The first Pan-African Psychology Union (PAPU) workshop was held in Accra, Ghana on 26-27 April 2013. It was hosted by the Ghanian Psychological Association, the University of Ghana and the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS). Participants included Presidents and representatives of psychology associations in Cameroon, Ghana, Egypt, Liberia, Nigeria, and South Africa. IUPsyS was represented by President Saths Cooper and Secretary-General Ann Watts.

The workshop opened with introductory remarks by the Pro Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana, the President of IUPsyS, Dr Charles Mate-Kole (President: Ghanian Psychological Association) and Professor Samuel Agyei-Mensah (Dean of Social Sciences, University of Ghana). The speakers collectively urged for the mobilisation and centralisation of African capacities, knowledge, voices and wisdom to inform human development not just on the continent, but also globally. Country reviews of the status of psychology in Cameroon, Nigeria, Egypt and Ghana followed. These provided a framework for the
subsequent discussions that represented an invested and passionate engagement with the issues, questions, considerations and aspirations that underpin our efforts to establish a Pan-African Psychology Union. The discussion also had strong synergy with the mission, principles and objectives of the draft PAPU statutes.

Notwithstanding the heterogeneity that exists in the region, a number of key issues and challenges emerged. These included:

- Colonial orientations to the discipline which continue to marginalise, dislocate and silence African knowledge and knowledge systems.
- Psychology in Africa operates within the context of its colonialis history, marginalisation within the global knowledge economy, poverty, environmental degradation, violence and conflict, illiteracy, disease, and leadership crises. These multiple and interacting factors oblige a psychology – Africentric in nature – that is sufficiently responsive and relevant to this dominant profile.
- Psychology’s low priority status in society generally, which dims its voice in the public sphere and elsewhere.
- The unequal development, application and organisation of the psychological sciences across the North and West African region due to the influence of diverse and context-specific drivers, such as the socio-political milieu, availability of and access to resources, historical influences, and power differentials.
- The tensions and cleavages that these and other factors have resulted in continue to hinder the advancement of psychology in Africa.

The following imperatives and priorities were highlighted for the discipline:

- The politicisation of psychology in Africa, which will serve to make explicit the influences of colonialism that have come to shape and define the discipline, make visible the silences and gaps that continue to exist, and grow the uniquely African voice that remains at the margins of global psychology.
- The need to demonstrate the relevance of the discipline on the continent.
- The importance of generating, privileging and disseminating African-centred psychological knowledge.
- Enhanced access to knowledge (e.g., where research is published and the need to create an African psychology journal to facilitate this).
- The need for contextual and cultural relevance, with the inclusion of indigenous theories, knowledge and practices to form the basis for what is taught (standards need to be set and maintained), as well as practice, research, publications and advocacy.
- Research to inform and strengthen a contextualised approach to teaching and practice.
- Organisation of the discipline within and between African countries.
- Increased visibility of the discipline.
- Extend the reach and influence of psychology to the public sphere.
- Package our knowledge products in forms that increase their utility and application.
- Networking and exchange (e.g., student and staff exchange).
- Engagement with other geo-political entities, such as the African Union.
Workshop participants unanimously agreed that PAPU, through facilitating interaction and engagement between psychologists on the continent, and through the creation of a systematic and coordinated approach, can harness the above vision, strengths and capacities to the benefit of our countries, the African diaspora and the world.

The second PAPU workshop, to which Southern African psychology associations will be invited, will be held during the Psychological Society of South Africa’s Annual Congress in September this year.