



The African Women's
Development and
Communication Network



Pan-African Women's Conference On 2030 Agenda & Africa Agenda 2063

Safeguarding Our Gains: African Women's
Collective Action in Defining the Pathway
to Achieve 2030 Agenda for Sustainable
Development (SDGs) and Africa Agenda 2063

CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL,
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This summary report captures the key discussions and outcomes of the African women's collective action in defining the pathway to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) at the 7th FEMNET Programming Conference that took place from **3rd to 5th May, 2017**. There were over **190 representatives** from women's rights organizations, CSOs, government representatives, media and development partners representing 34 countries at the landmark Conference.



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Acronyms

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| ABC | Advisory Board on Corruption |
| ACERWC | African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child |
| ACHPR | African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights |
| AfCHPR | African Court of Justice & Human (and People's) Rights |
| AFDB | African Development Bank |
| AHSG | Assembly of Heads of State and Government |
| APRM | African Peer Review Mechanism |
| ARFSD | African Regional Forum for Sustainable Development |
| AUC | Commission of the African Union |
| AUCIL | African Union Commission on International Law |
| CCPAU - FES | Centre for Citizens Participation in the African Union – Freidrich Ebert Stiftung |
| CCPAU | Centre for Citizens Participation in the African Union |
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women |
| CNRG | Centre for Natural Resource Governance |
| CSO | Civil Society Organization |
| CSOs | Civil Society Organizations |
| CSW | Commission on the Status of Women |
| CWAFCP | CIVICAS World Alliance for Citizen Participation |
| DTA's | Double Tax Agreements |
| ECA | Economic Commission for Africa |
| ECM | Executive Council of Ministers |
| ECOSOCC | Economic Social and Cultural Council |
| ECOWAS | Economic Community of West African States |
| ESARO | Eastern and Southern African Regional Office |
| EU | European Union |
| FDI | Foreign Direct Investment |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GEWE | Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment |
| GFI | Global Financial Integrity |
| HLP | African High Level Panel |
| HLPF | High Level Political Forum |
| IFF's | Illicit Financial Flows |
| IWHC | International Women's Health Coalition |
| JAES | Joint Africa EU Strategy |
| JSC | Joint Steering Committee |
| KPMG | Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler |
| LGBTI | Lesbian Gay Bi sexual and Transgender and Intergender |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| MEWC | Make Every Woman Count |
| MNCs | Multinational Companies. |
| NAP | National Action Plan |
| NDP | National Development Agenda |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| ODA | Official Development Assistance |
| PAP | Pan African Parliament |
| PRC | Permanent Representatives Committee |
| PSC | Peace and Security Council |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SRHR | Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights |
| UNCSD | United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development |
| UNECA | United Nations Economic Commission in Africa |
| VNR | Voluntary National Reviews |
| WEP | Women Environmental Project |
| WROs | Women's Rights Organizations |



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About FEMNET

Since inception in 1988, the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) continues to play a leading role in building the women's movement in Africa and ensuring that African women's voices are amplified and influence decisions made at national, regional, and global levels, which have direct and indirect impact on their lives.

As a pan-African, membership-based organization working to advance women's rights, FEMNET exists to facilitate and coordinate the sharing of experiences, ideas, information, and strategies for human rights promotion among African women's organizations through networking, communication, capacity-building and advocacy at the regional and international levels.

Over the years, FEMNET has established her niche as a nucleus serving to mobilize African women and girls to influence, lobby and advocate for the domestication and implementation of commitments made by African governments to the advancement of gender equality and realization of women's rights, including the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the AU Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

FEMNET's **vision** is an African society where gender equality is achieved and women and girls enjoy all their rights and live in dignity. Our **mantra** is women's rights are human rights, and our **mission** is to mobilize African women for the achievement of gender equality and the realization of women's and girls' rights at all levels. **(For more on FEMNET visit our website www.femnet.org)**

Executive Summary

The Pan-African Women's Conference on 2030 Agenda & Africa Agenda 2063, was held from the 3rd to the 5th May, 2017 at Crown Plaza, Nairobi, Kenya.



The three-day conference was organized by FEMNET with support from the European Union, UN-Women, Action Aid International, Ford Foundation and Equal Measures 2030.

Participants came from the five (5) sub-regions of Africa: North, West, Central, East and Southern Africa, and a few African women arrived from the Diaspora. They constituted women's rights organizations (WROs) including some from Europe and Asia; donors; partners; UN and AU officials; CSOs; academia; media practitioners; key senior government officials; and private sector representatives.

Specific Aims of the Conference

1. Increase understanding and awareness on the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the AU Africa Agenda 2063 and how they relate with other exiting regional and global women's human rights frameworks;
2. Strengthen and advance the role of WROs and feminist groups in monitoring, review and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
3. Map out a clear strategy and road map on how WROs can effectively participate, and contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda at national, regional and global level.



Raising Visibility and Media Coverage of the Meeting

Photography, videography, as well as report-writing were used to capture the proceedings of the conference. A formal press release with key



outcomes of the conference was also disseminated to the local, national, regional and global media soon after the conference. Media practitioners were also invited to attend and cover the proceedings of the conference. Insightful media articles include:-

- Gender-based violence still high, hurts efforts to empower women (4th May 2017) published in the Star Newspaper
- Support women aspirants, urges CS Sicily Kariuki (4th May 2017) published in the Daily Nation
- Women's rights bodies must fight to overhaul gender bias (3rd May 2017) published in the Daily Nation newspaper
- 150 rights groups converge on Nairobi for gender forum (2nd May 2017) published in the Daily Nation

A FEMNET social media team enabled regular updates and feedback regarding the conference, on a real-time basis through live-streaming and using FEMNET's social media platforms. On Twitter, the dedicated hashtag #FemmeAfricaSDGs, trended all day on the first day of the Conference (3rd May) – an indicator of high online engagement – and had a reach of 2,086, 776 accounts and 5,394,826 impressions globally. On Facebook, 57,409 people were reached and the Thunderclap with the solidarity message “I Sign-Up in Solidarity with African women pushing for FULL implementation of 2030 Agenda (SDGs) #FemmeAfricaSDGs” had a social reach of 190,157 people.

Rationale behind the Theme of the Convening

The conference is the very first for FEMNET members and women's rights organizations across Africa, since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs), and after the AU developed its 10-year implementation plan for the Africa Agenda 2063.

Participants reflected on the role of WROs in securing a stand-alone gender goal (**Goal 5**) and integrating gender equality targets in the other goals. The conference was held at an opportune moment when African countries are putting in place monitoring, review and implementation mechanisms of both Agendas. This enabled discussion on how to leverage on these regional and global Agendas while identifying existing opportunities at the local, national, regional and global levels.

The conference also served to strengthen women's agency and consolidate a collective voice of women and girls at all levels, towards the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) and the Africa Agenda 2063.

Participants were able to brainstorm on salient development issues affecting women and girls in Africa, and which continually hinder the effective enforcement of GEWE policies and practices. Discussions also focused on how the SDGs differ from the MDGs in terms of their potentially transformative impact on women and girls; how illicit financial flows (IFFs) adversely impact Africa's development and drain the much-needed resources for implementing GEWE programs; and how to leverage on the diverse rich experiences from different African countries in the implementation of the SDGs.

This Summary Report captures the main issues from the deliberations and puts forth a strategic roadmap developed by the participants that WROs, African Governments, CSOs, and other GEWE stakeholders can use to safeguard women's gains and achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as the Africa Agenda 2063.

Financing SDGs Through Resourcing Womens Rights Organisations: Innovation, Resilience and Sustainability

Challenging financing landscape

Financing for development has become increasingly difficult due to the ever changing donor landscape. Where funding is available it comes with stringent rules and procedures that stifle innovations and impede financial sustainability for a majority of WROs.



The report by the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), ***Where is the Money?*** depicts a chronically underfunding for women's rights organizations, with average budgets being around US\$ 20,000. The research showed that majority of WROs remain small not by choice, but because they have difficulties accessing resources that would allow them to sustainably implement their own programmatic visions and strategic plans.

It has also become difficult for WROs to access direct funding through large and medium-sized endowment grants as well as bilateral and multilateral donor agencies. Increasingly, WROs are being relegated to micro-grant programmes, or sub-contracting/grants from other INGOs or embassies. Additionally, there is also the tendency to fund mainstream organizations that are not working directly on women's rights programming.

Regional grappling with these changes in financing WROs

THINK YOUNG WOMEN, a women's organization in the Gambia, has been exploring local resource mobilization as well as aggressively advocating for the State to resource women's rights and gender equality programmes – recognizing the State's primary responsibility is to respect, protect and fulfill human rights obligations through policies such as the *Maputo Protocol* and national frameworks that support GEWE. The organization has also continued to proactively position itself and contribute in national planning and budgetary processes.



At organization level, senior members have committed specific amount of funds to the organization, embraced the use of cost-effective social media platforms for advocacy and started income-generating activities to facilitate the organization's sustainability.

In Ivory Coast, women's organizations have been considering new funding models to match donors' changing priorities while still reflecting grassroots needs. The National *Strategy Plan* 2016-2020 in the country also supports local grassroots communities' participation in the implementation of SDGs. There are efforts to engage with parliament through Regional Councils, as well as to reach out to the private sector and civil society to push for gender equality and women's empowerment. Most importantly, the women's rights organizations are now aggressively securing resources at local levels and urging CSOs in the country to support resource mobilization and capacity building programmes. These organizations are also lobbying local leaders to integrate women leaders in budgeting, planning and decision making processes that relate to their localities. The social entrepreneurship model is now considered a viable means of generating resources at local level to augment GEWE.

Hivos, an international non-governmental organization that seeks new solutions to persistent global issues is currently focusing on

being a social innovator encouraging women's organizations to invest finances in long-term and high-impact projects to ensure sustainability of their projects. Hivos Regional Office for East Africa has adapted the co-creation approach where Hivos and its partners are involved in co-creating and co-implementing projects by engaging front-runner stakeholders and gleaning on their expertise.

Main Points and Recommendations

1. WROs must continue to work collaboratively to challenge the funding models that are short term, project-based and crisis focused. These models always limit their ability and capacity to organize and sustain interventions that disrupt systems of power inequalities, which require flexible and long-term sustained funding that is responsive to the different contexts.
2. Funders must consciously ensure that funding for and to WROs includes core support to build strong institutions and movements that can **sustain** the work on gender equality and women's rights beyond projects.
3. Women's organizations are now aggressively pushing for State funds to implement the SDGs hence the need to lobby local leaders to integrate women leaders in budgeting, planning and decision making processes that relate to their localities.

African Women's Footprints within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is fundamental to delivering on the promises of sustainable development as articulated in the 2030 Agenda and the Africa 2063 Agenda as well as the over 20 years Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

The historic 1995 *Beijing Conference* brought together almost 17,000 participants and 30,000 non-governmental activists to ignite a powerful and very visible global advocacy for gender equality and women's empowerment.



The resultant blueprint; ***Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action***, inspired and guided African women and their counterparts globally to purposefully network with each other, actively lobby governments, civil society and the public to advance women's rights so that she may exercise her freedoms and choices and realize all her rights.

There was gallant political will and all-round agreement on women's rights and governments eagerly keen to translate the deliberations into concrete steps to implement in their own back-yards. Women and their movements grabbed the baton and strove to trail-blaze on GEWE in their African countries using different forums to ensure the centrality of gender in all development frameworks and across sectors.

Leaving a mark in GEWE

Women continue to shape and influence the global gender equality agenda from Beijing to-date. There have been numerous gains in GEWE in Africa including: *1st female Chairperson of the African Union Commission; African Union Constitution stipulates 50% participation of women in African leadership; African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights; African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance; Economic Social and Cultural Council; Agenda 2063; AU Strategic Plan 2014-2017; Maputo Plan of Action on sexual and*

reproductive health and rights (SRHR); the AU campaigns against child marriage and for the reduction of maternal mortality; Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security; improving girls' education; Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa; Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol); African Women's Decade (2010-2020); AU Africa Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

FEMNET together with her members, has strategically engaged in agitating for GEWE since inception, as well as in the post-2015 process. FEMNET successfully spearheaded the development of the **Common African Position on What Women Want**, which contributed to the successful adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015, with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). FEMNET additionally collaborated with her members and partners to advocate for a stand-alone goal - Goal 5, on gender equality and women's empowerment - and for mainstreaming of gender in all of the 17 SDGs. Moreover, FEMNET agitated for her members and women's rights organizations in Africa to engage in the process of developing the Africa Agenda 2063, Africa's blueprint that is guiding its development path. FEMNET has continued to carry the GEWE baton and pushed for women and girls' voices, needs and aspirations to be prioritized in the policy arena worldwide.

Implementing SDG 5 requires creating synergies between people, institutions, and frameworks across board, with strong linkages in the local communities and with women and girls in all their diversities.

Globally, the European Council in setting the policy agenda for the EU, has over the years advanced gender equality and women's empowerment as a 'precondition' for development and instrumental to achieving internally-agreed development goals. In Kenya for example, the EU supports a number of projects to increase women's participation in Kenyan politics in tandem with the constitutional two-thirds gender rule.

Swimming against the current in GEWE

Despite notable progress in legal and policy frameworks on gender equality, achieving "real equality" in everyday life still remains very much an "unfinished business". Women continue to be the majority of the world's poorest; are underrepresented in governments and decision-making bodies; earn less than men in the labour market for similar positions; 1 in 5 members of parliament are women; 1 in 3 women suffer GBV; women still earn less than 24% than men globally, and women, especially the elderly and disabled, remain the poorest economically.



There is an increasing and urgent need to consider how to effectively include the voices and proactive participation of women who bear the brunt of gender inequalities in the development of policies, projects and programmes that impact them.

Though the MDGs served as an important form of reference on GEWE, their structure did not adequately address the complexities that women face in various societal spheres. The MDGs were minimalist and discriminatory in nature but the SDGs are comprehensive, transformative and ambitious as they touch on issues of succession, women's ownership of property, employment opportunities, basic education, healthcare, gender-based violence, discrimination and poverty.

Way forward

African women's' footprints run through Agenda 2030 and 2063 and this needs to be

documented. There is need for a sustained profiling of women's integral role in negotiating, contributing and guiding global discourses on GEWE in the ever decreasing space for Civil Society Organizations. WROs must also continue to consolidate their gains and push for the resourcing and full implementation of the SDGs in their countries and regions.

WROs must continue to hold African governments accountable to their responsibilities to safeguard and build on the gender equality gains. In order to interrogate the SDGs implementation process, they must aggressively seek to reconnect, regenerate commitment, charge up political will and mobilize investment organizations to support women's economic empowerment programmes because economic and social justice go hand-in-hand. Their voices need to be louder and more sustained on GEWE for their footprints to remain visible on all fronts.

Main Points and Recommendations

1. Women's Rights Organizations must work in an innovative, collaborative and united way and leverage on each other's expertise to represent gender issues in the spaces they are in to better inform and negotiate on their position regarding GEWE in the region.
2. Women's Rights Organizations must create synergies between all frameworks to push the implementation of SDG 5 at national level by governments so that all agendas in all sectors and levels mainstream gender.
3. Women's Rights Organizations must document their achievements and footprints in GEWE advocacy for posterity.
4. Women's Rights Organizations must hold their governments accountable to safeguarding and building on their gender equality commitments.



Making Women and Girls Count: Monitoring, Review and Follow-Up Mechanisms and Frameworks

For Women's Rights organizations to hold governments accountable, a robust, relevant and **evidence-driven data** must be prioritized to report on the needs, realities and priorities of women and girls.

What is not counted does not often count! Therefore, to effectively implement the SDGs, there is need for practical and effective monitoring, review and follow-up of the mechanisms and frameworks that have been put in place over the decades to support and augment GEWE. This must be underpinned by evidence-driven data.

Challenges in monitoring and review of SDGs

There are a number of challenges that exist in the monitoring, review and follow-up of the SDGs including:

- The top-down development approach by governments and policy makers that excludes meaningful participation by WROs which ultimately affects the implementation process.
- The partial and inconsistent implementation of agreed-upon declarations and protocols by government and duty bearers.
- The stifling of women's agency especially within developing countries.
- Inadequate human and technical capacity by governments and duty bearers to implement and follow-up on implementation.
- The acute lack of financing required supporting the Implementation of the SDGs 2030; a figure that currently amounts to trillions of dollars annually.
- Inadequate funding for access to reliable, affordable and sustainable energy.
- Poor infrastructural development.
- Limited access to education and health.

To monitor and review the implementation of SDGs effectively, women's rights organizations need to hold governments and regional bodies accountable to existing GEWE commitments.

The role of data in monitoring and review of SDGs implementation

There is need to disaggregate data and ensure it is meaningful and of high quality to advocate gender rights and to monitor the review and implementation of SDGs pegged on specific and measurable outcomes.

Data must shift from 'Data for monitoring and tracking the SDGs' and focus more on 'Data for Decision-making' and 'Data for Deeper, faster, Better Development'.

Investing heavily in looking for data to populate a proliferation of indicators developed for each target at the expense of the larger picture will likely deflect attention away from the integrated nature of the SDGs. Data must contribute to policy and hold leaders accountable regarding





the SDGs by clearly showing it is connected to advocacy and action and that it helps fuel progress towards gender equality.

The SDGs present a need to build and sustain a strong and broad African data ecosystem that is driven by national priorities and is inclusive of all forms of data (official and administrative data, open data, big data, and citizen-generated data) and involves all stakeholders. This is especially because data can be biased and incomplete. Figures are pivotal to decision making and they need to be accessible and simplified so that they do not require a high level of education if they are to be useful at the grassroots.

However, ambition must be matched with clear means of implementation, resources to pay for and drive implementation and mechanisms to track and monitor progress against agreed milestones. There is also the challenge of aligning goals and targets with pre-existing national development strategies, goals and plans. This is however a labor-intensive and convoluted process.

In order for this to happen, women organizations need to realize that data collection is a political process, so they need to lobby supportive political leaders to sustain their calls for GEWE and to provide the political goodwill needed by women and girls. Ultimately, it is such supportive political leaders who will use the evidence-driven data to make decisions that optimize GEWE.

Main Points and Recommendations

1. What is not counted does not often count in policy development so monitoring implementation of SDGs must be based on robust, relevant and evidence-driven data.
2. Data collection is a political process so women must seek supportive political leaders to provide political goodwill and sustain their calls for SDG implementation.
3. The SDGs present a need to build and sustain a strong and broad African data ecosystem that is driven by national priorities and is inclusive of all forms of data (official and administrative data, open data, big data, and citizen-generated data) and involves all stakeholders.

Cross Sectional Movement Building and Solidarity

Women's Rights Organizations represent a wide range of constituencies that have been advocating for the respect and enforcement of women and girls' human rights.

Numerous efforts by WROs have yielded significant outcomes that have gone a long way into advancing GEWE in Africa and across the globe. However despite many commendable milestones of achievements, several hindrances to total success still prevail.

One glaring frailty of the efforts by WROs in advancing GEWE is rooted in their tendency to work in 'silos' – with a lack of connectedness when pushing for GEWE. This has rendered their efforts fragmented and weak in influencing policy making to support the implementation of the SDGs. This individualistic tendency further erodes their impact in an increasingly constricting environment. Women must therefore seriously reflect on how to work more effectively together and across movements if they are to effectively agitate for the implementation of the SDGs.

How to create a more powerful women's movement

Globalization has profoundly impacted the arena of communications, heightening the need for WROs to enhance their knowledge and skills in the use of digital tools for communication, information sharing, advocacy, marketing, mobilizing and networking. The effective use of social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, is therefore inevitable.

WROs also need to push their governments to implement the following for the SDGs to be realized: Institute equitable tax policies and administration; recognize, redistribute, and reduce women's unpaid care work; increase corporate democracy by implementing structural shifts towards employee control of

companies; universal social protection; and institute a minimum living wage and policies for equal pay for work of equal value.

Additionally, women's groups need to address the problem of the concentration of power and civil society needs to rebuild power from below and connect across issues, organizations and borders.







History has proven that when grassroots groups agitate aggressively for change, they successfully fight against inequality; for example, *women garment workers in Bangladeshi factories fighting for a living wage; youth activists in Zambia fighting for mining companies to pay their fair share of tax that funds public schools and health clinics; and indigenous communities fighting to prevent fossil fuel companies destroying their land.* Additionally, there has always been need for additional struggle from the bottom-up: the end of colonialism; the end of Apartheid; the development of welfare States; LGBT rights; the decision to “Drop the Debt”; free education in Kenya; the passing of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in India; and free HIV medicines in South Africa. Women therefore need to strategically connect the national level human-rights infringement issues with

international inequalities to understand how working collectively gives power for change.

Cross-sectional movement-building and solidarity can only happen if African governments change the narratives and shift away from moralization of development needs. For example, conversations can expand on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) to include infant and genital mutilation beyond FGM and public health programmes can for example include violence meted on women, including the LGBTI community to ensure that they are not discriminated against. Women and their organizations must therefore push for holistic gender equality and empowerment that embraces diversity of individuals, institutions and themes.

A Pan-African women's rights movement that uses cross-sectional and power analysis of social inequalities from the grassroots up is critical as well as inter-community women groups that embraces diversity (especially of vulnerable women). In this way, they can collectively agitate for the enforcement of women's rights; encourage inter-country visits to their counterparts in other countries to exchange knowledge; collaborate with the media to nurture the movement and speak more on equality; push for the development of GEWE education curricular to be taught at all levels; develop clear succession plans and document their achievements as women, for posterity.

Main Points and Recommendations

1. Authentic grassroots movement that build power and momentum to change the society's attitude and perceptions around GEWE.
2. A pan-African women's rights movement that uses cross-sectional and power analysis of social inequalities from the grassroots up is critical.
3. WROs must continue to push for the development of GEWE education curricular to be taught at all levels in their countries.

Women's Right Movement and The Illicit Financial Flows (IFFS) - Opportunities for Engagement

The High Level Panel (HLP) report on Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs) endorsed by the African Heads of State and government in January 2015, stated that Africa is losing approximately US\$50 billion annually through IFFs, mostly through abusive transfer pricing and trade mispricing and other aggressive tax planning schemes by multinational companies (MNCs) operating in Africa's commercial sector. The African Development Bank estimates that IFFs have drained in excess of a trillion dollars from Africa since 1980. These illicit outflows constitute 5.5 percent of the GDP in Africa and are larger than incoming total foreign direct investment and also vastly larger than the sum total of all official development assistance (ODA) flowing into Africa.

Illicit flows undermine the ability of developing countries to raise tax revenue. Most literature on the IFFs discourse acknowledges that tax abuse by multinational corporations, wealthy individuals, criminal activities and corruption and the entrenched network of financial secrecy and the resultant financial hemorrhage from Africa severely limits the ability of States to bring about socio-economic development. IFFs adversely channel resources to tax havens and reduce African governments' capacity to provide gender-equitable education, basic services such as health, portable water and social security and other basic services. This drives out women from accessing economic opportunities in their countries as, for example, their failure to go to school renders them uneducated and hence they cannot compete with men for formal and good jobs. Poor health facilities force women out of employment to pursue unpaid care work for their families. IFFs further undermine the possibility to fund social care work and by

extension, lock women into providing unpaid care work.

Some of the criminal activities that result from IFFs include drug and human trafficking, which includes sex trafficking and forced labour of adults and children, domestic servitude, forced recruitment of child soldiers and forced removal of and trafficking of organs. These practices affect women and children more as they bear the greatest burden of human trafficking.

Way forward in dealing with IFFs to augment GEWE

The strategic challenge is how is Africa going to be able to finance its own gender equitable development when it is losing a staggering amount of its resources to IFFs? Government reforms are needed to build effective States to reduce illicit capital outflows and this requires



Main Points and Recommendations

1. Africa is losing US\$50 billion annually in revenue as a result of IFFs
2. Tax evasion and tax avoidance limit socio-economic development and especially infringe on the rights of women and children.
3. Government reforms, policy intervention, deterrent fines, and research are critical to reducing IFFs and their adverse effects, and money saved from reduced IFFs can be rechanneled in augmenting GEWE and socio-economic development.
4. African countries should mainstream gender-responsive budgeting and offer rigorous transfer pricing training to their tax officials and policy makers on curbing IFFs and share intelligence on IFFs and the exploitation of young girls and women, for example, child marriages, forced prostitution, forced drug trafficking, child labour and so on.

strong political commitment. Tackling the problem will also require building effective States that are responsive to the needs of their societies. There is therefore need to strengthen African governments' domestic resource mobilization capacity to enable them to finance their sustainable development and structural transformation by reducing these resource outflows.

From the convening it was elaborated that more research is needed on how IFFs worsen gender inequality and participants also called for tax systems that increase taxes on the wealth, capital, and profits of the rich. There is additionally need to end tax secrecy and tax havens to reduce poverty, and increase funding for government development plans and gender mainstreaming.

In regards to IFFs, women's rights organizations will continue to advocate for the full implementation of the recommendation of the High Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows in order to fulfill goal 18 of Agenda 2063 which states that *"Africa is no longer aid dependent and takes full responsibility for financing development."*



Market Place to Share Experiences on SDG Localization

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) comprise a global development agenda which should not be seen as a one-size-fits-all approach for responding to the development needs of all countries given their political, economic and socio-demographic dynamics. Localized experience-sharing with regards to the implementation of SDGs in the regions is crucial in addressing region-specific issues and enhancing capabilities.

In the West African market place for instance, Nigeria through different stakeholders has advocated for the promotion of rights and health of women, young girls and community members through capacity building, networking and information sharing as well as the promotion of peace and security. Various organizations have also built awareness on SDGs, monitoring and implementation, as well as their financing, to ensure comprehensive follow-up and review.

Echoes of Women in Africa (ECOWA), a non-profit organization in Nigeria, recently presented a women's demand on financing gender equality to realize SDGs by 2030, to the Nigerian Vice President Prof. Yemi Oshibajo at the *Third International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD3)* in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The government in Ghana has developed policies to address the SDGs on poverty, hunger, and unemployment, while Sierra Leone has a trade union at the regional level which tackles gender issues and SDGs by defining and simplifying them for union members.

Implementing the SDGs has gained traction in Tunisia and the government has given them its full support. In Egypt, the Business and Professional Women of Egypt is organizing an (Afro-Arab) congress to strengthen women's

economic capacity and develop a road-map in light of achieving the 2030 Agenda and the African Union Agenda 2063. Other projects are also underway there to build the capacity of youth so that they can gain useful employment or begin their own enterprises after their studies. Urban and rural women are also being trained by a women's business development and business incubator center to start their own businesses in agriculture and solar panel management.

In the Northern Africa market place, ZENAB (Sudanese Association for the Development of Women) has adopted SDGs in Sudan with programmes in food security, women's economic empowerment, climate change, reproductive health, and the rights of girls.

Teething problems in SDG implementation

Sudan has however experienced some teething problems at the government level since it does not have a concrete roadmap for achieving the SDGs nor an effective leadership structure. Additionally, Morocco's debut to the African Union filled a gap in its participation in continental decision-making processes

but inadequate financial resources; lack of popularization and low media coverage of Agenda 2063 hinder SDG implementation. Political instability, conflicts and lack of political goodwill by some governments also contribute to the slow pace in gender equality.

Despite these problems, the North Africa sub-region has taken bold steps to include FBOs in the implementation of the SDGs with priorities that respond to the specificities of each country. There is also a national consultation of Moroccan NGOs with other NGOs in North Africa and the Middle East on ways of working and collaborating to solve the challenges the sub-region faces in the implementation of the SDGs.

SADC at different stages of development

Laws in the SADC region are at different stages of development. The amendment of laws for safe abortion in Mozambique, enactment of laws against child marriages in Malawi and consensus in most countries in the sub-region

to push for a marriage age of 18 years are some few examples of these legal stages. Malawi has restrictive laws on abortion while South Africa is making headway on unsafe abortions. Together with Seychelles, Madagascar and Namibia, South Africa seems to have recognized LGBTI rights. However, Zambia and Zimbabwe are lagging behind.

The Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) is naming and shaming member States that have not been accountable to gender equality commitments through their flagship gender barometer. SADC has also trained and worked with their East Africa counterparts to develop an East Africa gender barometer and use this method to hold EA governments responsible to SDG implementation.

Way forward on SDG localization

Innovative collaboration, solidarity and leverage on each other's expertise is integral to represent gender issues in different spaces. There is also need to create synergies between all frameworks to push for the implementation of SDG 5 at national levels by governments. Collaboration is powerful when fighting for gender equality, hence WROs, the African Union (AU), UN agencies and allies in each country must work together to better inform and negotiate aggressively on GEWE and SDG implementation in the region.

Data should also be of quality and disaggregated according to sex, and with clear targets and indicators which will reveal gaps that exist and where gender mainstreaming is most needed, so that agendas are evidence-based and practical.

The gender agenda should not be steeped in academia but embrace the grassroots and build their capacity through economic empowerment to overcome gender inequality. The language barrier should also be addressed to ensure that information is packaged to accommodate all actors including those in the Francophone and Portuguese-speaking areas of Africa.

Main Points and Recommendations

1. Although SDGs comprise a global development agenda, its implementation approach should be localized to address political, economic and socio-demographic dynamics.
2. Africa should seek for innovative ways of developing resource mobilization strategies instead of relying heavily on foreign funding.
3. Governments should ensure political goodwill and the stability of their countries to advance gender equality.
4. The sub-regions are at different stages of development; hence support and leveraging on each other's expertise will be crucial in representing gender issues in the different spaces.
5. Quality, disaggregated, and evidence-based data is lacking to measure progress on the implementation of SDGs.

Shrinking Civic Spaces: Exploring Existing Challenges and What Opportunities Exist to Navigate them

In spite of numerous and diverse conventions, laws, policies and programmes developed to augment human rights, civil society freedoms and spaces are shrinking and are increasingly being violated around the world.

A new modality of organization - the *Africa Hub* created by CIVICUS, an organization that has a Monitor Report that assesses civic spaces around the globe, in its latest report that covers March 2016 to March 2017 found out that civic space has closed in 20 countries, repressed in 35, and obstructed in 51. It has also narrowed significantly in 63 countries, and opened in only 26 others globally. Most of the countries with closed spaces are in Western parts of Asia and Africa. In the last decade only, CIVICUS has compiled data on increasing restrictions on the freedom of assembly, expression, and association around the world.

In this context, hate speech, physical attacks, disappearances and assassinations are increasingly common. Citizens, who speak truth to power, and challenge authoritarianism and market fundamentalism are suffering vilification and stigmatization, arbitrary detention and criminalization.

Sometimes, the phenomenon is difficult to define and combat since governments use different methods of repression and there is collusion between political and economic elites to erode the freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly.

These threats against civic freedoms and political rights usually arise in the form of: restrictions on foreign funding, arbitrary detentions, barriers to CSO registration, and smear campaigns against

them. Infringement of freedoms and intensifying government control raise the risk for social and geopolitical conflict. Also, even when donors partner with civil society to counter shrinking civic spaces, their rigid funding conditions for CSOs can undermine progress.

Diverse problems as a result of shrinking space

Zimbabwe exemplifies countries in Africa where CSO civic space continues to shrink at an alarming rate. Zimbabweans still find



themselves not able to exercise their right to peaceful assembly and there is restrictive registration of CSOs. In the extractive industry for example, communities cannot engage on SDGs with the mining communities, local government, traditional leaders and the State. The extraction sector is male dominated and patriarchal, making it difficult for women's concerns to be acted upon - e.g. Low salaries for women, and low representation of women on the management of mining companies. Additionally, the State has a stake in mining companies (e.g. Hwange Colliery), which makes it more difficult for communities to seek redress from it for human rights abuses.

There has also been diverse human rights losses and abuses in Zimbabwe including; GBV perpetrated by illegal miners and the local security officials in an effort to silence women rights defenders; exceedingly low salaries for miners; extra marital affairs and social conflicts by frustrated miners; loss of land due to unfair mining practices leading to food insecurity; air and water pollution that negatively affects women's health and increased child labour within mining communities.

Main Points and Recommendations

1. CSOs to explore legal systems and collect actionable evidence to agitate through the court system for the increase of civic spaces and to seek redress of human rights violations.
2. CSOs to seek non-violent avenues to agitate for GEWE and to link transparency and accountability with the overall governance agenda at national, regional and global levels
3. WROs to hold multi-stakeholder dialogue at all levels (civil society, government, private sector companies, RECs, and academia) to push for GEWE rights and space.
4. WROs to push for inclusion in national data collection and analysis, to ensure gender mainstreaming and usefulness of government interventions towards GEWE.

In the Northern Africa region, regarding inheritance rights, women can only inherit 50% of their husband's property and they cannot go outdoors without being escorted by a man. Some women's organizations such as APROFE are unable to get an office location due to their agitation for GEWE and civil society organizations are not allowed to create partnerships that are considered detrimental to the government.

How to create space in shrinking space

CSOs need to explore legal systems as an alternative way of expanding these shrinking spaces. Africa Hub for example, has an AID application that can be used to find legal redress and it to work together with governments in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Women and their organizations can shift away from working in silos and collaborate in an organized way for GEWE. They need to reflect on alternative sources of funding and collect actionable evidence to use in agitating against shrinking spaces and protecting those spaces that still exist.

There is need for capacity building at grassroots level and gender-sensitive research; multi-stakeholder dialogue (civil society, government, private sector companies, and academia) to push for GEWE; speaking out on women's rights at national and continental level platforms; interrogating existing policies/laws to develop alternatives that protect women's rights; committing to corporate social responsibility (CSR) by the private sector as a measure to address inadequate financing; organizing non-violent advocacy methods to increase civic space; collaborating with experts to front gender rights in their spaces; engaging and training media practitioners to agitate for GEWE in an informed and timely fashion.

A Refreshing Meeting of Minds on the Way Forward on the SDGs

Participants at the FEMNET Programming Conference agreed that the meeting served to increase their understanding and awareness on 2030 Agenda and Africa Agenda 2063 and how they relate with other existing regional and global women's human rights frameworks.

Deliberations helped participants understand the fact that the SDGs were developed in a more consultative manner, taking into account the priority needs and aspirations of various constituencies including women and girls. The meeting also highlighted that gains in GEWE are eroded by the continuing risks such as: GBV, low representation of women in decision making, doing majority of unpaid work without value and recognition, inability to own and control property, forced child marriages and FGM, maternal mortality from preventable diseases; shrinking civic space, dwindling resources to WROs, and a deficit in political will and interest to address structural and systematic gender inequalities.

Way forward to feed into the road map towards implementing the SDGs

There was therefore agreement on a number of ways of how WROs can effectively participate, and contribute to the achievement of Agenda 2030 at national, regional and global levels in their countries and beyond.

Some specific action plans were put forward for reinforcing and reinstating the SDGs and holding governments accountable to their implementation, including:

There is need to include the international community in following-up the implementation

of SDGs by African government and to ensure that all SDGs and the entire 2030 agenda are aligned to Africa Agenda 2063 and other gender and human rights frameworks in existence, such as CEDAW, The Beijing Platform for Action, the Universal Periodic Review, and the Maputo Protocol. WROs must also ensure that themes and issues are discussed in a gender transformative way, and harmful policy decisions are avoided.

On IFFs, the women categorically called for a stop to Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs); the establishment of a global tax body, and an increase in research on how gender inequality is made worse through IFFs. They called for progressive tax systems that increase taxes on the wealth, capital, and profits of the rich; an end to tax secrecy and tax havens; domestic resource mobilization; and gender responsive budgeting. This will effectively reduce poverty and legitimately provide funding for government development plans including gender mainstreaming. They also called for mandatory rules and accountability mechanisms that ensure that private sector compliance with human rights, including women's and indigenous people's rights and protection of the environment.

On cross-sectional movement building, the participants felt that there was urgent need for a substantive **Pan African Women's Rights Movement** that uses cross-sectional and power analysis of social inequalities and that pushes for the implementation of 2030 Agenda and the



Africa Agenda 2063 for sustainable development (SDGs). Through such a movement, WROs would be able to collectively and powerfully agitate for substantive gender equality and equity from the grassroots up, using inclusive methodologies as put forward by the *Leave No One Behind Agenda*, as well as embrace diversity at individual, thematic and institutional levels. There is also urgent need to break the donor-recipient relationship in Africa' and push for equal partnership with mutual values and principles and dialoguing to resolve gender issues.

In the current Data Revolution Era, participants agreed that WROs must push for meaningful data capture that is inclusive of girls and women's voices, experiences, and realities, to impact policy making and legislation and use data to reconnect, reconvene and re-catalyze development. Additionally, they agreed that increased citizen participation in the collection and use of this data will work to building a strong data ecosystem and influence evidence-based decision-making on GEWE. These decisions will be based on robust, African-driven and gender

sensitive data collection and analysis by national institutions responsible for the development of such data sets, sources, and types. Such data would also boost the monitoring and tracking of SDGs implementation at grassroots, national, regional and global levels.

On economic inequality, the WRO participants called strongly for a fair wage economy that provides a living wage for care work; social and economic policies that invest in and protect women and girls; fair distribution of opportunities and decent employment for women; an end to economic slavery of women and girls in the work place; new economic models that realigns economic benefits to the interests of people; and to peace and democracy.

Finally, the participants felt that in the face of reduced civic space governments need to conscientiously safeguard and protect the rights of all women to freely speak out, organize, act and hold them accountable in the implementation of the SDGs and general human rights.

COMMUNIQUÉ

Safeguarding Our Gains: African Women's Collective Action on Defining the Pathway to Achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Africa Agenda 2063

The African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) convened over 190 African women's rights organization representatives from 34 African countries in Nairobi, Kenya, for the first and biggest pan-African women's conference since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. The convening comes at a time when gender gains, underpinned by the ratification to international treaties and conventions on gender equality by African governments, continue to be eroded.

During the conference, African women's rights organizations and movements embarked on the development of a strategic roadmap geared towards safeguarding and cultivating gender equity gains. African women's movements intend to ensure that women and girls are at the centre of the effective follow-up, and monitoring and implementation of the SDGs and Africa Agenda 2063.

In this regard, the Nairobi convening identified a set of 6 priorities to collectively embark on over the next few years.

1. **Accountability to Sustainable Development Goal 5 - Gender Equality**

We recognize that all the SDGs, with their goals, targets and indicators, are interrelated and important to achieve gender equality and empowerment of African women and girls. However, we distinguish SDG 5, with its focus on the reduction of gender inequality as central to the attainment of all the other SDG goals.

As part of our responsibility to holding African government's accountable to delivering on their global commitments, we call for all SDGs and the entire 2030 agenda to be aligned to Africa Agenda 2063, as well as other gender and human rights frameworks already in existence, such as CEDAW, The Beijing Platform for Action, and the Universal Periodic Review and the Maputo Protocol

We foreground the role of the women's Organizations, networks and movements in the voluntary national reporting processes, as well as other regional and global forums to ensure themes and issues are discussed in a gender transformative way, and harmful policy decisions are avoided.

2. **Financing for SDGs**

The African High Level Panel (HLP) states that 'Africa is losing approximately \$50 billion annually through IFFs'. Because of their scale and negative impact, the issue has become an urgent matter of concern regarding Africa's development. FEMNET is committed to continue to take leadership in mobilizing African women's rights organizations to collectively push this agenda on the continent. We call for the stop of Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs), the establishment of a global tax body and call for an increase in research on how gender inequality is made worse through IFFs.

Losses through IFFs aggravate gender inequality; reduce spending on social services like maternal health, care work, girl child education, etc. We call on all governments to stop IFFs, and call for the establishment of a global tax body that is adequately resourced and meaningfully inclusive.

We call for progressive tax systems that increase taxes on the wealth, capital and profits of the rich; and an end to tax secrecy and tax havens, domestic resource mobilization and gender responsive budgeting. This will ultimately and effectively reduce poverty and legitimately provide funding for government development plans including gender mainstreaming.

We note the active interest of the private sector in the Sustainable development agenda and call for Governments to put in place mandatory rules and accountability mechanisms that ensure that private sector compliance with human rights, including women's and indigenous people's rights and protection of the environment.

3. Cross-Sectional Movement Building – diversity and organising

We are committed to harnessing the Pan African Women's rights movement that uses cross-sectional and power analysis of social inequalities. We will harness collective action to powerfully agitate for substantive gender equality and equity from the grassroots up, using inclusive methodologies as put forward by the Leave No One Behind Agenda to embrace diversity at individual, thematic and institutional levels. We believe that lack of social justice in one area is absence of it completely.

We shall cultivate a collective voice towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Africa Agenda 2063 for sustainable development (SDGs) even as we work in different sectors, countries, and spaces, as we are all agitating for the same goal.

Despite the erosion of gains made in gender advocacy, we are determined to collaborate more strongly and increase our power as African women through collective action and strategic alliances with and cross like-minded human rights movements.

4. Data collection and accountability

To effectively monitor and measure progress in gender equality and Women's Rights commitments made at different levels including the Gender specific goals and targets under 2030 agenda and Africa Agenda 2063 as the newest development frameworks. We commit to, and call for, increased and meaningful data capture that is inclusive of girls and women's voices, experiences and realities to impact policy making and legislation. We call for increased citizen participation in the collection and use of this data which in turn will work to building a strong data ecosystem.

We agitate for evidence-based decision making based on robust, African-driven and gender sensitive data collection and analysis by national institutions responsible for the development of such data sets in meaningful engagement with women's rights organizations.

We will use different data sources and types that leverage of the digital age to push for a data revolution that will enable effective monitoring and tracking of SDGs implementation at grassroots, national, regional and international levels.

We urge states to efficiently fund and produce timely, robust, inclusive, user-driven, and disaggregated data that measures dimensions of the lives of women and girls for public good and inclusive development. This will include quantitative and qualitative data (case-study and story development) that document women's experiences and lived realities.

We call for a critical mass and community of African women data collectors to build ownership of data, use feminist analysis and tools and optimize decision making that is grounded in our reality.

5. The Fight against Inequality

We recognize that women are a non-homogenous group on the basis of gender identity, class, sexual orientation, spatial (rural, urban), age, ability, religion etc and we push for intersectional equity and equality.

The same market fundamentalism ideology that creates the gap between the richest and the rest also relies on, and further entrenches patriarchy – it undermines the rights of women, achieving economic development off the back of low wages and poor working conditions that discriminate against women worldwide.

Women workers are the lowest-paid, and face precarious and dangerous jobs, unprotected by labour laws in a world that yields billions for the global economy. Rather than recognizing, protecting and rewarding their economic contribution, market fundamentalism hits women and girls hardest by stripping away policies like paid maternity leave, childcare, social security and free health and education.

We call for a fair wage economy that provides a living wage for care work, and social, and economic policies that invest in and protect women and girls. We call for fair distribution of opportunities and decent employment for women and an end to economic slavery of women and girls in the work place.

We call for new economic model that realigns economic benefits to the interests of people, and to peace and democracy.

6. Protect women's rights, democratic rights and civic space in the face of growing inequality

The rapid rise of inequality crushes democracy. Collusion between political and economic elites erodes the freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly in Africa, and civil society freedoms are increasingly being violated around the world, and civil society space is increasingly shrinking.

In this context, violence against women and girls, hate speech, physical attacks, disappearances and assassinations are increasingly common. The right to choice and bodily integrity and access to comprehensive sexual reproductive health and rights is under threat. Citizens, who speak truth to power, challenge authoritarianism, market fundamentalism and women human rights defenders are suffering vilification and stigmatization, arbitrary detention and criminalization.

Following from the Beijing +20 Africa Regional Shadow report commissioned by FEMNET in 2014, the closure of space affects women's rights organization through shrinking and fragmented funding streams, closure of frontline domestic violence centers, shifts away from women's rights by states in favor of norms that centre "family values". Further, violent extremism and religious fundamentalism are increasing states rationale for shrinking civic space. Together, these are all key concerns that need to be addressed.

We call for governments to safeguard, and protect the rights of all women to freely speak out, organize and take action. We call for governments to address an end to legislation that prevents civil society holding governments accountable.



From left to right:

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