Participate  We  In/f_luence  Inform  Mobilize  Participate  Influence

Since 1988
African Women’s Development and Communication Network
Vision
An African society where gender equality is achieved and women and girls enjoy all their rights and live in dignity.

Mission
To mobilise African women for the achievement of gender equality and the realisation of women’s and girls’ rights at all levels.

Core Values
- Gender equality & commitment to the rights of women and girls
- Respect for diversity
- Professionalism
- Solidarity
- Integrity
FEMNET stands out as a visible and credible pan-African women’s rights organization which asserts influence at strategic regional and global levels. Set up in 1988, FEMNET is one of the strongest African networks that has successfully mobilized and connected women within and beyond Africa. Its push for laws and policies at national, regional and international levels has placed the women’s movement at the centre of development discourse that includes women’s rights and gender equality. Over the years, it has developed innovative programmes and approaches that facilitate: empowerment of women in different realms; development of leadership among young women; partnership with men; and generation of authoritative and inspiring knowledge products.

It operates as a meso-level CSO that interfaces community and national level women’s concerns with global level processes through a regional platform.

Set up in 1988, FEMNET is one of the strongest African networks that has successfully mobilized and connected women within and beyond Africa.
Since its formation, FEMNET has sought to realize African women’s collective leadership for equality, peace and sustainable development. In order to reverse the existing gender inequalities and social injustices against women, it proceeds from the premise that patriarchy must be dismantled if women are to enjoy their rights fully, lead dignified lives and realize their full potential.

FEMNET’s theory of change is premised on the feminist framework that recognizes women’s rights as human rights; the imperative of gender equality and justice in development; women’s empowerment in all spheres; recognition of unique African problems around women’s rights; and solidarity through pan-Africanism. The envisaged change occurs when women as primary rights holders and relevant duty bearers are empowered and accept women’s rights as a norm. This requires solidarity, resilience, transformation of oppressive norms, change in policies and laws and revamped individual mindsets and communal belief systems.

FEMNET’s role in creating this change is catalytic through sustained action to simultaneously address practical gender needs and strategic gender interests in Africa using the women’s movement and partnership with men as the primary anchors.
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The strategic priorities in this plan are deciphered from proposals on how to respond to the past experiences, anticipated environment and recommendations from the evaluation of the last strategic plan and systems audit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority One:</th>
<th>Advocate for African women’s rights to be recognized in key policy and development frameworks.</th>
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<td>Priority Two:</td>
<td>Facilitate FEMNET’s member organizations to have improved capacities on organizational development, economic empowerment, policy advocacy and political participation.</td>
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<td>Priority Three:</td>
<td>Facilitate women in Africa to be better informed and be able to meaningfully engage in and influence processes at all levels and contribute to the body of knowledge on women’s rights issues using cutting edge communication tools.</td>
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<td>Priority Four:</td>
<td>Strengthen governance and management for organizational effectiveness.</td>
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FOCUS AREAS

1. Advocacy

FEMNET has over the past 25 years worked to create an environment that supports gender equality, peace and sustainable development. This has involved engaging with policy makers and other leaders to develop regional and international policies that highlight these issues. Subsequently, many policies on human rights have been developed and adopted. The current strategic plan (2014-2018) will prioritize advocacy for implementation of these policies. This will be done through already established programmes, such as the Men to Men programme, and through our partnership in regional and international coalitions such as SOAWR, the Women’s Major Group, Post-2015 Women’s Coalition, Africa Working Group on Post 2015 and the NGO/CSW Africa.
The Advocacy Programme will work on mobilizing African women to hold governments to account on the following priority areas:

- Harmful practices with specific reference to female genital mutilation (FGM) and early marriage.
- Violence against women and girls.
- Women in political leadership and decision making.
- Sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Women and the economy.

**Outcome:** African women’s rights recognized in key policy and development frameworks.

| Output 1: | AFRICAN women influencing decision making on national, regional and global policies on identified priority areas. |
| Output 2: | FEMNET members advocating for the implementation of critical women’s rights instruments that address the four priority areas. |
| Output 3: | Targeted groups of religious and cultural leaders speaking up against harmful traditional practices especially FGM and early marriage. |
| Output 4: | FEMNET members effectively advocate for universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. |

2. Capacity Building

FEMNET’s niche is predicated on facilitating, mobilizing and empowering African women’s organizations to deliver on their mandate. This programme area seeks to maximize on the membership of FEMNET by increasing the capacity of FEMNET’s membership as well as the capacities of the Secretariat and the Board. Priority Areas for Capacity Building include:

- Organizational development.
- Resource mobilization.
- Networking, communication, lobbying and advocacy skills.
- Women’s governance and leadership skills.
- Macro-economic policy literacy.
- Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) knowledge including access to safe abortion.
**Outcome:**

FEMNET’s Secretariat, Board and members have improved capacities on organizational development, economic empowerment, policy advocacy, and political participation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output 1:</th>
<th>Recommendations from the 2013 systems-based audit and capacity assessment implemented.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Output 2:</td>
<td>Tools and manuals produced to enhance member’s knowledge of and skills on advocacy, networking and communication around issues of political participation and good governance, macro-economic policy and SRHR</td>
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<td>Output 3:</td>
<td>FEMNET members’ and Board’s capacities built in strategic planning, financial management, corporate governance, policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation and resource mobilization.</td>
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<td>Output 4:</td>
<td>Capacities of member organizations strengthened in feminist macroeconomic policy analysis</td>
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<td>Output 5:</td>
<td>Platforms are created and used for women in political leadership and civil society from across Africa to share best practices and strategies for effective leadership that is accountable especially to gender equality and social justice in general.</td>
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### 3. Communication

FEMNET has a vast network spread out in over 40 countries in Africa, has built a reputation, contacts and experience over the last 25 years. It is therefore strategically placed to link national, regional and global level activities to contribute to enabling women in Africa to be better informed, able to meaningfully engage in and influence processes at all levels, use emerging ICTs to tell and document their stories and contribute to the body of knowledge on women’s rights.

The Communications programme will focus on:

- Strengthening the capacity of women’s organizations to access information and manage knowledge.
- Create and manage platforms to share information, ideas, strategies and experiences for cross-learning and implementation.
- Increase know-how of, access to and control over ICTs.
- Address insensitive and regressive reporting on gender issues.
**Outcome:**
Women in Africa better informed, able to meaningfully engage in and influence processes at all levels and use emerging ICTs to tell and document their stories and contribute to the body of knowledge on women’s rights.

| Output 1: | Publications that inform, educate, generate debate and contribute to the body of knowledge on women’s rights and gender equality. |
| Output 2: | Online platforms to facilitate exchange of information, ideas, experiences and strategies among African women. |
| Output 3: | Documented stories and experiences on women’s rights issues using ICTs. |
| Output 4: | Young Africans (female and male) in institutions of higher learning from different sub-regions informed and engaged in current issues related to women’s rights. |
| Output 5: | Media informed of and are gender-sensitive in reporting development matters. |
| Output 6: | Enhanced linkages between Freedom of Information (FOI) and the advancement of women’s rights. |

### 4. Institutional Development and Coordination

This area of work will focus on the coordination and sustenance of organizational development in order to enable the programmes to be implemented effectively towards achievement of the objectives of this strategic plan.

| Outcome: | Effective and functional organization. |
| Output 1: | A conducive environment for staff members to perform their duties. |
| Output 2: | Strategic plan is fully implemented. |
| Output 3: | Effective organizational policies and procedures. |
| Output 4: | Effective and functioning Board of Directors. |
| Output 5: | Institutional and programme budgets financed. |
| Output 6: | Harmonious relationships with funding partners and other stakeholders. |
| Output 7: | Increased ownership of FEMNET programmes by the membership. |
Monitoring and evaluation will be carried out periodically throughout the strategic period. Lessons learnt and recommendations derived from the M & E process will inform the implementation plans for the subsequent year.

The idea of forming FEMNET was conceived during the African Regional Preparatory Conference held in Arusha, Tanzania in October 1984 by an African Women’s Task Force that was set up to monitor the implementation of the UN Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies. The urgency then was the need to ensure African women’s participation in the 3rd UN Conference for Women in Nairobi, Kenya, as well as to create a mechanism for African women to work together beyond the United Nations Decade for Women (1975-1985).

The birth of FEMNET in 1988 was an institutional response to the urgent need for women in Africa to connect on shared experiences and undertake joint initiatives for advancing African women’s status.
Over the years, FEMNET has positioned herself as a convener, organizer and facilitator on dialogues around critical issues including:

- **Women’s Involvement in Governance and Leadership**

  Convened the Regional Conferences for African Women in Political Leadership - a platform for African women in political leadership to meet, interact, share experiences and collectively devise ways to overcome the persistent challenges that hinder women’s equal and effective participation in decision making processes. The conferences have been held in Togo (2009), Zambia (2010), Kenya (2011) and Malawi (2012) – bringing together seasoned women politicians, political aspirants from countries holding elections, leading women’s rights activists, civil society and research organizations engaged in women’s leadership development, and key development partners who support women’s political participation initiatives.

- **Influencing and Monitoring the Implementation of Commitments in Key Regional and Global Instruments**

  Mobilized African women and men to engage and contribute to the regional and global review processes of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Since 2000, we have been working with our members and partners to push for women’s voices to be heard as participants in continental and global meetings including, the UN’s Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). Coordinated the production of the CSOs Shadow Report on Beijing +5, +10, +15 and +20 highlighting persistent challenges and making recommendations to accelerate actions in order to achieve the commitments of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

  FEMNET has been working with the Solidarity for African Women’s Rights (SOAWR) Coalition to consistently and consciously engage the African Union (AU) and its specialized mechanisms to advocate for gender-responsive policies and their implementation. SOAWR has focussed its efforts towards the development, adoption and ratification of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol). By January 2015, 37 countries had ratified the Protocol. More work lies ahead for more countries to sign and to domesticate the Protocol in order to make it applicable in the national contexts.

  We have contributed to the design and implementation of strategies that ensure that gender justice is entrenched in the institutions and policies, including at the AU and all its institutions.

  Since 2012, FEMNET has been mobilizing and building the capacities of African women to participate in the post-2015 development processes. The aim
is to have more African women participate and influence the process so as to capture the needs and priorities of women and girls in the next development framework to be adopted in September 2015.

- **Promoting Women’s Economic Empowerment**

  In 2007, FEMNET initiated the mainstreaming of gender in macro-economic policies and in the framework of the New Aid Modalities, including the Poverty Reduction Strategy Processes (PRSPs). A research on the experiences of gender lobbies in the PRSP development processes and an analysis of women’s poverty in direct relationship to national macroeconomics policies was conducted in five countries in Africa (Egypt, Mali, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia). The findings revealed the need to devise new ways of sensitizing economists and staff in the ministries of finance, economy and national planning on the importance of gender mainstreaming as a means for reducing poverty. Capacity building trainings were conducted in Egypt, Cameroon, Mali Kenya, Uganda to enhance knowledge and skills of the government staff on how to integrate gender and women’s empowerment issues in macroeconomic policies, budgeting and the PRSP development processes. A PRSP training manual and advocacy toolkit were produced and used during these trainings.

  Recognising the important role women play in the economy, FEMNET has been advocating for the recognition and redistribution of unpaid care work to men, boys, the State and private sector.

- **Advocating for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights**

  Global recognition of the importance of universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights is essential. FEMNET has continuously engaged with Member States of the African Union at a regional and global level to ensure that they understand the linkages between SRHR and development especially in the African context with high rates of maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS and incidences of unsafe abortion.

  FEMNET has built the capacities of our membership to understand and utilize key guiding frameworks such as the Maputo Protocol and the Maputo Plan of Action - both as indigenous African instruments.

- **Ending Violence against Women (VAW)**

  FEMNET pioneered and has been implementing the Men to Men Strategy since 2003. Using this strategy, FEMNET has mobilized and empowered men and boys to be advocates in reaching out to their peers and communities to end all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls. The strategy has developed approaches for specific interventions for men in dif-
different groups. Recently, the Men to Men approach has been engaging religious and cultural leaders to end Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and other harmful cultural practices and religious teachings that perpetuate violence against women in Tharaka Nithi and Homabay counties in Kenya.

As a member of the CSOs Coordinating Committee on the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) Special Session on Sexual and Gender Based Violence, FEMNET compiled a set of guidelines to support Member States in developing their Zero Tolerance National Campaigns, to ensure that they were in line with international, regional and ICGLR human rights instruments.

FEMNET initiated an online petition dubbed Justice For Liz Campaign, calling for justice for a 16 year old who was gang-raped and thrown into a pit by six men in Busia, Kenya. The petition was signed by over 1.8 million signatures from across the globe and got a lot of attention on social media with #JusticeForLiz trending on twitter. FEMNET also mobilized its members from over 25 nations across Africa to take the demands of justice, dignity and respect to the streets where the petition was delivered to the Office of the Inspector General of Police along with a list of key demands, including short and long term measures to quell the surge of gender-based violence in Kenya.

In solidarity, FEMNET members in 20 African countries organized vigils, prayers, marches etc to call for the return of over 260 girls kidnapped in Chibok, Nigeria in 2014.

As a communications Network, FEMNET has been instrumental in facilitating the exchange of information on women’s human rights and opportunities for women across Africa, through several information and communication channels including website, listserv, blog and social media (Facebook, Twitter).

Overall, FEMNET has contributed to building the women’s movement in Africa so as to ensure that African women’s voices are amplified and influence decisions made at national, regional and global levels.

FEMNET creates a link between grassroots – national – regional level advocacy and provides a platform at the global level where African women's voices are heard.

At our core is the call for justice, equality and respect.

Our vision remains an African society where gender equality is achieved and women and girls enjoy all their rights and live in dignity.
THE AFRICAN WOMEN’S DECADE!
2010-2020

Honour African Women!