



The African Women's Development and Communication Network

Press Statement / 17th February 2020

Availability of Data is crucial in the implementation of SDGs 2030

Nairobi/17th Feb: If there are no statistics or data to present the actual reality to the gaps of gender inequalities in Africa then women and girls will continue to be disadvantaged and countries may not realize the full implementation of the SDGs2030.

The African Women's Development and Communications Network (FEMNET) is urging for the deliberate infusion of data driven advocacy and approaches by governments and all stakeholders if they are indeed keen to transform the lives of women and girls in Africa.

"Unless we embrace the data revolution; unless we count what needs to be transformed and account for all who have never been accounted for then we will always be speaking from a point of no-evidence at all!" said FEMNET Executive Director Memory Kachambwa. "Data is profoundly political. All resource allocation and distribution is pegged on data – without data, issues relating to women and girls will not count".

FEMNET in partnership with Uganda-based organization The Forum For Women in Democracy (FOWODE) and Kenyan organization GROOTS are this week convening participants from twelve African countries to thoroughly analyze the of Data-Driven Advocacy in contextualizing the impact of the SDG2030 and in particular in closing the gaps on gender equality.

The countries participating in this forum are; *Uganda, Malawi, Tunisia, Zambia, Liberia, Mozambique, Senegal, Guinea Conakry, Tanzania, Mali, Rwanda & Kenya.*

What is not counted cannot be accounted for!

Over the 32 years of her existence, FEMNET has learned that government policies in Africa are failing women and girls primarily because of lack of availability of data to drive impact and positive change for women and girls in Africa.

“We cannot emphasize enough just how political and necessary data is in transforming lives in Africa. Data helps those who are invisible, visible. It may direct attention to crises which powerful actors may prefer remains hidden; this is what prevents women and girls from being counted and therefore accounted for. Their lives can never transform unless they are counted. What is not counted cannot be accounted for and what is accounted for must count for women and girls!” Adds Ms. Memory.

Globally, data analysis is widely streamlined within the sustainable development goals with the deliberate hindsight to **“leave no one behind”**. Because of lack of data analysis, communities that have been largely marginalized and forgotten such as women living with disabilities, sexual minorities and people from indigenous communities are often left behind in processes that reinforce inequalities.

It is also important to form the conversation on the definition of data to be collected and analyzed. If Africa’s women’s rights organizations do not define what ought to be counted, for example pushing for the voices of minorities and the multiple layers of discrimination e.g women with disabilities living in poor areas and lacking in the basic necessities of living.

In this regard, data representing this group of women must indeed capture the different layers of discrimination as presented.

In 2018, the global partnership [Equal Measures 2030](#) that encompasses global civil society organizations and private sector released a survey report of over 600 gender advocates of which 89% agreed that a break-through in SDG progress on the most disadvantaged girls and women would not be possible without relevant data.

The survey also revealed that women's rights organizations lack sufficient funding and expertise to effectively utilize data, which can be a barrier to the success of their advocacy efforts.

(*Please see attached the latest 2019 SDGs Gender Index by Equal Measures 2030 that gives a clear data indication on the processes of implementation in Sub Saharan Africa.)

Data is extremely important in the implementation process.

During the 1st Pan African Women's rights conference on SDGs hosted by FEMNET in 2017 under the theme; ["Safeguarding Our Gains: African Women Collective Action on Defining the Pathway to Achieve 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development \(SDGs\) & Africa Agenda 2063,](#) over 200 women's rights organizations, policy makers, high level government officials and other stakeholders produced a communiqué that reinforced the urgency for Data analysis in effective gender equality processes.

The Conference Identified **Gender data and budgetary allocation** for gender equality and women's empowerment as key pillars for ensuring that SDGs leave no woman behind needs a thorough data revolution within it even more than ever.

Data advocacy is therefore the catalyzing strategy for change that When more and better data on the lived realities of women and girls are in the hands of women-led civil society, and When they have the resources and skills to use that data and evidence, opportunities for real changes in law, policies and budget allocations on gender equality follow.

FEMNET in this data-driven advocacy process is keen to unpack the data analysis mentality towards an impactful focus that has meaningful data dynamics that works to the benefit of Africa's women and girls.

"Data is not only picked as is. We must ask deeper questions like "who is collecting and curating the data? How is the data going to be used and by whom? Data is very important. Data actually has the power to shift the numbers through resource allocation. We cannot convince anyone to budget where there is no data that demands that budgetary allocation" Said Memory Kachambwa.

The data-driven advocacy forum is taking into consideration some key concerns that will be instrumental in driving change:-

This project therefore pursues change guided by three key fundamental ingredients

1. **Strong local partners with broad access to women's groups to build the capacity of, support and inspire action by their members.**

Facilitating women-led civil society across Africa, but especially in Kenya and Uganda, to have more and better data on the lived realities of girls and women;

2. **Data for advocacy tools that are customized to local context and aggregated gender data that can easily be visualized by the data advocates is a key element as it forms the basis upon which the advocacy plans will be developed.** Therefore advocates will have the power, capability and resilience to use that data and evidence to influence real changes in law, policies and budget allocations that will improve gender equality.
3. **Cultivation of collective learning and action at regional and global scales.** Sharing of information and learning and capacity building. The “pass it on” effect of the trainings and access to tools grows a stronger network of engaged, confident and active women across 12 countries, linking to regional and global learnings.
4. All these must be **guided by inclusion principles to** ensure there is a deliberate emphasis on working with women living with disability in the co-creation and implementation of this project whilst also ensuring that data on disability is integrated throughout the program.

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About FEMNET:

*The African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) is a pan- African, feminist and membership-based network based in Nairobi with over 600 members across 48 African countries. **FEMNET envisions an African society where gender equality is achieved and women and girls enjoy all their rights and live in dignity.** 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.*

*Since inception in 1988, **FEMNET has strategically positioned herself as a convenor, organizer and facilitator on dialogues around critical issues** including women's involvement in governance and leadership, promoting women's economic justice, advocating for women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, ending gender-based violence and harmful practices (such as female genital mutilation and child marriage) and strengthening the women's movement in Africa.*

