



LAUNCH OF THE PAN-AFRICAN WIDOWS GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE PAWGADI TAWS2025

Theme: “*Widowhood in Africa: Building a Sustainable Culture*”
Sub. Theme: “*Widows’ Inclusion for Africa’s Transformation: Advancing Rights, Dignity, and Development*”

Date: 3rd - 5th September 2025
Venue: Mövenpick Hotel Namibia

Organized by: Pan-African Widows Growth and Development Initiative

PROGRAM

Moderators: Toun Okewale Soniaya, Michael Madhimba Amy Banda
Rapporteurs; Omotara Aisida, Thato Lijane-Tlhomelang, Barbara Hachamba, Kaveri Kavari-Muuoja

TIME	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
DAY ONE: 3RD SEPTEMBER 2025		
06:30 - 08:00	Registration of Participants	Secretariat
OPENING CEREMONY		
08:00 – 08:30	Arrival of Guest of Honour	Secretariat
09:00 – 09:15	Guest of honor Visiting Exhibition	TAWS leader
09:15 – 09:30	National Anthem	Band
09:20 – 09:25	Prayer	Ms. Moureen Ngwenya Founder of Comfort Zimbabwe
09:25 – 09:30	Welcoming Remarks	Ms Jane Kuhanga TAWS Country Representative
09:30 – 09:35	Introductory Remarks	Short clip of the widows
09:35 – 09:40	Remarks/presentation of TAWS2024 Communique by the Union of African Widows	Barrister Omotara Aisida Legal Secretary, Union of African Widows

09:40 – 09:45	Traditional/Cultural Dance	Kavango Cultural Group
09:45 – 09:50	Short Clip on widowhood across Africa	Southern Africa
09:50 – 09:55	Remarks	Mama Anna FMR 1st Lady
09:55 – 10:00	Short Clip about Namibia	Opentiera
10:00 -10:10	Keynote Remarks	Dr Emma Kantema-Gaomas Minister of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Social Welfare Namibia
10:10 – 10:20	Poem	Miss Tjiveripo Kahuure
10:20 – 10:45	Unveiling of the Pan-African Widows Growth and Development Initiative AWGaDi	Moderator
10:45 – 10:55	Goodwill Message	Lord Raj Loomba
10:55 – 11:00	TAWS Special Recognition / Appreciation	Moderator: Ms. Hope Nwakwesi (PhD) TAWG Steering Committee
11:00 – 11:20	Remarks	Ms. Hopolang Phororo United Nations Namibia Resident Coordinator
11:20 – 11:30	Abstract Presentations Widowhood in Africa (West, East and Central Africa)	Prof. Mrs. Lucy Okukpon UniBen Gender Director, University of Benin Nigeria Dr Nuwatuhaire Bernard (PHD) Director Post Graduate Studies, Research and Innovations, Ankole Western University (AWU)-Uganda & co Prof Joyce Bayande Mbongo Epse Endeley
11:30 – 12:00	Tea Break	All participants

HIGH PLENARY SESSION

Why Widows Must Matter in Africa's Development Agenda

12:00 – 12:20	<i>Widows' Inclusion in National and International Commissions, African Union, UN Women</i>	Hope Nwakwesi (PhD) President Pan-African Widows
12:20 – 12:40	<i>Ending Widowhood Omission Strategies to address gender equality.</i> <i>Despite the widespread impact of widowhood across Africa, widows remain largely invisible in national development plans. What framework policy shifts can governments and regional bodies implement to integrate widows for sustainable development?</i>	Vaidah Mashangwa Director Strategic Policy Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation in the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community Small and Medium Enterprises Development Zimbabwe

PLENARY SESSION		
12:40 – 12:45	AWWA DOC TRAILER	TAWS
12:45 – 12:55	<i>Strategies to ending the historical exclusion of widows issues from national and continental policy conversations; from gender departments perspective.</i>	Hon Sindisiwe Chikunga Minister of Women, Youth and Persons With Disabilities
12:55 – 13:20	PANEL 1A: Ending Widowhood Omission – Representation and Political Participation <i>(Strategies for ensuring widows' voices in national governance and AU platforms</i>	Dr. Isatou Touray Former Vice President of the Republic of Gambia Hon.Hanna Wendot Cheptumo Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Gender, Culture, the Arts, and Heritage, Kenya Widows Representatives
13:20 – 14:30	Lunch / Exhibition Visit	All participants
AFTERNOON SESSION		
14:30 – 14:40	<i>Eliminating Widowhood Abuse: From cultural harm to human rights, the diplomatic role</i>	Hon. Dr. Dorothy Gwajima Minister for Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups, Tanzania.
14:40 – 15:15	PANEL 1B: Ending Widowhood Omission – Representation and Political Participation: The case for widow-led advisory councils	Mispa Fri Awasum Pan-African Women Organisation Women in law and development Africa Widows Representatives
15:15 – 15:45	PANEL 1C: Ending Widowhood Omission: Representation and Political Participation - Testimonies from widow leaders	Hon. Hajiya Imaan Sulaiman-Ibrahim Minister, Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Nigeria. Hon. Yvonne Dausab Federal Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development, Kenya
15:45 – 15:50	Her Story	Central Africa Congo Widows

15:50 – 16:25	ROUNDTABLE <i>Interactive/Community-Based Widows groups; Widowhood in East, West, Central, South and North Africa</i>	MODERATOR: Dr Wameotsile Mahabile Ms. Barbra Hachamba Circle of Comfort, Zimbabwe Ms. Diana Kabanyonza Howard Foundation Uganda Barrister Gozie Udemezue Healing heart Widows Nigeria - Widows, Women Men and Youths Ms. Dineo Phuti chairperson Widows Working Together, Botswana
16:25 – 16:55	Presentation of Awards and Picture Taking	MODERATOR
DAY TWO: 4TH SEPTEMBER 2025		
08:00 – 09:00	Tea Break/ Exhibition Visit	All participants
09:00 – 10:20	Presentation of the Day 2 Highlights	Rapporteur
10:20 – 10:35 10:35 - 11:55	<i>Financial Inclusion for Widows – Unlocking Economic Opportunities</i> PANEL SESSION <i>What scalable economic models, whether cooperatives, microfinance, or agribusiness, have proven most successful for empowering women, and how can these be designed to capture widows and replicated across regions with limited infrastructure?”</i> <i>Access to microfinance, grants, cooperatives: Policy strategies for inclusive economic programs</i>	Ms. Ifeoma Uddoh CEO Shecluded Moderator: Economic Experts/ Global funds for Widows
10:55 – 11:05	<i>Her Story: The plight of widows in Burundi</i>	Ntakirutimana Octavie President and Legal Representative of the Association of Responsible Widows (AVR Burundi)
11:05 - 11:15	<i>Integrating widows into national health insurance system: The Role of Public-Private partnerships</i>	Dr Eleanor Nwadinobi President Medical Women’s International Association

11:15 – 11:40	<p>Ending Widowhood Omissions: Representation and Political Participation in your view, how can widowhood be reframed from charity to a policy priority?</p> <p><i>What are the biggest barriers preventing widows from participating in decision-making processes and governance structures?</i></p>	Former First Ladies
11:40 – 12:25	<p>Engaging the younger generation in addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by widows in Africa</p>	Widows kids, NGOS
12:25 – 13:00	<p>PANEL SESSION Law and Policies for Widowhood issues in Africa/ policy frameworks for promoting widows rights</p> <p><i>In countries where harmful widowhood practices are embedded in culture, how can legal systems harmonize statutory protections with customary laws without alienating traditional authorities?</i></p>	<p>Lawyers:</p> <p>Ms. Ireen Nambule Samulozela Commissioner of Oath Zambia</p> <p>Mispa Fri Awasum (Cameroon)</p> <p>Gozie Udemezue (Nigeria)</p>
13:00 – 14:30	Lunch / Exhibition Visit	All participants
AFTERNOON SESSION		
14:30 – 15:05	<p>Why numbers matters: accurate data on widows essential for effective policymaking and</p>	NGO Founder, Policymakers, Widows representatives
15: 05 – 15:25	Raised by a Widow	
15:25 – 16:00	OPEN FORUM: An Interactive segment for Delegates questions, answers and contribution	All Participants
16:00 – 16:10	Her Story	Namibia / Southern Africa
16:10 – 16:40	<p>BREAK OUT WORKSHOPS (3 GROUPS) Evidence Based planning: building a qualitative and quantitative Demographic data baseline of African Widows. <i>Without credible data on widow demographics and their specific needs, policies fail to address the real issues. What systemic approach can the Pan-African Widows body use to build a</i></p>	

16: 40 – 17:00	Presentation of discussions	
DAY 3 : 5TH SEPTEMBER 2025: SUSTAINABILITY, SOCIAL PROTECTION AND PARTNERSHIPS		
9:30 – 9:50	Presentation of Day 2 highlights	Rapporteur
9:50 – 10:10	Expanding Social Security – Health Integrating widows into national healthcare schemes	
10:10 – 10:30	Expanding Social Security – Education, Scholarships and education loans for children of widows & Orphans	
10:30 – 11:00	Tea Break/ Networking	
11: 00 – 12:05	Development partners, NGOs, and tech innovators share scalable models for widow empowerment	NGOs and Widows
12:05 – 12:25	Her Story	
12:25 – 13:00	Strategic Dialogue: The Role of Regional & Continental Institutions	
13:00 – 14:30	Lunch Break/ Exhibition	All
CLOSING PLENARY: FROM AGENDA TO ACTION – COMMITMENTS, DECLARATIONS AND ROADMAP		
14: 30 – 15:05	OPEN FORUM: <i>Final reflections, endorsements of the African Widows Agenda. With the launch of the Pan-African body, what actions should make up the proposed Widows Agenda that will facilitate enforcement mechanisms that civil society and regional institutions adopt to hold governments</i>	Hon. Dr. Bertha Makilagi Foreign Affairs Tanzania
15: 05 – 15:30	Video interlude	
15: 30 – 16:00	Adoption of a conference declaration, consolidation of call to actions and country-level	
16:00 – 16:20	Closing Remarks/ (2026 Summit)	
16:20 – 16:30	Vote of Thanks	
16: 30 – 17:00	Group Picture Taking	All

19: 00 – 20:30	Cultural Gala & Awards Night	
---------------------------	---	--