



Our Vision: An African society where gender equality is achieved and women and girls enjoy all their rights and live in dignity.



“Time is up for discrimination and abuse against women!”

As the year 2018 trudges on, something extraordinary is happening in the world. We continue to witness more and more **local organizing and meaningful regional and global solidarity** by gender activists and advocates, uniting in their collective struggle to shame discrimination and resist oppressive forms of patriarchy. From fighting sexual assaults and harassment – through the [#MeToo](#) and [#TimesUp](#) movements - to the radical voices calling for transformational social and economic alternatives that tackle inequalities – through the [#FightInequality](#) campaign – there is definitely a heightened awareness on women’s human rights. One by one, **gender consciousness and feminist consciousness** is slowly illuminating the dark corners of sexual abuses in different industries and sectors –

from our homes to educational institutions, [world of sports](#), [hospitals](#), boardrooms, courtrooms, C-level executives, state house, celebrities, [hospitality](#), parliaments, [united nations agencies](#) and even in the military. This continues to solidify again and again, what women activists and advocates have been speaking out all along – **women and girls must be respected as equal human beings** - not forgetting the numerous,

“Time is up for discrimination and abuse against women. The time has come for women to thrive.”
[Christine Lagarde](#)
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“Inequality can be reduced. Poverty can be wiped off the face of the earth! It's a question of choices. Inequality is rising and it's a result of choices our business and political leaders are making!”
[Winnie Byanyima](#)

documented researches and analysis – all pointing to the agency of women’s power and ability to act and transform the world. Clearly, “time is up for discrimination and abuse against women. The time has come for women to thrive.” as so well stated by [Christine Lagarde](#), the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) at the 2018 World Economic Forum.

Another extraordinary thing happening in 2018. **FEMNET is turning 30 years!** Definitely a cause for celebration and also a moment to reflect on our collective gains, analyze persistent hurdles, as we chart our next 30 and 50 years together.

As documented in [Our Herstory](#), FEMNET founders were visionary and inspired to set up this Network, deeply convicted that Africa can only be transformed when African women are at the center of all its progressive actions. Their **voices must be heard** as they advance equality, sustainable development and peace; they **must be visible in the corridors of power**; they must have the **capacity to organize effectively** to initiate and influence the development agendas; they have to **participate in implementing the decisions made** and **equally share and enjoy the benefits of development**. Above all else,

FEMNET Founders intended that **FEMNET should provide a common platform for all African women** to acknowledge and celebrate our diversities as a source of power and hold each other up in solidarity and sisterhood against all odds as we work together to improve the quality of life in Africa for every person.

As we celebrate **FEMNET @30**, we would love to hear from you our members and partners – what do you MOST celebrate as a member of FEMNET? What would you like to see DIFFERENT as a member/ partner? Individually, what can you offer to CONTRIBUTE to FEMNET’s vision and mission? Please send your responses on email to library@femnet.or.ke and communication@femnet.or.ke

Check out other updates and news in this first E-Bulletin in 2018. We look forward to an exciting and busy year ahead as we endeavour to realize our vision for ‘An African society where gender equality is achieved and women and girls enjoy all their rights and live in dignity’.

Do keep us posted even as you join these and other exciting activities for together we will make the much-needed difference in our continent! We thank you for your continuous support and wish you all an exciting and successful 2018!



1. What to Look-out for in 2018!

Here's a glance at some of the critical moments, processes & activities FEMNET Secretariat, members and partners will actively follow, engage and participate in 2018 – forging for a more equal Africa, and world. As always, we will endeavour to keep you posted through our various communication channels – such as these [e-bulletins](#), [website](#), dedicated listserv and social media ([Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#)) – keep following and engaging us.

Dates		Key Activities, Events and Days to Engage
January	28 th – 29 th	♀ 30th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Heads of State and government of the African Union Theme: “Winning the Fight against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa’s Transformation”.
	17 th – 18 th	♀ 31st GIMAC Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting Theme: “Corruption and Governance: Impact and way out for Women, Children and Youths.”
	19 th – 26 th	♀ #FightInequality Week of Action
	23 rd – 26 th	♀ World Economic Forum Theme: 'Creating a Shared Future in a Fractured World'.
	29 th Jan to 7 th Feb	♀ 56th Session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD56) Theme: “Strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all”
February	7 th – 13 th	♀ 9th World Urban Forum (WUF9) Theme: “Cities 2030, Cities for All: Implementing the New Urban Agenda”
	6 th – 9 th	♀ CSW 62 Rural Women’s Assembly National Convenings in Cameroon (6-7 Feb) and Malawi (8-9 Feb). For more information contact advocacy@femnet.or.ke
	14 th – 16 th	♀ The first Global Conference of the Platform for Collaboration on Tax (UN Headquarters, New York) NB: Attendance by invitation only. Theme: Taxation and the Sustainable Development Goals
March	12 th – 23 rd	62nd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women Theme: Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls
April	23 rd – 26 th	♀ Financing for Development (FfD) Forum 2018 Theme: “Steps taken towards implementation of commitments contained in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda & other Financing for Development outcomes”

June	5 th – 6 th	♀ European Development Days (EDD 2018) Theme: "Women and Girls at the Forefront of Sustainable Development: protect, empower, invest".
July	9 th – 18 th	♀ High-Level Political Forum 2018 Theme: "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies".
September	18 – 25	♀ 73rd session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 73) – including the high-level plenary meeting on global peace on 24 September, in honor of the centenary of the birth of Nelson Mandela, known as the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit. The plenary will adopt a political declaration negotiated by Member States. The high-level General Debate will be held on 25 September
November	12 th – 15 th	♀ International Conference on Family Planning Theme: Investing for a Lifetime of Returns
December	3 rd – 14 th	♀ 24th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 24) to the UNFCCC



Passionate women community leaders in Turkana, Kenya unpacking county budgeting processes and identifying pathways for shaping gender transformative budgeting cycles that incorporates their views, concerns, aspirations and priorities as women. *(Photo Credit: Crystal Simeoni, FEMNET, January 2018)*

2. FEMNET's Briefs

African Women at the 30th African Union Summit

The theme for the 30th African Union “Winning the fights against corruption: A sustainable path to Africa’s transformation” provided an opportunity for women’s rights advocates to interrogate ways in which corruption has continued to hinder the realization of gender equality, women and girls empowerment. A major obstacle towards achieving women’s and girls’ sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) is inadequate resources which results from issues such as Illicit Financial Flows of which corruption is a component.

FEMNET through the Secretariat and Members from 10 countries from all regions of Africa engaged and participated in the strategic meetings, such as the:-

- AU Gender Pre-Summit hosted by the Directorate of Women, Gender and Development of the African Union Commission.
- 31st Pre-Summit Consultative meeting on gender mainstreaming in the AU hosted under the auspices of the Gender is my Agenda Campaign (GIMAC).

FEMNET hosted a Regional Policy Dialogue on Ending Corruption and advancing SRHR in Africa [#SRHRDialogues](#) - creating a platform for dialogue on the linkages between corruption and SRHR and resulting in the formulation of key recommendations on actions needed to win the fight against

corruption and the role of women’s rights organizations in Africa.

Media Highlights:-

- [AU’s anti-graft agenda can eradicate gender inequality in Africa – FEMNET](#) (Daily Nation Newspaper on 23rd January 2018)
- [AU urged to escalate anti-graft war to improve lives of women, girls](#) (Journal du Cameroun.com on 22nd January 2018)
- [AU’s anti-corruption agenda can eradicate gender inequality in Africa](#) (Panorama Rwanda Newspaper on 23rd January 2018)
- [Women ask AU to intensify fight against corruption](#) (Uganda’s 93.3 KFM)

"The worst disease in the world today is corruption. And there is a cure: transparency"

Accountability: Understanding County Budgets in Kenya

Growing inequalities calls for individual and collective participation in local community affairs and more so the strengthening of the capacities of women to be able to participate effectively in governance and civic affairs from the local community to the national and regional levels.

FEMNET, partnering with Ford Foundation and the African Woman and Child Features Services (AWCFS) are keen to “*Strengthen women’s engagement in resource governance*

and civic affairs through evidence based advocacy, communication, networking, and social justice storytelling” in Kisumu and Turkana counties in Kenya and Moshi in Tanzania.

In January 2018, FEMNET identified 35 women community leaders in Kisumu and Turkana counties in Kenya and enhanced their capacities in understanding county level budget processes and identifying entry points for influencing priorities and holding their leaders accountable. Ultimately, these trained cohort will be champions for monitoring resource generation, allocation and utilization at county and national levels.

3. *Young FEMNET Corner!*

More Boys must Enroll in Women & Gender Studies and Research

By George Seko

Joining [FEMNET](#) from a purely accounting background has been quite empowering, as it has enabled me to have a much broader understanding of the term gender and specifically, gender inequality, providing me with a new way of re-imagining equality.



Growing up in Dandora, in Kenya, I thought women and gender studies and research was a purview for women and girls! This is because in college, I and other boys tended to choose technical courses with a perception that women and gender studies was a ‘preserve’ for girls and women.

The gap between boys and girls pursuing gender studies and research has greatly widened. According to the [Partnership for African Social and Governance Research PASGR](#))¹, “*the overall enrolment of women in African universities is low, and social sciences attract relatively higher numbers of women.... Women are mostly invisible in economics training programmes in Africa.*”

¹ <http://www.pasgr.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Gender-Barrier-Scoping-Paper-Final.pdf>

This can mostly be attributed to limited and many times lack of gender consciousness and glaring gender inequalities at primary and secondary levels of education since the Kenyan education curriculum does not incorporate gender studies. In fact, the curriculum has failed to introduce even a single topic, leave alone a subject, on gender studies which has resulted in majority of boys thinking of gender studies as a non-issue or a side-issue that is not of their preferential choosing.

As a result, there has been an unusual slackness on the side of boys and men in many societies in joining efforts with girls and women to end harmful cultures like female genital mutilation (FGM), early and forced child marriages and wife inheritance.

Nonetheless, over the last decade, there has been a growing interest in the role of men and boys in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment for example, as led by FEMNET through the Regional Men to Men Programme, which focuses on educating men and boys on women's rights, including sexual and reproductive and health rights (SRHR), the consequences of early child marriages and other harmful cultural practices.

The achievement of gender equality is now seen as a societal responsibility that concerns and should fully engage ALL - women and men, girls and boys. The global commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women in the Beijing Platform for Action and other major international legal frameworks, including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women continue to accelerate efforts in this regards, and has continued to amplify the role of boys and men in achieving gender equality.

I believe gender equality is a way of life that must begin to be realized first in our homes, places of worship, in our markets, community barazaas, county dialogues and then cascade to the local, national, regional and global arenas. Then and only then, can the spirit and letter of real gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, everywhere, be a reality.

George Seko is a financial accountant, passionate about equality and social justice and currently working as an Accounts Assistant at FEMNET.

Corruption: the dragon that raids in the pockets, minds and on the bodies of women.

By Kalevera Imungu

The 30th African Union (AU) Summit kicked off on the 22nd of January 2018 at the headquarters of the pan-African bloc (in Addis Ababa) under the



theme "Winning the Fight against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation." Through FEMNET's support I was able to attend the GIMAC (Gender Is My Agenda Campaign) AU Pre-Summit that continued to keep in line with the main summit's theme (Corruption and Governance: Impact and way out for Women, Children and Youths). Over and above the very informative and profound

discussions that took place at the GIMAC meeting, one thing stood out to be true: **corruption has infiltrated every area of society and adversely affected women and girls above all other key populations.**

The rot of corruption has infiltrated the education sector, women's health care, public service delivery, the extractive industry, governance, electoral processes and led to poor service delivery including of sexual reproductive health services as well as forced and early marriage amongst other vices.

Another key learning for me was that African citizens need to be more aware of the fact that the corruption of our continent is not always a bribe exchanging hands. Forced marriage is the corruption of a woman's body and freedom, restrictive laws against safe abortion are the corruption of a woman's right to choice, female genital mutilation is the corruption of a woman's body and right to sexual pleasure while unfair labour practices are a corruption of women's right to equal pay and decent work. It is only when we begin to understand this that we can make more deliberate efforts at community and family level to ensure these and other harmful practices and laws do not find a space within the African narrative.

Another key component of the conversation at the GIMAC summit was the role of illicit financial flows (IFFs) in the systematic decline of the continents economy and the general welfare of its vulnerable populations. Contrary to common belief, corruption forms a rather small percentage of total IFFs. The majority of the USD 50 billion that Africa loses annually through IFFs is as a result of harmful tax practices by large corporations and trafficking activities within the continent. IFFs

compromise African government's ability to meet their financial obligations and as is the common story, social programmes that are largely needed by women, girls and the youth receive little to no funding. This cascade puts women and girls at greater risk for human trafficking which generates more IFFs and so the vicious cycle continues. This simple, panoramic view of the role of IFFs in the disempowerment of women and girls is a key first step to African governments and CSOs developing joint strategies to oblige multi-national corporations to pay taxes and amplify measures aimed at ending human and drug trafficking.

Conversely, it was encouraging to see the robust efforts of CSOs across the region aimed at countering the wide array of corrupt practices before the fact and the presence and participation of young women at this year's summit was also a cause for celebration. Be it Kadiatou Konate (Make Every Woman Count) from Guinea whose powerful presentation shook the room, Aurea Mouzinho (Ondjango feminista) from Angola whose passion for equitable development shines through her, Lorna Andisi (a FEMNET member) from Kenya whose use of her journalistic prowess shines a light on feminist gains and challenges or even myself (currently interning at FEMNET) and a disruptive feminist committed to improving the quality of women's lives financially and socially, the room was not at a shortage of young brilliant and unique minds.

In conclusion, it is my sincere hope that organizations such as FEMNET and others in the CSOs arena do not tire in lobbying for a better, inclusive continent for women and girls. That our words, fuelled by our passion

ignite an eternal flame and mould a corruption free future. We must collectively work together towards slaying and tackling the corruption dragon without fear!

Kalevera Imungu is a feminist, an advocate for women's rights and a gifted leader currently interning with FEMNET in the Advocacy Programme.

Change begins with ME!

By Olive Kabisa

As an individual, what comes to your mind when 'Women Rights and Gender Equality' flashes?



For me I'd imagine a group of women, always on a major street, shouting at the top of their voices about a recent violation of a woman's right. Their leader is with them and the journalists point their microphones towards her to speak. She speaks so powerfully, in commanding words that glue you to her as you listen to every single word that she utters.

Women rights and gender equality was just a discussion topic until I began working at FEMNET, last year in November. It made for a very good essay in English compositions back in high school. And in the university, when we would gather around a table with my friends and we'd discuss about some incidences about violation of women's rights such violence against women, we'd all say how

sorry we were for the particular victim. Feel pity. Probably laugh if we could manage to get a joke out of it. But it would end up as just that. A discussion.

In my head, revolving around my little world and just myself, I've always thought that it's only upon the NGOs (of which their existence is so little known) and the government to take care of such cases. I mean, how does it affect me and my little world of perfection that has no such cases? And in that case let 'them' take care of it. Or someone else out there... But not me. How selfish!

The last couple of months working with FEMNET, on advancing women's rights, has opened up my mind into realizing how little I've been doing on my part and preferring to leave the responsibilities to an NGO or the government.

My friend once told me that what you don't know won't hurt you but even then, what you don't know will also cost you. There is still so much ignorance and lack of action in Kenya and the African continent at large. With me as a classic example.

Apart from discussing about that guy who senselessly batters one of your girlfriends behind her back or with her, what are you doing to speak out and act on such an injustice as an individual? Because even if your girlfriend will be smart and leave the said boyfriend, what about the next girlfriend he sets his violent hands on? And what about that recording that's doing the rounds on social media about 'how she's tired- nimechoka' that you are laughing at? Are you also joining in the joke, unconsciously forgetting that this is a lady who is saying 'NO' but the partner won't take into account her refusal making it rape?

We can't all honestly wait for the government or women's rights organizations to come and solve these problems that we as individuals can.

This year, let's make at least one firm resolution to not only just talk about it but

also act on it! Because this year FAM, it's time to stay #woke!

Olive Kabisa is a fun-loving girl who likes simple things in life and is currently a bilingual (English and French) intern at FEMNET.

4. E-Resources

Click on these links to read and share these resources by FEMNET.



[Pan-African Women's Conference on 2030 Agenda and Africa Agenda 2063 – Summary Report](#)



[Factsheet: What are the Gender Dimensions of IFFs?](#)

We would love to hear from you! Please send your contributions, comments and suggestions to: library@femnet.or.ke and/or communication@femnet.or.ke

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