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AfroFrequency launches in New York to put African imagination at the centre of technology's future

New pan African movement connects culture, journalism, technology and policy to give Africans a stronger voice in shaping emerging technologies

NEW YORK, 22 September 2026 — AfroFrequency held its global launch today at the New York headquarters of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), on the sidelines of #UNGA81. As world leaders converged for the General Assembly's high-level week to consider AI's implications alongside other global priorities, the new pan African movement put a central question on the table: who will shape Africa's technological future?

Led by AfroFrequency coordinator Churchill Otieno and Maurice Otieno, the launch brought together artists, technologists, journalists, lawyers, civic organisers and policymakers. It began a long term effort to carry African imagination and lived experience into technology design and the rooms where rules are written.

Churchill Otieno | AfroFrequency coordinator; Executive Director, Eastern Africa Editors Society

"Technology affects employment, identity, democracy, creativity, education, culture, rights and everyday life. Those questions belong to society as a whole. AfroFrequency will create spaces where different communities can meet, challenge one another and build together."

The movement begins as governments and companies make consequential choices about artificial intelligence. AfroFrequency argues that journalists, cultural workers and the communities affected by those choices must help define the questions, alongside engineers and regulators.

Ambassador Philip Thigo | Kenya's Special Envoy on Technology

"No sector has a monopoly on trust. As AI increasingly shapes what people hear, see and understand, information integrity becomes a question of human agency and choice. Journalism remains a vital line of defence, but protecting our shared reality is a responsibility that reaches well beyond journalists or governments."

Maurice Otieno | Chief Futures Architect, AfroFrequency

"Technology does not develop in a cultural vacuum. AfroFrequency exists to make sure African voices are present and influential in the conversations that determine what technology means, what it is used for and what kinds of futures it enables."

CNN correspondent Larry Madowo moderated the event. He connected the movement's broader invitation to the safety of journalists and referred to a description of AfroFrequency offered by Linda Bonyo of Lawyers Hub.

Larry Madowo | CNN correspondent and launch moderator

"I've seen firsthand why defending journalists matters, and Angela has been a tireless advocate for their safety. AfroFrequency gives us a wider table for that conversation. As Linda put it tonight, this is an AI potluck: journalists, technologists and others each have something to bring to the future of information."

Angela Quintal spoke for CPJ, which hosted the launch at its headquarters.

Angela Quintal | Africa Director, Committee to Protect Journalists

"Press freedom and the public's right to know are at the heart of CPJ's work. We document violations so that we can advocate for journalists facing danger and help those who need immediate support. That work demands persistence, especially when journalists are detained and the facts are difficult to establish."

Gypsy Guillén Kaiser, CPJ's chief global affairs officer, spoke on behalf of Media 20. She called for accountability to prevent technological dependency, more resources for African journalism on AI governance, and recognition that reliable information is essential to livelihoods and markets.

Gypsy Guillén Kaiser | Chief Global Affairs Officer, CPJ; speaking for Media 20

"Accurate, timely and relevant information moves markets, from the street vendor to the stock exchange. It affects livelihoods and the decisions families make every day. That is why information integrity, media sustainability and media freedom deserve a place on the G20 agenda."

AfroFrequency will begin with Sessions in Nairobi, Johannesburg and Lagos, supported by creative and journalistic work through its Studio, collaborative experiments and policy engagement. The annual AfroFrequency Festival will bring the resulting ideas, stories and prototypes to a wider public.

ENDS**About AfroFrequency**

AfroFrequency is a pan African movement bringing artists, technologists, journalists, storytellers, civic organisers, lawyers, researchers and policymakers together to shape Africa's technological future.
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