

In the Spirit of Pope Leo XIV, WUCWO and Taiwan Launch Digital Empowerment Project for Women Leaders in Africa

Computers and digital training for 50 Catholic focal points in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, and Ghana, a partnership rooted in human dignity, solidarity

ROME, ITALY, August 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Rome was the starting point, but Africa was the horizon. At the headquarters of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations ([WUCWO](#)) in Rome, the [Government of the R.O.C. \(Taiwan\)](#) formally presented its support for the "Digital Empowerment for Women Leaders and Catholic Networks in Africa" project. The initiative includes 15 laptops, digital training for 50 local focal points, mentoring, a shared communication platform, and ongoing technical support for women leaders and Catholic networks in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, and Ghana.

The ceremony was conducted in hybrid format, with participants joining online from Mexico, Somaliland, Nigeria, South Africa, and the five beneficiary countries — a geography of solidarity that itself spoke to the reach of the partnership being launched. Presenting the donation on behalf of the Government of the R.O.C. ([Taiwan](#)), Ambassador Anthony Chung-Yi Ho to the Holy See grounded the initiative in a principle at the heart of Pope Leo XIV's social teaching:



Digital Empowerment for Women Leaders and Catholic Networks in Africa



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A Century of Service, a New Chapter
For more than 115 years, WUCWO has united Catholic women around the world in faith-filled service. Recognized by the Holy See in 2007 as a Public International Association of the Faithful and holding consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC, Human Rights Council and FAO), participatory

status with the Council of Europe, and being an official member of UNESCO, WUCWO represents around 8 million women across 56 countries. In 2023, as part of its first project in Africa on violence against women, its World Women's Observatory listened to more than 10,500 women in 37 African countries, documenting their realities, accompanying them in the fight against gender-based violence, and giving voice to those most often overlooked.

The ceremony in Rome was coordinated by WUCWO Secretary General Lavinia Rocchi Carrera, who presided over the gathering and kept the bridge open with participants across three continents. WUCWO President General Mónica Santamarina — based in Mexico — addressed the assembly by video link, as did Taiwan's diplomatic representatives in Somaliland, Nigeria, and South Africa, and focal points from the five beneficiary countries.

"Trust in Women's Leadership as a Driving Force"

In her address, President General Mónica Santamarina placed the partnership in the context of years of patient listening and accompaniment across the African continent: "Over recent years, through WUCWO's World Women's Observatory, we have heard the voices of thousands of African communities. These voices have given us a deeper understanding of the many forms of violence and discrimination they continue to face — and the extraordinary leadership, resilience, and commitment of so many women who, within their communities, work every day for dignity, justice, and peace."

Santamarina described the project as an expression of the spirit that animates WUCWO's global mission: "This project involves precisely that spirit — shared responsibility, and trust in women's leadership as a driving force for social transformation. I hope that this meeting is the beginning of a strong alliance."

Taiwan Can Help: From Resources to Partnership



The Ambassador grounded Taiwan's engagement in the framework of President Lai Ching-te's value-based diplomacy and Foreign Minister Lin Chia-Lung's Diplomatic Allies Prosperity Project

Ambassador Ho, who assumed his post in May 2025 and has been actively fostering cooperation between Taiwan and the Holy See, opened his remarks by honoring the century-long witness of the organization he was addressing: “For more than a century, WUCWO has united Catholic women around the world in faith-filled service. Through your unwavering commitment, millions of women have become powerful agents of hope, compassion, and transformation in their communities.”

Ambassador Ho made it clear that the significance of the donation transcends the material: “The true value of this project lies far beyond the equipment we provide. It lies in the lives that will be transformed. By strengthening the digital capacity of women leaders, they are better equipped to address gender-based violence, promote girls’ education, strengthen Catholic networks, and serve their communities even more effectively. Technology becomes truly meaningful only when it empowers people to uplift one another.”

Echoing the social teaching at the heart of Pope Leo XIV’s pontificate, the Ambassador drew an explicit connection between the project and the Holy Father’s vision: “Our partnership also reflects the vision of Pope Leo XIV, who reminds us that technological progress, including artificial intelligence, must always serve the human person and promote the common good. Innovation should never distance us from our humanity. Rather, it should bring us closer together with greater compassion, justice, and hope.”

He then articulated the three pillars on which the partnership stands: “This event is far more than a presentation of contributions. It is a celebration of a partnership founded on shared values, shared vision, and shared victory. Our shared values are rooted in human dignity, solidarity, and service. These values inspire a shared vision of empowering women through education and technology. Guided by that shared vision, I am confident that together we will pave the way for shared victories in the future that will empower countless women, strengthen families, and uplift communities across Africa.”

The Ambassador grounded Taiwan’s engagement in the framework of President Lai Ching-te’s value-based diplomacy and Foreign Minister Lin Chia-Lung’s Diplomatic Allies Prosperity Project, insisting on a distinction that defines Taiwan’s approach to international cooperation: “Taiwan believes that digital inclusion is an essential pathway to sustainable development. We remain committed to the spirit of Taiwan Can Help — not simply by providing resources, but by building partnerships that empower local communities to create lasting change.”

Voices from the Field

The most moving moments of the ceremony came from the women themselves. Lucy Joceylin Vokhiwa, WUCWO Board Member from Malawi and former National Chairlady of the Catholic Women’s Association of Malawi, spoke directly to what the donation will change in practice: “Receiving computers and digital training is so much more than receiving equipment. It means communicating more frequently, more effectively, and listening closely to the women so that their stories are told. It means organizing meetings, gathering information, and preparing reports even when physical gatherings are difficult. It means strengthening our network with

women leaders across Africa and sharing best practices with each other.”

Sister Teresa Mulenga, a Teresian Sister of the Child of Jesus from the Archdiocese of Lilongwe (Malawi) and WUCWO focal point, added a perspective that goes to the heart of the project’s ecclesial mission: “We need evidence. And for us to talk of evidence, there is a need for a lot of data collection, analysis, and application — which is only possible with the use of the tools that will be provided. These tools help us bring the voice of the voiceless and, more especially, reach out to policymakers.”

Evaline Ntenga, WUCWO Vice President for Africa and President of WAWATA in Tanzania, offered her testimony by video, describing the World Women’s Observatory as “a platform where women from diverse communities can share their stories, knowing that their experiences will inform advocacy, policymaking, and practical interventions.”

A New Chapter Begins

The ceremony concluded with a toast shared across continents — Rome, Mexico, East Africa, West Africa, Southern Africa — a symbol of the communion that this partnership seeks to make visible and lasting.

Secretary General Lavinia Rocchi Carrera captured the spirit of the moment: “Today, we are celebrating new opportunities — the opportunity to learn, to connect, to share, to make our voices heard, and to reach further. This is where a new chapter begins. One that certainly blesses us with hope.”

Ambassador Ho closed with a blessing that drew together faith, solidarity, and mission: “May this partnership continue to strengthen women, transform communities, and illuminate a brighter future for our sisters in Africa. May God bless WUCWO, and may God bless Taiwan, and may God bless all those who dedicate their lives to serving others.”

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