THE AFP FOUNDATION TODAY ANNOUNCED THE LAUNCH OF THE FIRST INDEPENDENT, NON-PARTISAN FACT-CHECKING WEBSITE IN FRANCOPHONE WEST AFRICA

THE WEBSITE WWW.FR.AFRICACHECK.ORG WAS DEVISED AND DEVELOPED BY THE AFP FOUNDATION, WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE OPEN SOCIETY INITIATIVE FOR WEST AFRICA (OSIWA), AND IN A PARTNERSHIP WITH THE EJICOM JOURNALISM SCHOOL IN DAKAR, SENEGAL, WHERE ITS EDITORIAL TEAM IS BASED.

It is a sister site to the award-winning English-language www.africacheck.org, which was set up in partnership with the University of the Witwatersrand, in Johannesburg, in October 2012. Since then, the website has received almost two million visitors and has recently extended its work from South Africa to other countries including Nigeria and Kenya.

"The Africa Check project has won two awards for its ground-breaking role, bringing independent, non-partisan fact-checking to public debate and the media in anglophone Africa," said AFP CEO and chairman of the AFP Foundation Emmanuel Hoog. "We hope to achieve similar success in the continent's French-speaking countries."

The new site, known as Africa Check_FR, is edited by the respected Senegalese journalist Assane Diagne, formerly editor-in-chief of the APS news agency.

Diagne said: "Every day, traditional media and the social networks are inundated with claims by the leaders of public opinion that are less than accurate. It is this huge field, ignored to date by the African media, that Africa Check is seeking to explore."

The launch of the site was announced in Johannesburg at the 2015 African Fact-Checking Awards, co-sponsored by the AFP Foundation and Africa Check. The event was hosted by the African Media Initiative (AMI).

The top prize was won by **Benjamin Ezeamalu**, a journalist with the Nigerian online news site Premium Times, for a report exposing as false a series of claims made by public figures in Nigeria about legislation relating to the age of consent.

The two runners-up prizes went to **Phillip de Wet**, a journalist with the Mail & Guardian newspaper of South Africa, for a report on a controversy around spending on the home of President Jacob Zuma, and comparisons with the late former President Nelson Mandela, and to **Pieter-Louis Myburgh** from the Media24 news group, also in South Africa, for a report disproving claims about train safety.

The top prize winner receives 2,000 euros and the runners-up receive 1,000 euros each. This year's awards attracted 51 entries from journalists in 15 countries.

The AFP Foundation is the non-profit media training arm of the AFP news agency. It was set up in 2007 to support press freedom and media standards around the world.

Africa Check is an independent, non-profit organisation that promotes accuracy in public debate and the media in Africa. It was set up in 2012 and has offices in London, Johannesburg and Dakar.

Contacts:
For further information on the launch of Africa Check_Fr please email Editor Assane Diagne on Assane@AfricaCheck.org or AFP Foundation Deputy Director, and Executive Director of Africa Check Peter Cunliffe-Jones on Peter.Cunliffe-Jones@afp.com
For information about the fact-checking awards or to interview the winners, please contact Peter.Cunliffe-Jones@afp.com.