For Immediate Release

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WACSI AND WADR STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION TO AMPLIFY CIVIL SOCIETY VOICES IN WEST AFRICA

[Accra/Dakar – 16 May 2025]— The West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) and West Africa Democracy Radio (WADR) have renewed their strategic partnership through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), reaffirming their shared commitment to amplifying civil society voices amid shrinking civic space and complex socio-political challenges in West Africa.

This renewed collaboration, spanning May 2025 to May 2028, will focus on three core pillars:

1. Enhanced Media Engagement: WADR will serve as WACSI's primary regional media partner, providing dedicated coverage of civil society initiatives through investigative features, documentary-style reports, and in-depth interviews.
2. Digital Advocacy Expansion: Joint efforts will leverage social media, podcasts, and interactive dialogues to mobilise citizens around governance, human rights, and social justice issues.
3. Capacity Building: Training programs will equip civil society actors with strategic communication skills and journalists with expertise in covering civic engagement and governance.

The partnership comes at a critical juncture for West Africa, where shrinking civic space marked by democratic backsliding, state-led crackdowns on dissent, and systemic governance deficits has weakened civil society's ability to advocate for marginalised communities. External donor freezes (including the US aid freeze) have disrupted funding streams, underscoring the urgency of local philanthropy and resource mobilisation to sustain civil society operations.

Dr Nana Asantewa Afadzinu, Executive Director of WACSI, emphasised the transformative potential of media-civil society synergy:

“For civil society to thrive, its work must be seen, heard, and understood. The media is not just a channel for information—it is a force that shapes perceptions, holds power to account, and inspires action. This partnership with WADR is a powerful step in ensuring that civil society’s efforts translate into real change across West Africa.”

Agnes Thomasi, Executive Director of WADR, highlighted the radio network’s role in fostering accountability:

“WADR has always stood for independent journalism for free and open societies. By strengthening our collaboration with WACSI, we are reinforcing our dedication to telling the stories that matter, amplifying the voices of the under privileged, connecting citizens with civil society, and ensuring that governance and accountability remain at the heart of public discourse.”

WACSI’s regional programming embodies a strategic and adaptive approach to strengthening civil society across West Africa and beyond. Grounded in a nuanced understanding of the complex political, social, and economic contexts in which civil society operates, WACSI delivers targeted, high-impact capacity strengthening interventions that build institutional resilience, enhance financial sustainability, and safeguard civic space.

WADR has consistently been at the forefront of advancing democratic governance, human rights, and civic participation across West Africa. Through its independent, multilingual, and transnational broadcasting, WADR amplifies citizen voices, promotes transparency, and fosters informed public discourse on governance, peacebuilding, electoral integrity, and freedom of expression.

As West Africa continues to navigate complex socio-political dynamics, this collaboration represents a strategic alliance grounded in shared values of civic empowerment, transparency, and democratic governance. Together, we are strengthening the region’s civic ecosystem—amplifying voices, building institutional resilience, and catalysing people-led change.

This partnership reinforces a collective vision for a more informed, engaged, and inclusive West Africa, where citizens are at the centre of sustainable democratic progress.

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Signed

WACSI **WADR**

About WACSI

Established in 2005 by the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), WACSI has been dedicated to enhancing the capacities of civil society organisations (CSOs) to be more responsive, resilient, and influential in promoting democratic governance, sustainable development, and social justice.

About WADR:

The West Africa Democracy Radio (WADR) is a trans-territorial, sub-regional radio station based in Dakar, Senegal. WADR was established in 2005 as a project of the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) to among other things protect and defend the ideals of democratic and open societies by disseminating development information through a network of community radios in the West African sub-region. It is a leading source for News and development information across West Africa covering critical areas such as democracy, good governance, human rights, security and regional integration amongst many others.

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