



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



## #CSW62 in Brief

The [62<sup>nd</sup> Session on the UN Commission on the Status of Women \(CSW62\)](#) held in New York from 12<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2018 culminated in the [Agreed Conclusions](#) – a set of concrete recommendations to be implemented by governments at the international, regional, national and local level – and which **women's rights organizations we will use to hold policymakers to account in order to move the commitments from paper to reality!** The CSW62 this year has been heralded by gender equality advocates as progressive – with the adoption of the [Agreed Conclusions](#) by UN Member States, recalling the disappointment of no agreed conclusions being arrived at in 2012 when a similar theme was under review focusing on women and girls living in rural communities – i.e. *“the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges.”*

FEMNET members and secretariat staff participating at the CSW62 leveraged on the [African Women's CSW62 Advocacy Position & Policy Recommendations](#) co-created during the [Pre-CSW62 Africa Regional Strategy Meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia](#) to strategically lobby and influence the discussions and final outcome. Check out the **blogs** [FEMNET's #CSW62 ReelFeel; Reflecting on the CSW62 Agreed Conclusions: Tracing African feminists footprints prior to and during #CSW62](#) and curated conversations on the twitter **hashtag** [#CSW62Africa](#); View [Photos](#) and **Media articles:** [Campaigners take on US embassies for denying women visas](#); [Standing ovation for Kenyan woman's speech in New York](#); and [Young women call for open dialogue on issues affecting them](#).



African Women's Position & Policy Recommendations at CSW62

“Frame women’s economic empowerment and justice to include their access to and control over economic resources such as land, access to decent work, control over their own time and meaningful participation in economic decision-making at all levels not just at micro but also macro levels from the household to international institutions and policy spaces.”

#CSW62Africa

African Women's Position & Policy Recommendations at CSW62

“Establish alternative national models of women’s livelihood which recognizes the intersectionality of issues for women living in rural areas and respects the indivisibility of their rights, in particular the intersectionality of unpaid care work, violence against women, agroecology, market access and women’s economic empowerment.”

#CSW62Africa

## Dinah Musindarwezo is Moving On!

After being FEMNET's Executive Director in the last 6 years, Dinah Musindarwezo is moving on!

A bold feminist with an unmatched level of expertise on gender equality and development issues, Dinah has been an incredible team member and we will definitely miss her – even as we look forward to connecting with her within the women's movement space .

As the *Feminist-In-Chief*, managing the day-to-day running of the organization, Dinah was always on the move, working tirelessly with the team at the Secretariat, members and partners to ensure that FEMNET was effectively and efficiently working towards her vision of an African society where gender equality is achieved and women and girls enjoy their rights and live in dignity. Her deep passion for women's empowerment, gender justice and equal rights for all was evident throughout her tenure at FEMNET. Dinah has emerged as a forceful opinion leader shaping the women's rights narrative through the mainstream and social media platforms.

Her stellar leadership, open-mindedness and her poignant words will forever remain in our hearts and FEMNET is truly grateful for her assiduous efforts for the cause.

In the words of Dinah, "as feminists, we all have a role to play in making change happen in line with transforming and dismantling patriarchal beliefs and norms" so we say Aluta Continua Dinah! FEMNET wishes you nothing but joy, success and blessings in your next journey and we know in you we have an avid advocate for women's rights.

FEMNET deeply appreciates Dinah's stellar leadership through the highs and lows of FEMNET and wishes her lot's of blessings!

Dinah can now be reached on email [dinah.musinda@gmail.com](mailto:dinah.musinda@gmail.com)



"I am leaving FEMNET but I am not leaving the struggle for a better world and definitely not the women's movement."



# International Women's Day

March every year, presents us an opportunity to celebrate the International Women's Day. Yes, there has been progress in advancing women's rights and women's empowerment - but this progress has been too slow in many fronts, pointing to the need for continued and deliberate interventions to resist gender discrimination and keep [#PressingForProgress](#) in all spaces, in all levels.

FEMNET's Executive Director joined Kenya's NTV's Morning Show where she boldly called on Kenya's President to lead by example for instance in enforcing the two-thirds gender principle in appointing women Cabinet Secretaries as per the Constitution. [Click here to WATCH the conversation.](#)



## Holding African Leaders Accountable to fulfilling Obligations and Commitments to Women's Rights to their Bodily Autonomy & Integrity

On 8<sup>th</sup> March, FEMNET in close partnership with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) – through the Embassy of Sweden in Lusaka, Zambia launched a four-year programme strategic partnership that aims at strengthening women's voices in influencing policies and decisions affecting them at the national, regional and global levels as well as facilitating women's leadership in policy influencing and advancing their rights to their bodily autonomy and integrity. Specifically, the programme will also focus on advocating for access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), prioritizing on ending female genital mutilation, access to safe and legal abortion and ending child and forced marriages in six target countries in four sub-regions of Africa including Zambia and Mozambique in Southern Africa, Tanzania and Rwanda in Eastern Africa and, Liberia and Guinea Conakry in Western Africa. For more information reach out to FEMNET's Head of Programmes on email [progmanager@femnet.or.ke](mailto:progmanager@femnet.or.ke)



# Young Women are Standing Up to be Counted!

FEMNET has been intentional in strengthening the capacities of young women towards harnessing concerted advocacy and communication efforts and consolidating their input into national, regional and global advocacy efforts. Through the *'Young Women Stand Up Be Counted'* project whose focus countries include:- Kenya, Mozambique and Guinea Conakry – FEMNET has initiated



dialogues, built cross-national coalitions, engaged media and leveraged on the power of social media, sports and art to mobilize and facilitate young women's informed, effective and strategic input and engagement. To date, over 150 young women have participated in SRHR trainings in Mozambique, Kenya and Guinea Conakry resulting in enhanced capacities in policy advocacy, communication and leveraging social media to advocate for the elimination of female genital mutilation and child, early forced marriages. These trained and passionate advocates continue to boldly articulate their [SRHR advocacy priorities for legislation & programming](#) and [ways to continue supporting each other's work](#) moving forward and unprecedented online presence through blogs including:-

- [#YoungWomenSay: Join our #SRHRDialogues & lets chat about Young Women & Access to Contraceptives](#)
- [Strengthening Young African Women's Movements and their role in Ending FGM and Child, Early & Forced Marriages](#)
- [Spelling out and defining the gender dynamics within the #DemographicDividend discourse](#)
- [Engendering the Demographic Dividend Discourse](#)

In addition, the project has provided pathways for linking young women with access to platforms for professional growth, access to policy and decision making platforms and strengthened young women movements. Some of the platforms include; African Union Summits, Commission on Population and Development, Commission on Status of women, Global Media forum and we applaud one of the alumni who is now the FRIDA girl advisor for sub Saharan Africa. The [Young Women and Demographic Dividend advocacy brief](#) provides a nuanced gender and human rights analysis of the demographic dividend discourse. The analysis is pegged on contributing to the technical enrichment of the concept but also clearly outline the priorities and investment pathways for African governments to leverage towards realization of demographic dividend.

*For more information on the Stand Up to Be Counted Project, reach out to Catherine Nyambura, Advocacy Officer, FEMNET ([prog-associate@femnet.or.ke](mailto:prog-associate@femnet.or.ke)) who has been programme lead for the project.*

## Inter-Gender Community Dialogues on Ending GBV

FEMNET continues to engage men and boys to end gender-based violence and promote sexual violence-free environment for women and girls in tea estates and smallholder farmers in Kericho and Bomet counties. To date, the project dubbed “Wanaume Changamukia Haki -HeForShe Men and Boys” has enhanced the

capacities of over 5,000 men and boys in ending gender based violence the two counties. A team of male gender equality champions are deconstructing gender stereotypes and challenging the normalization of sexual harassment and gender-based violence and other negative social norms amongst their peers in their communities. In February 2018, FEMNET’s Men to Men Regional Programme, organized two inter-gender dialogues to spark conversations around gender equality and women’s rights and ways to sustain cross-generational community interest and action against sexual harassment and gender-based violence.



*For more information on the Men to Men Engagement and Strategy, reach out to Kennedy Otina, Programme Associate, FEMNET ([mentomen@femnet.or.ke](mailto:mentomen@femnet.or.ke)) who has been programme lead for the project.*

## Young FEMNET Power!

### Wakanda: The Femologics of it All

*“... we see ourselves better, when we see ourselves in someone else.” – Lupita Nyong’o.*

Currently the 5<sup>th</sup> highest earning film of all time (not accounting for inflation), Black Panther has become a cultural phenomenon in a way no one could have predicted. This movie, this experience, this phenomenon has burrowed through and planted itself firmly in the hearts of African Americans and Africans all over the globe. Black Panther is no ordinary Marvel movie. It has become the ember by which the new African uprising may start.



Black Panther presents a visual narrative that has never been seen before, aside from Nollywood movies and our other notable African works of film, Hollywood has never presented a cast almost fully

composed of black African American and African actors for a movie of this scale. Just the hype leading up to the release of Black Panther was akin to the unmistakable rumble of the clouds before a storm.

Among the many themes of discussion that Black Panther dissects is feminism. Black Panther is infused with so much Black Girl Magic that it was a struggle for me not to wake up out of my seat cheering some of the scenes that showed women, African women operating with full agency and strength.

If you haven't watched the movie, you absolutely should but without giving too much away, Black Panther is based in Wakanda- a technologically and ideologically advanced African nation that has never been colonized. Wakanda is rich in mineral wealth and its most valuable mineral is the metal vibranium that is used to form all of its weapons and implements. The incoming king of Wakanda, T'Challa (Chadwick Boseman) is the main protagonist of the story and alongside Nakia (Lupita Nyong'o), a spy who also plays his love interest and Okoye (Danai Gurira), the highest ranking military general in Wakanda, they face the task of trying to retrieve a Wakandan artifact made of vibranium and the story takes some very interesting turns thereafter.

Femologically speaking, Black Panther represents a changed narrative for women on the big screen. The main women in the story are Nakia and Okoye, Shuri who plays a tech savvy young woman and the new king's sister and Ramonda, the Queen and T'challa's mother. The beauty in Black Panther begins with the fact that the women depicted in the film are the ones who do the saving and a lot of the fighting as the *Dora Milaje*, with full capability. There are no damsels in distress in this movie, no undeveloped female characters who are just there to serve as eye candy, not a single woman in the film is depicted merely as a sex object and her body used to commodify her.

The women of Wakanda pass the Bechdel test, the women of Wakanda do not feel the need to apologize for any aspect of their femininity and blackness, they wear their natural hair proud and live their lives free of the assault of modern "beauty standards". The women of Wakanda are not pitted against each other, they do not dwarf each other, they are successful in STEM, in the military as the principle protectors of their territory and in leadership as exemplified in the character of Ramonda. **The power the women of Wakanda operate in is not as a result of tokenism, it is earned and they operate in it with full agency.**

Freedom of choice is another underlying theme in the production in the sense that even toward the very end of the story, Nakia does not abandon her life's passion and ambition to follow the traditional narrative we are used to where women abandon all of themselves for the good of others and often to their personal detriment. Okoye chooses to fight and stay true to her sense of duty even in the face of personal struggle.

Wakanda depicts an uncolonized society that is aspirational to all of us. It is a society open to forward movement and one that paints the picture of the product of a people that are not dictated by the gender binary. It is clear through this representation that sexism is learnt and in no way innate to us as human beings. The role of imagery and representation comes through clearly in this film. It is evident that imagery informs our perception of a people and imbues us with a sense of hope that we can be

what we see and even greater. Wonder Woman and now Black Panther, are movies that have all but shattered our perceptions of female characters and the potential of women and it's about time!

For African Americans mostly as well as other disenfranchised people, Black Panther addresses identity politics and agency. It touches on the exploitation of Africa's mineral wealth and the assault on the African continent as a result of colonialism. From the museum scene in the film, conversation has been sparked up once more around the rightful place of African artifacts that hang in European museums, products of what was often violent theft and culture-drain. It addresses the unfair incarceration and gun violence young black men in America face and offers possible solutions within its storyline.

**While we will never know what it would be like if Africa was never colonized, even though Wakanda in all its splendor may only be a happy place we go to in our minds and in this Marvel film... we can devote our efforts to re-moulding a society built on the foundation of equality, respect for sovereignty and held together by the fabric of feminism.**

**WAKANDA FOREVER!**

*Written by Kalevera Imungu is a feminist and passionate advocate for women's rights, currently interning with FEMNET in the Advocacy Programme.*

## Opportunities

### **Apply for the African Changemakers Fellowship**

**Deadline: 30<sup>th</sup> April 2018**

African Changemakers Fellowship (#ACFellowship) Program that will run from August, 2018 – September, 2018 selects impressive African visionaries between ages 25-40 to train and empower them to change their communities positively across Africa and beyond. These committed changemakers know best how to transform businesses and their communities' social issues. The Fellowship Program seeks to develop African leadership and entrepreneurial skills through training, mentorship, collaboration and a connected network to a global changemakers. *To read more and apply – click [here](#) and [here](#)*

### **Call for Papers: Overcoming Inequalities in a Fractured World: Between Elite Power and Social Mobilization**

**Deadline: 20<sup>th</sup> April 2018**

Inequalities are one of today's greatest challenges, obstructing poverty reduction and sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development seeks to overcome such disparities, "leaving no one behind". But how can this ambitious vision be achieved in the current climate, in which those in power act to protect the status quo from which they benefit? How can we build progressive alliances to drive the political and policy changes needed for an equitable, inclusive 21st century eco-social compact? *To read more and apply – click [here](#)*



## Call to Action

### Are you a girls' and women's rights advocate? Here's an Opportunity to Share your views on the Global Advocates Survey

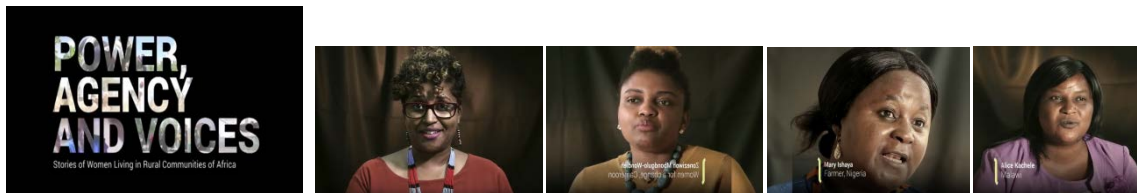
[Equal Measures 2030](#) invites gender equality advocates to contribute and share their responses to this [Global Advocates Survey](#) in order to better understand how advocates across sectors understand and relate to measuring and tracking progress on gender equality and the role of data and evidence (or its absence) in their work. The findings of this survey will be used to better understand the perceptions and behaviours of gender equality advocates, especially in relation to current progress toward gender equality, information needs, and use of data and evidence for advocacy. It will inform the design and work of Equal Measures 2030 and its partners and the results will be compiled, analyzed and shared in Autumn 2018.

Feel free to share the [Global Advocates Survey](#) with other gender equality advocates and champions from women's rights organizations, civil society, government, private sector across the globe.

*Equal Measures 2030 is an independent civil society and private sector-led partnership that connects data and evidence with advocacy and action in order to fuel progress towards gender equality and guide efforts to reach the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. FEMNET is one of the Equal Measures 2030 Partners.*

## E-Resources

### WATCH Documentary: #CSW62Africa - Lived Realities & Experiences of Africa Women Living in Rural Communities



As African women, *"we want to own the land, we want to make decisions, we want to be equal!"* As representatives of Member States, UN entities, and ECOSOC-accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from all regions of the world convened in New York for the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62) - from 12th to 23rd March 2018, African women candidly highlighted their lived realities and experiences focusing on the priority theme reviewed *"Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls"* [Click here to Watch Documentary](#)

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

Engage with us: [Website](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)

Copyright ©2018 FEMNET. All Rights Reserved