

Women Must LEAD!

A Policy Dialogue for Women's Political Participation in Kenya

#WomenMustLead



The African Women's Development and Communication Network

In partnership with



FAWE Forum for African Women Educationalists
Forum des éducatrices africaines



Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar
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A Report on the Policy Dialogue for Women's Political Participation in Kenya

Venue: Sarova Panafric Hotel

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Acronyms

FEMNET - The African Women's Development and Communication Network

KEWOPA - Kenya Women Parliamentary Association

International-IDEA – International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

WLSA – Women and Law in South Africa

IFAN- Gender Lab

FAWE - Forum for African Women Educationalists

PADARE – Men's Forum of Gender

AU- African Union

COMESA - The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

EAC - East African Community

REC - Regional Economic Community

NARC Kenya - National Rainbow Coalition - Kenya

FIDA - Federation of Women Lawyers

CRAWN - Trust - Community Advocacy and Awareness Trust

The Meeting started at 10am with the Kenyan national anthem with colleagues in Kenya and others who joined the meeting virtually through Zoom.

The conference moderator, Mildred Ngesa, kicked off the meeting by asking the participants to join in the national anthem.

Briefing on COVID-19 Safety measures by Sarova Panafric Hotel

Justus Kioko from Sarova Panafric began the meeting by giving a welcome speech. He is in charge of security at Panafric Sarova Hotel. Thanked the group for supporting them at this time of COVID when businesses have gone down. He apologized for the inconvenience brought on by COVID-19 and having to social distance all participants. He noted they observed all protocols as concerns COVID-19 and encouraged participants to follow the government protocols of wearing masks properly, use provided sanitizers and social distance. He shared that the conference rooms are disinfected immediately participants finish their meetings. Adequate security had been put in place to ensure the safety of all attendants. All staff at the hotel had been tested and found medically fit to serve clients.

Introduction by Mildred Ngesa



Mildred Ngesa – Moderator

Mildred noted that FEMNET with her partners International IDEA and other Kenyan partners like KEWOPA were spearheading the **Women Must Lead project**. She noted that without the

women’s participation in Kenya, politics would go nowhere. FEMNET is 32 years old and works in 47 African countries. It is a truly pan-African network which understands the opportunities and challenges Africa faces in pushing for the equality and justice agenda.

She acknowledged those that were joining virtually on Zoom especially from six other countries include Kenya and Ethiopia. Two of the panelists Prof. Adebayo Olukoshi from International IDEA and Hon Martha Karua, the party leader of NARC, were part of the team that joined the meeting on Zoom. Mildred gave the social media hashtag of the day **#WomenMustLead**. This she said, was an affirmation and statement that had many dimensions of women’s leadership.

Memory Kachambwa – Executive Director – FEMNET

Welcome Remarks



Memory Kachambwa making her welcome remarks

Memory began by acknowledging and thanking all panelists and participants who had taken their time to be at the meeting. She posed a question to the participants asking them, “*What does Kenyan women have to celebrate exactly 10 years since the promulgation of the new constitution?*”. She noted that since the promulgation of the new constitution, women celebrated gains such as equal representation, gains which are now being eroded, ignored and replaced with self-serving interests. She urged the women leaders to be vigilant especially with the rising calls for the amendment of the constitution. Coming from Zimbabwe, she shared that they borrowed heavily from the Kenyan constitution as they did theirs in 2018.

Memory shared that the project that had brought the participants together was the Women’s Political Participation Project whose title was “*Enhancing the inclusion of Women in Political Participation in Africa.*” The overarching objective of the project is to contribute to the

enhancement of women's political participation in Africa with a view to advancing the goal of gender equality in politics and governance.

She shared that the project had five specific objectives which are:

- I. Contribute to an increase in the voice and presence of women in all domestic political processes and institutions in Africa at the different levels at which they exist.
- II. Step up advocacy for and expand awareness towards increased demands for the inclusion of women at all levels of local/sub-national and national political participation and decision-making.
- III. Enhance the capacity of local and national women's organizations, groupings, networks, and mobilisers, community activists, elected female office holders, and others to engage, negotiate, and forge alliances, advocate, and campaign for change in favor of women's greater political participation.
- IV. Work with key institutions of democratic governance such as political parties, parliaments, the media, etc. to build constituencies, alliances, norms, templates, and targets for reform and change towards greater women's political participation.
- V. Generate and share new research knowledge to serve the goals of policy and political reform, capacity enhancement, and advocacy that will be pursued.

The partners in this project are:

- 1) Gender Links
- 2) FEMNET
- 3) WLSA
- 4) IFAN –Gender Lab
- 5) FAWE
- 6) PADARE

I-IDEA will provide project leadership and coordination, lead on regional activities and report to the donor.

The countries and/or regions that are covered by the project are:

Africa: Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

- ❖ Botswana – Gender Links
- ❖ Democratic Republic of Congo – FEMNET
- ❖ Eswatini – WLSA
- ❖ Cote d'Ivoire – IFAN-Gender Lab
- ❖ Kenya – FEMNET/FAWE
- ❖ Senegal – IFAN-Gender Lab
- ❖ Tanzania – FEMNET
- ❖ Zimbabwe - PADARE

FEMNET's objective in the project is to increase the quantity and quality of Women's Political Participation in the DRC, Kenya and Tanzania.

Memory shared that FEMNET will be focusing on three countries for the implementation of the project. The countries are Kenya, DRC and Tanzania. FEMNET will also convene a regional activity that will incorporate all 8 countries within the project. It was noted that the project has a timeline of three years starting from 1st October 2019 to 31st October 2022.

FEMNET's activities within the project in three countries are:

DRC Activities

- 1) Situational Research and Analysis on WPP for country specific paper
- 2) Hosting of Semi-Annual Regional WPP Academy on Rotational Basis
- 3) Country-Specific Policy Briefs
- 4) Thematic Dialogue Sessions with Parliament and Election Management Bodies

Kenya Activities

- 1) Thematic Dialogue Sessions with Parliament and Election Management Bodies
- 2) Political Party Policy Dialogue Sessions on WPP
- 3) Cross-Generational Thematic Capacity Sessions for Women Leaders and Youth Activists

Tanzania Activities

- 1) Hosting of Semi-Annual Regional WPP Academy on Rotational Basis
- 2) Political Party Policy Dialogue Sessions on WPP
- 3) Cross-Generational Thematic Capacity Sessions for Women Leaders and Youth Activists
- 4) Thematic Dialogue Sessions with Parliament and Election Management Bodies

Regional Activities will include:

Peer to peer sessions for women's Grassroots organizations and Networks

Engagement with EAC and COMESA

- ❖ Thematic Dialogue Sessions with RECs and Engagement with the AU – COMESA
- ❖ Thematic Dialogue Sessions with RECs and Engagement with the AU – EAC

Memory ended her welcome speech by wishing all the participants a fruitful deliberation.

Professor Adebayo Alukoshi – International-IDEA

Why Women's Political Participation is Crucial for Kenya and Africa

Prof Alukoshi noted that he was very delighted on behalf of IDEA to be part of the meeting. He recognized that it was almost impossible to organize this meeting seeing that there is a pandemic

and that some countries are still on lockdown. He however noted that in spite of the pandemic, they will continue to find safe ways to continue to engage each other on important matters.

10 years of Kenyan constitution has been celebrated around the world as the best arrangement. Even as we mark this anniversary it was unfolded in the context of Africa's own democratization which resulted in the end of military rule in our continent, at least in most places and ushered multiparty electoral politics.

It has not always been a perfect journey. There have been setbacks in the journey towards an inclusive and democratization of our continent. The road that has been traveled has been a progressive one where we have seen governance adapt competitive politics even as the struggle of a democratized continent. The Kenyan constitution is one of the most advanced in the world that gives women immense political participation. The other country is Rwanda who are regarded to have the most effected and expanded participation in the continent. There are other six or seven countries in Africa that are regarded to have a high consideration for women leadership. The progress needs to be celebrated but also ensure that the consortium works towards bringing new ideas. He noted that participation of women in political parties cannot be given on a platter, women must fight for it. It is a struggle.

Hon Gathoni Wa Muchomba – Kiambu Women Rep and Chairperson - KEWOPA



Hon Gathoni Wa Muchomba
addressing the participants

Hon Gathoni Wa Muchomba began by appreciating FEMNET for convening the forum and KEWOPA whom she was representing. She shared with the participants that represents the people of Kiambu where she covers 12 constituencies. She added that Friday is the political day for most politicians who return to their constituencies, hence the reason why most politicians were not available.

She appreciated the women leaders who had gone ahead of them and in the process sacrificed their families to ensure Kenyan women were where they are. She picked out Prof Wanjiku Kabira and Hon Martha who she noted were trailblazers in the women's movement in Kenya.

She noted women must lead and lead from the forefront and do what it pertains to do that, stating "I pride myself with the rebirth of women movement in Kenya. What the women leaders of Kenya can do is to keep the fire burning." She informed the meeting that KEWOPA was started by three members of parliament and has grown to accommodate 95 Members of Parliament. This number includes both the Senate and National Assembly. During the formation of the 8th Parliament KEWOPA has had 9 members and has been growing. In the 12th Parliament it grew gradually to 97 members. The current membership comprises of 23 Single Constituency Members, 47 County Women Members, 3 elected Senators, 6 Nominated Members of National Assembly and 18 Nominated Senators.

Hon Wa Muchomba pointed out that KEWOPA had contributed to the realization of family Bills which included the Marriage Act 2014, the Matrimonial Property Act 2013 and the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act. Other key pieces of legislations that they contributed to were the Prohibition of FGM, Sexual Offences Act, Access to Information Act among others. KEWOPA has also played a major part in the push for a two thirds gender principle as proposed by the Constitutional Amendment Bills in 2015 and recently in 2018 and 2019. Despite all their efforts, this bill principle is yet to be implemented.

She noted that as the Bill came up for voting in Parliament, they had engaged in different activities as they negotiated and bargained with the male counterparts to support the Bill. But when the time came, their male counterparts did not support them. They felt lied to and cheated. This led them to ask themselves, if they had packaged the two thirds gender principle in the right way. Did they have political goodwill and was it the right time? She noted that their male counterparts keep telling them that the gender rule is a progressive issue and that soon it will be implemented.

She noted that even though their efforts to push this Bill had not yet born any fruits, in 2017 more women entered parliament than ever before. For the first time, women became governors and senators, three in each office. More women were elected in the national and county assemblies. 23 members of the national assembly in 2017 versus 16 in 2013 and 96 members of the county assemblies in 2017 versus 82 in 2013. It was however noted that in the Senate and National Assembly, women hold few leadership positions in either body, such as committee chairs or speaker positions, and have been unable to breakthrough into significant committee assignments or other influential positions.

There are challenges that face women in elective politics. To ensure that women actually lead practically, she urged the participants to ensure they get:

- ❖ Political party support from their various political parties. Women needed to get support from the political parties.
- ❖ Skills training of women candidates.
- ❖ Negotiated democracy.
- ❖ Media to cover women candidates in a positive way.

- ❖ Facilitate financial resources to help women run their campaigns.
- ❖ Provide frameworks that are going to discourage violence against women in elections to be stopped. This didn't matter whether it was physical, psychological, sexual or economic.
- ❖ Provide frameworks that discourage cultures and traditional gender roles that discourage women from taking political office.
- ❖ Encourage political networks that give women a platform so campaign and publicize their manifestos.

Hon Wa Muchomba encouraged the participants to discourage patrilineal politics, where power is basically handed from father to son and instead to also embrace matrilineal politics where power goes from a mother to a daughter. She urged the participants to make it practical as they say Women Must Lead by eliminating obstacles that cause women not to lead.

She ended by quoting Antoinette Elizabeth Taylor who helped fight for the right of women to vote in the United States. In Kenya, she recognized Hon Martha Karua and Hon Justice Njoki Ndung'u. She also quoted the late Nelson Mandela, saying *“women never lose campaigns, instead they learn new strategies for future winnings.”*



She believes that women have not lost the battle in the two thirds gender rule, instead they had acquired better skills that will help them win tomorrow.

Hon Martha Karua – NARC Party Leader / Former Presidential Candidate

Redefining Women’s Solidarity in Political Participation



Hon Martha Karua speaking to the participants

Hon Martha Karua began by pointing out that the three arms of government are not compliant to the two thirds gender rule. The Supreme Court has two women against five men. The Judiciary is non-compliant. The Executive arm of government is also not compliant to the two thirds gender rule and so are the parastatals. The parliament, both the national assembly and senate are also not compliant. The county government governments have also not complied. The Constitution is clear on how to enforce this two thirds gender rule. Out of the 47 counties in Kenya, only eight county assemblies are compliant. 39 of those counties have not complied.

She noted that without solidarity they, women politicians and leaders, will not be able to push their agenda. Solidarity has been defined as unity or agreement of feeling or action especially among individuals with a common interest. It is also mutual support within a group. This is based on the Free Dictionary found online. Wikipedia defines solidarity as an awareness of shared interests, objectives, standards, and sympathies creating a psychological sense of unity of groups or classes. It refers to the ties in a society that bind people together as one.

As we seek solidarity as women, we must remember that we are raised in patriarchal system. It is a system that gives privileged to our male counterparts. It prioritizes our brothers over sisters and it becomes the “normal”. Each of us must raise our awareness. Being raised in a patriarchal society makes being discriminated seem normal.

Hon Martha shared a personal experience where she was invited to join a business and professional women’s club when she first started working as a Magistrate. They did the invite in writing. She didn’t respond to them. She shared she had been raised to look down on everything to do with women’s groups. She believed women just met to gossip. Within 6 years of getting employed, she decided to go into private practice and then joined to become a member of Law Society of Kenya. It is that activism as a lawyer within the nation that she noticed women were treated differently. She then joined FIDA and afterwards made a trip to Uganda. She found the women very organized

and came back fully conscious about the discrimination in the society. She became conscious of her being blind to the double standards applied to women in this society. That was her journey of self-discovery.

She encouraged women to stand in solidarity with each other in order to leverage on their numbers to complete the journey. She has noticed how standing together has allowed Kenyan women to make gains. Her first time in parliament was during the IPPG (Inter-Parties Parliamentary Group) meeting in 1997. Out of the 186 members in parliament, only 6 were women. What helped them was that they worked with women's political caucus groups outside of parliament that had been created by the women's movement. They were not seen as six members but as the voices of women. They were able to bring in slots that passed in parliament saying all the nominated slots, had to have gender parity. That introduced nominated female members countrywide. In parliament they got five seats out of twelve.

Standing in solidarity helped women to make the gains they have in the Constitution. In 2010 women stood with unity of purpose and were able to make the gains we have now. Standing together made women's voices count. Hon Martha noted that there is a high attrition rate in parliament. Adding that parliament has 80% of new members in every house. Continuous awareness on gender equality must be done. She encouraged all participants to familiarize themselves with Her-story instead of just History, since this helps individuals to know where they are coming from. When women connect with the struggles of the women of yesterday, they become stronger for the future. During Hillary Clinton's time they were hard on her. A man with a criminal record with conviction was elected sooner than a woman with great credentials.

She shared that when she first vied for a seat, the men who were competing with her would meet and say they would rather lose to a fellow man but not to her. She noticed that women were pushed out of the political party nominations. They were denied nominations to winnable seats. She noted that discrimination against women is high in political parties. It is also seen in the parliament committees which have 20 committees. She wondered why parliament can't have those committees' leadership split in two and have women lead in 10 of them. If women stood together and speak with one voice, political parties will recognize them because they know they can't do without women. It is the women who lead campaigns

Hon Martha said that women groups that had political leanings like Inua mama groups were important, because political parties recognized that women were articulate when it came to organizing campaigns. Its two years to the elections in Kenya. Women leaders should demand that their parties nominate them to winnable seats. This is something that is done for the men, why not women?

Real Speak



Hon. Getrude Musuruve



Hon. Dennitah Ghati



Hon. Zulekha Hassan



Hon. Sofia Abdi



Hon. Jacqueline Oduol



Hon. Waithera Chege

Key issues hindering the realization of the meaningful women's political participation in Kenya were the focus. These issues were shared by the participants as they registered for the meeting.

***Fear** of getting into the elections

***Violence and intimidation** during campaign period. Must women face intimidation?

***Lack of finances to facilitate the election campaign period.** The Room was divided on this question what was posed to them; can you campaign without money?

- ❖ Some said that one could not go to a campaign without money. Some of your voters would be swayed with money.
- ❖ It was noted that others faced discrimination especially people with disabilities. Without finances, campaigning becomes a tall order for them.
- ❖ Hon Zulekha Hassan shared that a leader can run for office without necessarily having a lot of money but it depends on the geographical size one chooses. The bigger the coverage, the more finances one requires. But one can put in time and get the support.
- ❖ It was noted that FEMNET acknowledges that finances are important but nevertheless we encourage women to run for the seats.

***Male dominance / Patriarchy** uneven political environment

***Lack of Political goodwill from political parties.** Political parties not enforcing the 2/3 gender rule. Did men perfect the art of backstabbing us?

***Cultural / Religious beliefs and hindrances** – women are considered to be home makers and nurturers opposed to be leaders.

***Lack of role models** (female) to empower them ; It was noted that there were not a short of role models but that the women leaders had not gone to the grassroots to mentor the women that needed mentoring. A question that needed reflection was posed to the group; whose role model are you?

***Women leaders with disabilities** - Hon Dennitah shared that she wanted to see **women with disability** in political parties. The attitude was so bad that none of the political parties brought their counterparts who were with disability to the podium. Hon Musuruve also noted that the perceptions needed to change especially towards women leaders with disability.

FEMNET responded by saying that women with disabilities were their core of programming across Africa.

Lack of confidence – On this one it was noted that the fact that one dared to lead, they had confidence.

Editah Ochieng – Former Political Aspirant for Kibra Member of Parliament Make Room for Young Women Politicians



Editah Ochieng speaking during the meeting

Editah began by sharing that the late Hon Ken Okoth of Kibra had nurtured her in leadership. When Kibra lost their Member of Parliament, she wanted to vie but there were not senior women for her to consult with. She decided to run on the Ukweli Party, a little known party. She shared that it was tough because she had no savings. It was made even more tougher because of her humble background where her mum is a tailor and her father a welder.

Editah thanked members of FEMNET especially Memory Kachambwa and Mildred Ngesa. She noted that FEMNET called for a fund drive that helped her raise funds for her security. She received a lot of threats both online and offline when she announced she was going to run for office. Her campaign was also made difficult because voters were being openly bribed from door to door. Her belief in pro-choice and being a feminist made it even more challenging. She however didn't relent. She went on to do her manifesto and shared it with Kibra residents.

When the elections were over, she had 59 votes to her name. She said this didn't discourage her instead it was an encouragement that 59 people believed in her. It was a tough journey for her because her family was in danger especially her two daughters. She gladly said, "If I didn't win, I will win in the future." Some of the suggestions that came up in her Manifesto, she noted, were being used by the current Member of Parliament.

Editah wants to see more young girls come into the political space especially girls from slums like Kibra. She noted that she will continue to fight the retrogressive policies from colonial times. Kibra experiences high incidences of violence during election period, something she says she will keep fighting. We must choose feminist leaders. She shared that to her women are not their worst enemies instead she looks at the patriarchal system that has warped our society thinking. Her journey though starts with vying for a presidential seat as she wants to start in parliament.

One of her agendas is to get more young women registered in political parties. She shared that most young women are great mobilizers but never register in political parties and consequently miss out on compensation the parties give to registered members. She also requested that the young women leaders will appreciate training in communications and online security.

Reflection question : After Editah’s speech, the Moderator paused a question to the audience for reflection ; What are we doing for the Editah’s of Kenya who want to be mentored in their political journeys?

Daisy Amdany – Executive Director – CRAWN TRUST

Do the numbers really count?



Daisy Amdany speaking during the meeting

Daisy began by saying that the question of numbers was a double-edged sword. She quoted Sun Tzu who was a Chinese general and military strategist saying, “*strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.*”

Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.
Sun Tzu

She defined strategy as, “a plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim.” Tactics was described as, “an action or strategy carefully planned to achieve a specific end.”

She noted that the more women they have in authority it would mean breaking barriers. She celebrated the 47 seats that women hold in every county because there are counties that would never have elected a woman leader unless it was demanded by the constitution. Daisy noted that because of privilege, men never discuss numbers that are needed for them to hit the threshold in parliament. It is assumed that they will have the numbers.

Because there are women in the parliament, they contribute issues that make it to the floor of the house. Women lead differently. She urged the participants not to be too harsh on themselves especially for those sitting in parliament noting that they had not done badly for themselves. Male counterparts in parliament are weary of the women leaders. They reason that if they give the women the much sort after two thirds gender principle, they will be finished seeing that the number of women in government is already gradually growing. It is a testimony that women are making a difference.

She challenged the participants asking them, *‘Beyond the fighting, do we have a plan? How will we control the power we get?’* She noted that men in their place of politics are united. For as long as the two thirds has not been operationalized by the political parties, the women leaders will never get it. Parties have a lot of control. Women are not homogenous and that will help them appreciate the differences and work with them. Women must seek to agree on the irreducible minimums and present them to their parties. As long as women don’t have a clear plan of action, they will always have the numbers but the numbers will never count. She shared three **As** that Dr Maria Nzomo, a veteran politician shared with her. These are Access, Agenda setting and Accountability.

- ❖ In **Access**, women have almost cracked the nut because their numbers are growing in leadership. But the question is, when they get access, then what? Research has shown that the more women you have as leaders, the less corruption you have. Research has also indicated that women leaders tend to address more social issues. They are peacemakers.
- ❖ **Agenda setting** – to set it the agenda you must control space. The space is still controlled by patriarchy. Women must set their own agenda.
- ❖ **Accountability** - Women must demand for accountability from one another as leaders. Every single seat that women have in the parliament, they have had to fight for it. The question however is how are they being held accountable by the women’s movement?

Understand these three **As** will help women control their political spaces. There must be a change in approach if women want to get the two thirds principle passed. However they should not be begging and cajoling their male counterparts to give them anything. This is because the constitution gives power to both male and female counterparts. Power cedes to nothing without a demand. Political parties must be built around ideologies and as organizations. They must be moved away from being built around individuals. There must be a strengthened Political Parties Registrar who will ensure parties are well regulated especially when it comes to who they present as nominees. Women must understand that nominations are like going to war in Kenya.

When women notice that their demands are being ignored, they must entertain the option of walking away. This way, the men will cede ground. This is because they know that the best organizers of political campaigns are women and youth. They know they can't do without the women. Women should never forget that men support each other even when they are from different parties. They have an unspoken solidarity even when vying against each other. Politics is about interests. Women are ahead because they are already having these conversations. Women must feed into the other generation of upcoming leaders. They must go back to solidarity and set their agenda. They must prove that having numbers counts.

Hon Millie Odhiambo – Member of Parliament – Suba North

Women Vs Women



Hon Millie Odhiambo addressing the participants

Hon Millie began by sharing some popular assumptions that she said were not true.

- ❖ All women are feminists.
- ❖ Rural women don't understand feminism.
- ❖ Women are their worst enemies.
- ❖ Educated women and men are more informed.

Women can lead just as well as men. However she found in a recent research that no book in Kenya profiled women who had been in parliament since independence. Something she said needed to be remedied.

Hon Millie shared her reality:

***Not all women are feminists.** Just because someone is a woman doesn't mean she is a feminist.
There are men who are feminists.

*On **women being their own worst enemies**, she noted that women are not homogenous. Consequently they don't respond to situations the same and they also don't respond like men. New political governance structures have brought a new way of governance. She noted that when she got into politics, men were largely against men. Women were very few. Now we have a dimension where women fight against women. Women are not homogenous. There are 47 women fighting against women for the same position. We have powerful women who are coming into political spaces. And women will start fighting women in political parties. There are women who have been raised in patriarchal spaces who believe they have to elbow others to get ahead. When women fight women men use terminologies that are negative. The question however is; How do we deal with this new dynamic that we didn't have before? How do we deal with socio political differences with women?

*She has found that **rural women are feminists more than urban women**. Rural women will tell you about reproductive issues. In her constituency, women tell her about their children not going to school. She then prioritizes and makes sure they go to school. She shared that because of her nurturing role as a women, she has used it positively to benefit her constituents. On defining who a feminist is, she said it is a man or woman who understands and feels how a woman feels to be discriminated against just for the reason of existing as a woman.

***Incorporating women from other spheres** – She challenged the organizers of the conference to incorporate women who were engineers, doctors, scientists etc so that we can avoid a situation where feminists just talk amongst themselves and end up experiencing no uptake on their ideas.

*Look out for **male set agenda**. She urged women leaders to be vigilante on supporting agendas set by their male counterparts. This agendas were mostly against women. Men set agenda should not be our agenda. She asked the organizers to consider doing workshops in the village level where a lot of civic education is required. She urged them to find creative ways of reaching women in the villages. She made a plea that when groups go visiting her constituency, it was important to alert her so that she can own it. If not alerted, the men leaders are very quick to own such workshops with whatever “goodies” that are brought on the ground.

***Psychotherapy for women** leaders – She encouraged the organizers to consider doing psychotherapy for women who want to run for office explaining they go through so much trauma during the elections and that needed to be debunked.

Maiden Institute - She also shared that she had started an Institute that was looking at law, leadership and entrepreneurship. This institute which is training women leaders, is based on a book she has written. It is currently running online but will soon have physical premises when Kenya is declared COVID-19 free.

Plenary



***Engaging with the media** - A reporter from Standard newspapers shared a concern that women Member of Parliament rarely come out to give interviews. She urged them to be open to media interviews.

***Social media attacks** - Women leaders were also urged to support each other when they noticed their counterparts getting bullied on social media.

***Trainings** - Honorable Getrude Musuruve shared that NDI (National Democratic Institute) trainings on political leadership helped her a lot as a first timer in parliament. She was happy to be part of the feminist movement which she considered could be part of helping women with disability who were coming to leadership.

***Introducing yourself** - Prof Hon Jacqueline Oduol emphatically urged women to always learn to introduce themselves in a meeting. *“Introductions should not left to others to do. They might say things that you do not want said,”* she added. She noted that women are a double brand. First they are women and secondly, they are leaders. They should always be proud of this.

She further went on to share **five aspects that men use as domineering factors against women** especially in meetings. These, she said, should never be let to slide by other women in those meetings if they see them happening to the female counterparts. These are:

- ❖ Making invisible - Being downplayed

- ❖ Making ridiculous - Making ridiculous comments about them
- ❖ Burdening you with shame – Don’t allow yourself to be burdened with guilt and shame
- ❖ Double punishment – Because you are a woman and a leader
- ❖ Withholding information – Information can be withheld from you

She thanked FEMNET for sending her to Beijing 25 years ago. She finalized with a quote, “*No one will give you power. It has to be taken.*”

**Racheal Ouko on behalf of
Ms Martha Mukhuwezi – Executive Director – FAWE
Concluding remarks**

Racheal shared that FAWE was a member of the consortium that was working on Women Political Participation together with FEMNET, IDEA and other partners. She noted that women had already done a lot of work in the past. Stories of their struggles and challenges should be noted and used as a learning tool for women. The women leaders were also challenged to identify and take up opportunities for mentoring the younger ones.

Women in politics have a big role to play in education because they think about their communities. Education should there be a cross cutting theme. Peer learning should be given an opportunity. She reiterated each of their strengths will work better together for the African continent.

One Word

One word on how the participants felt about the meeting:				
Pregnant	Inspired	Excited	Reenergized	Interesting
Mind blowing	Great	Enlightened	Challenged	Informative
Eye-opener	Power	Liberated	Strong	Joyous
Supported	Fired up	Refocused	Sisterhood	Solidarity

Request from KEWOPA Chairperson

The KEWOPA Chairperson, Hon Wa Muchomba shared that the Association members in parliament asked her to request for support from different organizations to support them with various items for their constituencies. She noted that COVID-19 had caused economic stress for the people. The women parliamentarians don't have a kitty they can pull out funds to help their constituents.

Vote of Thanks

Memory thanked all participants and partners for attending and enriching the conversations with personal and collective leadership experiences. She reminded the women leaders that there is power in sisterhood solidarity and reiterated FEMNET's continued support because women must lead!



Appendix 1

Press Statement



Press Statement

For Immediate Release: Nairobi, 29th August 2020

“Women Must LEAD! We need feminist leadership in Kenya”

Ten years after the promulgation of the Constitution of Kenya (2010), women are asking what is there to celebrate when several gains to women’s representation and participation in leadership continue to be eroded, ignored and replaced with self-serving interests? *“How do we celebrate when the two thirds gender rule has not been fulfilled in all arms of government not even in the county assemblies where only eight counties are compliant meaning thirty-nine are not!”* was the powerful reflective question posed by Hon. Martha Karua during the *“Women Must Lead” Policy Dialogue* held on 28th August 2020 in Nairobi, Kenya. The Dialogue organized by the African Women’s Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) in partnership with International IDEA and WPP Consortium partners¹ brought together close to 30 women leaders to reflect and strategize on women’s political participation in Kenya.

Hon. Karua called on the women leaders to familiarize themselves with the herstories journeys of women leaders trailblazers and connect the struggles of equality. Hon. Karua reminded the meeting delegates the long treacherous journey leading to the promulgation of the Constitution of Kenya ten years ago, where women leaders stood together in solidarity to consolidate the gains, thereby overcoming the politics of divide and rule along political lines. Cognizant that both women and men live and are raised in a patriarchal society that privileges and prioritizes men, Hon. Karua

¹ Women’s Political Participation Consortium members include Gender Links, WLSA, IFAN-Gender Lab, FAWE and PADARE.

emphasized the need for women leaders to redefine solidarity and work together to heighten consciousness around dismantling patriarchy and normalized discrimination against women.

As women we must stand in solidarity with one another to move the agenda for equal and meaningful representation and participation of women in politics and decision-making spaces” said Hon. Karua. “Get to know the herstory from your family perspective, from the neighborhood, from our communities, from our country and from the world over, and by the time you are done, you will sign up for the SISTERHOOD, yes SISTERHOOD, because our brothers have an understanding of brotherhood that is activated automatically when male privilege is threatened.

In his opening remarks, Prof. Adebayo Olukoshi from International IDEA – Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance noted that despite increased awareness on the imperative of including women in governance systems through rules, standards, instruments at national, regional and sub-regional levels, it is important to recognize that women’s representation and participation in governance remains insufficient and incomplete.

Kenya’s last general election in 2017 saw a nominal increase for women’s representation in politics with the first time entrant of three women governors and three women senators compared to none in 2013. More women were elected to the national and county assemblies (23 members of the national assembly in 2017 compared to 16 in 2013 and 96 members of county assemblies in 2017 compared to 82 in 2013). Another sad reality is the fact that women still hold few leadership positions as committee chairs or speaker positions in the Senate and National Assembly and have been unable to breakthrough into significant committee assignments or other influential positions.

Hon. Gathoni WaMuchomba, Chairperson of KEWOPA – Kenya Women Parliamentary and the Member of Parliament of Kiambu County reminded the meeting participants of the proactive contribution by women leaders towards the realization of the Marriage Act 2014, the Matrimonial Property Act 2013 and Protection Against Domestic Violence Act among other Bills. Other key legislations such as the Prohibition of FGM, Sexual Offences Act, Access to Information Act among others. However Hon. Wa Muchoba noted that despite several efforts pushing for the realization of the two thirds gender principle “*our male colleagues lied to us! They cheated us! On the day of passing the bill they abandoned us.*” She called on all leaders to discourage patrilineal politics in Kenya.

“Political parties are the let downs for women leaders in Kenya”, weighed in Hon. Dennitah Ghati, Nominated Member of Parliament. Nominated Senator Gertrude Musuruve said the conversation about two-thirds gender rule cannot be complete without the inclusion of people with disability. She said political parties should make efforts that ensure people with disability get a chance.

Ms. Editar Ochieng confirmed that in 2019, whilst vying for the Member of Parliament in she received immense support from fellow women and continues to be mentored and supported by women in her leadership journey. *“I’m committed to challenging and expanding spaces for young women to get into political space to challenge retrogressive policies”* opined Editar. We must shift narratives and mindsets. Women are not enemies of women. The great impediments is patriarchy which manifests differently. We need social empowerment to unpack and view women’s leadership holistically.

“Power concedes to nothing without a demand, women must demand in solidarity for the 2/3 gender rule. Let’s push for the amendment of the political parties act, we don’t need to amend the Constitution”. Ms Daisy Amdany, Executive Director CRAWN Trust.

Hon. Millie Odhiambo, Member of Parliament of Suba North reminded participants of the need to support affirmative action, after all men first got into parliament through an affirmative action as many African countries gained independence in 50’s and 60’s.

In the next two years, FEMNET, International IDEA and the WPP Consortium partners are keen to enhance women’s political participation in Africa with a view to advance the goal of gender equality in politics and governance. This partnership is committed to contribute to an increase in the voice and presence of women in all political processes and institutions in Africa at the different levels at which they exist. Through policy advocacy, strengthening of capacities and generating research and knowledge, the WPP consortium partners will work with women leaders and institutions in Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Cote d’Ivoire, Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania and Zimbabwe to expand awareness and demand for the meaningful inclusion of all women in their diversities.

Closing the meeting, FAWE’s Executive Director Ms. Martha Muhwezi urged all the women leaders to mentor young women aspirants to ensure that they too do not go through the struggles our trailblazers went through.

For more information and/or to request for an interview please contact: FEMNET Head of Communications, Mildred Ngesa; m.ngesa@femnet.or.ke / +254 727137853

About FEMNET:

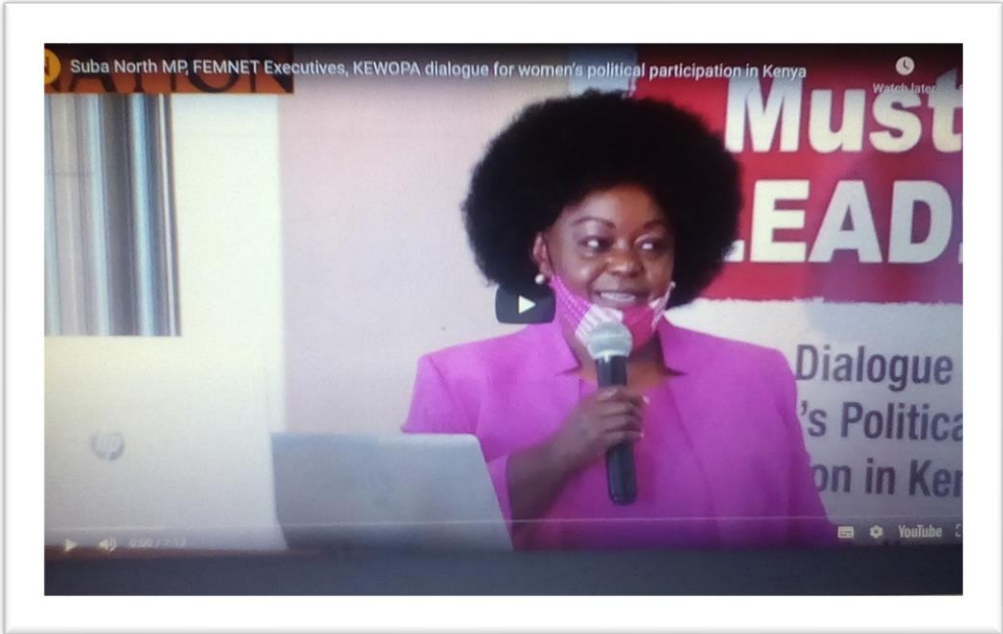
The African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) is a pan- African membership-based feminist network based in Nairobi with over 800 members across 50 African countries. FEMNET envisions an African society where gender equality is achieved and women and girls enjoy their rights and dignity while in its mission it seeks 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 its inception in 1988, FEMNET has played a leading role in building the women's movement in Africa and ensuring that women and girls' voices are amplified, and their needs, priorities, and aspirations are prioritized in key policy dialogues and outcomes that have direct and indirect impact on their lives. For more visit our website www.femnet.org

Appendix 2

Media Coverage



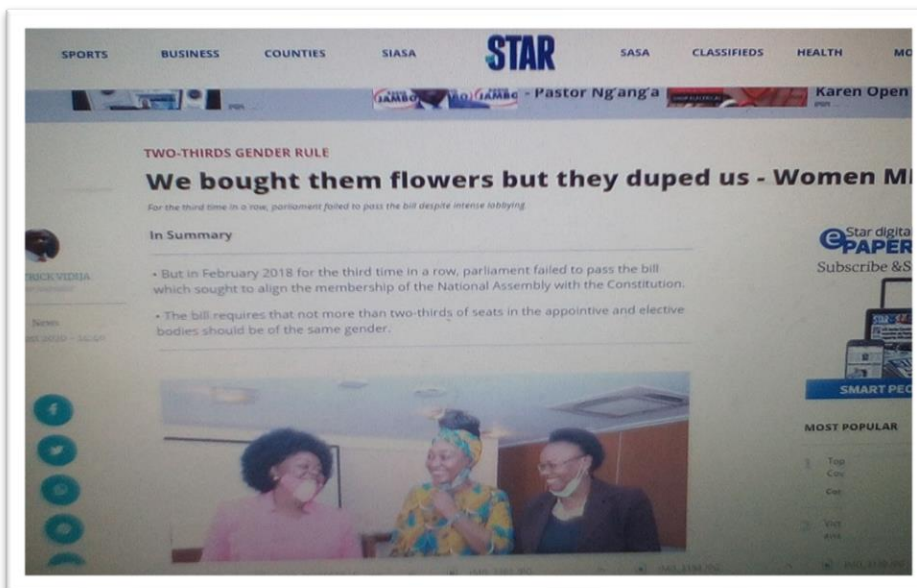
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Nation online - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AAvIeEM-GYo>



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<https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2020-08-29-we-bought-them-flowers-but-they-duped-us-women-mps/>