multiply the faces and amplify the voices of women, especially in areas where they are

“When economically empowered, women take control of their lives, set their own agendas, provide solutions to their problems and challenges, and develop self-reliance’

underrepresented,” said Machel, who is also the

founder of the Foundation for Community Development in Mozambique. “Through our women’s networks in agribusiness, finance and ‘Women Creating Wealth,’ we foster links

and build a critical mass of highly-qualified and change.” The Graça Machel

active women across sectors and professions who can work collectively to influence, shape and drive the socio-economic policies to ensure that they achieve economic prosperity and social

Trust works across the African continent to amplify women’s movements, influence governance, and advocate for the protection of children’s rights and dignity.

The Trust consolidates the work of Machel and seeks to build on her legacy by inspiring the younger generation to take up new challenges and create societies that value and care about social justice.

Machel noted that the primary mission is to amplify the voices of women’s movements, influence governance and promote women’s leadership and contributions in the economic, social, and political development of Africa.

The Trust also advocates for the protection of children’s rights and dignity.

Recognizing the crucial role that media plays in shaping societal attitudes, Machel said it’s important that women are at the center of transformation within the media landscape.

The new network has also gained the support of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), the Black Press that’s comprised of approximately 208 African-American owned newspapers across the United States.

“The National Newspaper Publishers Association supports and salutes the Graça Machel Trust that effectively empowers African women. When African women are empowered, it results in advancing all African people throughout the world,” said Dr. Benjamin Chavis, the president and CEO of the NNPA.

“The Diamond Empowerment Fund, co-founded by Russell Simmons, me and others also recognizes the extraordinary global leadership of Graça Machel and the Graça Machel Trust. I vividly remember meeting Graça Machel at her home in Maputo, Mozambique along with her husband South Africa President Nelson Mandela and my colleague Rus-



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sell Simmons in 2006.”

Chavis continued: “We discussed the ongoing struggle and movement to transform Africa for progress and the liberation of all who stand for freedom and equality.”

Prior to her marriage to Mandela, Machel was the wife of Mozambique President Samora Machel. She also served for more than a decade as that country’s minister of education and culture.

Machel said that WIMN will drive coordinated messaging and build awareness on issues related to health, education, and women’s economic empowerment, which will have a positive effect on women and children.

“Given the influential role that media plays in shaping societal attitudes, the network seeks to change the present narrative of women that presents them as powerless victims and ignores the many positive stories and successes,” Machel added. “When economically empowered, women take control of their lives, set their own agendas, provide solutions to their problems and challenges, and develop self-reliance.”

Machel added: “To build a strong and equitable future for all Africans, we acknowledge the fundamental contribution of women and ensure that we create a supportive and enabling environment where they are able to fully participate and benefit.”

The network will also create an inter-generational platform to allow young talented female journalists to participate and work alongside the continent’s more seasoned veterans.

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