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FEMNET acknowledges and deeply appreciates several individuals and partners that contributed and journeyed with us in the entire process of envisioning and developing this 10year strategic plan (2020 – 2029).

Immense gratitude to FEMNET members who provided the much-needed national context analysis and priority areas of concern/focus that formed the basis for prioritizing the **five thematic** areas of focus i.e. (i) ending violence against women and girls; (ii) advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights; (iii) women's transformative leadership; (iv) women's economic justice and (v) climate justice and natural resource governance.

The management and staff team at the secretariat coordinated the strategic plan consultations and participated in co-writing, editing and fine tuning the draft which was validated by members in February 2020. FEMNET Board of Directors contributed and endorsed the strategic plan in August 2020. Tons of thanks to the staff team who dedicated their time and contributed to the final production of this strategic plan: Maureen Olyaro and Josephine Ireri for reading-through, asking critical questions and editing the text; Rachel Kagoiya for coordinating the design and production of this final product and Memory Kachambwa who steered the process, proficiently providing invaluable advice and insights.

We are grateful to the team of consultants including Christine Guchu and Tom Olila who were extremely instrumental in leading the consultations and consolidating the conversations and content in this strategic plan. Hope Chigudu stirred and provoked our thinking of who we really are as a regional network, who we represent now and in future and why we must be intentional at co-creating an organization with a soul, grounded on pan-African feminist values and practices.

Thanks to all our development partners for their unwavering support to FEMNET's core and programmatic work over the years.

We believe this strategic plan is not only inspiring but also a timely guide and reference to the Secretariat staff, members and partners in realizing our collective vision where "African women and girls thrive in dignity and wellbeing, free from patriarchal and neo-liberal oppression and injustices".

The compilation of this strategic plan was finalized at a time when the world was grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic, which has brought to fore and exacerbated the persistent struggles for equality and the urgency to shift the power, which we have been agitating for over the years. In the coming years, focus must be around direct and sustainable funding to feminist movements and networks, as well as prioritizing feminist analysis to challenge inequalities, gender discrimination, unequal power structures and systems.



Foreword

The African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) is a pan-African feminist, network with over 800 individual and institutional members across the 5 sub-regions of Africa and in the diaspora. FEMNET works to mobilize, inform, influence, and amplify African women's voices and advance gender equality and women's and girls' rights. As a network, FEMNET is recognized as a visible and credible women's rights organization, that asserts influence at strategic regional and global levels.

The development of this ten year (2020 – 2029) blueprint is inspired by a need for continued repositioning within the evolving operating context and to enable continued relevance and effective responses to the changing needs and aspirations of our constituencies. FEMNET's core ambition during this strategy remains that of championing the rights of African women and girls, as a prerequisite to their wellbeing, dignity and freedom from patriarchal and neo-liberal oppression and injustices.

FEMNET recognizes that the commitment to alter relations of power, structural injustices, and systemic oppression lies at the heart of feminism. We shall thus continue our push towards altering power structures that perpetuate gender inequality. We will do this by nurturing the African women's movement to enable women and girls in their diversity to effectively claim, affirm, and use their collective power to end all forms of exclusion, oppression, exploitation, and injustices against them.

We will in this regard adopt a multipronged strategy focused on disrupting patriarchal power orders in policy spaces; nurturing innovative and powerful feminist spaces; re-politicizing the women's right agenda; and invigorating constituency building and engagement. This includes robustly growing women and girls' solidarity, voices, agency, and power to shape discourse, while countering regressive forces against gender equality and women's empowerment.

Further, as an ever-growing Network, FEMNET will continue to strengthen her institutional capabilities to align to the vision and purpose of her members. The strategy is equally dedicated to ensuring that the Network remains relevant to members and constituents needs and aspirations as well as explore and implement bold, innovative and agile ways of organizing through digital means but also remaining truly rooted and connected to movements at the local level. We will also seek to retain ourselves as a truly responsive, adaptive, and nimble Network with a Soul grounded by the African Feminist Charter.

This strategy is the outcome of a co-creation process entailing rigorous analysis, deep consultations, and authentic reflections by FEMNET staff, board members, organizational and individual members, peers, partners, and other stakeholders. FEMNET regards this strategic plan as a broad framework document that sets broad parameters to her programs and operations in the next ten years. The plan will be operationalised through three cycles of three-year tactical plans premised on periodic reviews.

FEMNET acknowledges the need for collaborative approaches and will thus work with multiple actors across multiple levels to build solidarity and strengthen partnerships that are inclusive and progressive. We bank on the continued support of our partners and collaborators as we seek to continue delivering progress towards enhancing the dignity and well-being of women and girls in the African continent.

Mrs. Emma Kaliya
Chairperson, FEMNET Board of Directors

Memory KachambwaExecutive Director, FEMNET





The Network was established in 1988 to facilitate and coordinate the sharing of strategies, experiences and information among African women's rights organizations and activists.

FEMNET has over 800 members drawn from 50 African countries and the diaspora.

About the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET)

FEMNET is a credible pan-African feminist and member-based network. FEMNET works to empower African women, amplify their voices, and advance their rights, among others by **ensuring that African women's needs and aspirations are prioritized in key policy dialogues and decisions** at national, regional, and global levels. Further, FEMNET mobilizes African women to hold their States accountable to women's rights and gender equality commitments.

The Network was established in 1988 to facilitate and coordinate the sharing of strategies, experiences, and information among African women's rights organizations and activists as a strategy for collective organizing and policy influencing. This was to be achieved through networking, communication, institutional strengthening, and advocacy at regional and international levels.

The Network has strategically positioned herself as a convenor, organizer and dialogue facilitator around critical issues that touch on women's dignity and wellbeing. This includes championing women's economic justice, women's leadership, sexual and reproductive health and rights; as well as, ending all forms of violence and harmful or discriminatory practices against women and girls.

FEMNET has over 800 members drawn from 50 African countries and the diaspora (as at December 2019). She operates as a meso-level NGO that interfaces community and national level women's human rights priorities with global level processes through a regional platform. FEMNET's secretariat is based in Nairobi, Kenya.





Organizational Track Record

Voice:

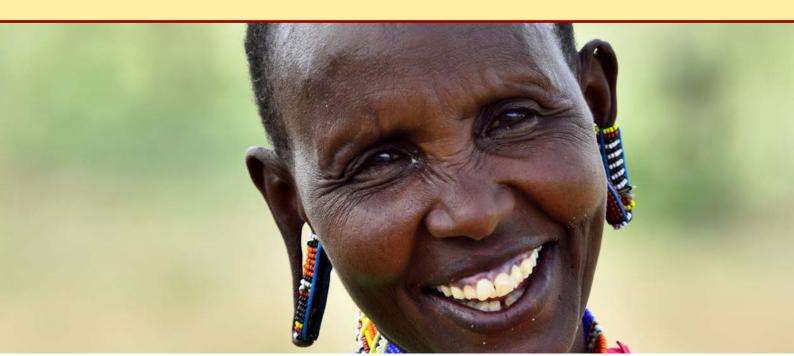
FEMNET has continually invested in amplifying women's voices', enabling them to be heard and to inform gender equality dialogues and decisions. This includes supporting women to set and monitor critical agendas including at the African Union Summits; the AU Agenda 2063; the periodic reviews of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the International Conference on Population and Development; as well as at convenings of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (commonly known as the SDGs) and the UN Commission on the Status of Women. FEMNET in this regard effectively connects community advocacy issues to national, regional, and global arenas.

Choice:

FEMNET boldly champions women's rights around issues regarded by many as 'controversial', hence left out. This include work on women's bodily autonomy, integrity and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), as well as rights of gender nonconforming persons. Over the years, we have fearlessly challenged patriarchal norms, attitudes and practices that hinder women and girls from living in dignity.

Policy Influencing:

FEMNET has contributed to development, adoption, and follow-through on implementation of various legal, policy and institutional frameworks. This include contributions towards the: 1) adoption of gender equality as a standalone goal in the SDGs; 2) implementation of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo protocol); and 3) development of the SDG Gender Index. FEMNET has also been a member of various AU working groups, e.g. those that developed the AU Agenda 2063, AU Gender Policy and AU Gender Strategy 2018-2023.



Strategic Convening:

FEMNET has continued to enhance inclusiveness of African women's rights actors by bridging prevailing intergenerational gaps. This included being intentional in engaging young feminists, activists and women human rights defenders. Further, the Network has opened new frontiers in engaging men and cultural/religious leaders in promoting gender equality. The Network has established herself as a strategic convenor of the African women's movement with dynamic structures and systems of oversight that has sustained members, funders and partners' confidence.

Communication:

FEMNET has over the years informed and amplified the voices African women and girls by publishing diverse disruptive articles on women's rights discourses. As a thought leader, FEMNET uses digital and mainstream platforms to strategically spark conversations on topical

issues. These have increased agenda setting and reporting on gender equality¹, thereby solidifying FEMNET's brand as the 'go-to' knowledge hub, mobilizer, and continental networker on matters women's rights.

Social Justice:

The Network has equally dedicated herself to pushing the bar on women's economic justice by addressing practices that contribute to widening socioeconomic disparities, more so gender inequalities. This includes championing women's participation in key macroeconomic discourses; unpacking complex macroeconomic policies; and interrogating the effect of economic practices such as illicit financial flows, misinformed debt, corruption and tax policies on Africa's women and girls.

1 Most of the FEMNET's publications can be found at https://femnet.org/category/publications/.



FEMNETs Theory of Change

Our reason for existence

What we do to create change

Changes we expect in the medium term (intermediate outcomes)

In order to reverse existing gender inequalities and social injustices against women and girls in Africa:-

- (i) Patriachy must be dismantled at all levels.
- (ii) Negative social norms and practises must be challenged and transformed.
- (iii)Existing gender equality and women's rights policies and legal frameworks must be implemented, resourced and policy makers held accountable.
- (iv)Women's rights and feminist neyworks and organising must be financed and resourced adequately.

Women and girls in all their diversity must enjoy their rights fully, lead dignified lives and realize their full potential as equal citizens.

Enhancing Solidarity and sisterhood within African women's movements at global, regional & national levels.



Shifting unequal power relations and harmful gender and social norms & practices.



Increasing the significance and visibility of African women & girls'
Voices and Agency.



Consolidating FEMNET's position as a pan-African feminist Network with a Soul anchored on African Feminist Principles.

With a focus on:

- 1. Ending violence against women & girls.
- 2. Advancing sexual & reproductive health & rights.
- 3. Transformative women's leadership.
- 4. Economic justice and rights.
- 5. Climate justice & natural resource governance.

Vibrant, resilient, diverse African women's movement effectively promoting women's rights.



Feminized and politicized women's rights policies, processes and outcomes.



Strengthened capacities of women, girls, women with disabilities and gender non-conforming persons and their formations.



Increased inclusion of women and girls in critical social, political and economic decision-making spaces.



People-centered, well-resourced, thriving and effective Organization.

Principles, Approaches & Core Strategies: FEMNET believes that capable and resilient women's movements working We therefore co-build and strengthen movements of movements, while deepening strategic partnerships, membership (un)learning; and promote research and documentation of HERstory as key strategies for change.

Long term change ambitions (ultimate outcomes) Ultimate change we contribute to (impact)



together have higher chances of successfully confronting injustices and discrimination against women and girls. support and research outreach. We apply pan-African feminist and intersectional lens; catalyze feminist rethinking and

Theory of Change (ToC)

FEMNET aspires to be an authoritative, robust, and diverse pan-African feminist network advancing gender equality and women's and girls' rights. We understand however that **patriarchy must be dismantled**, and **societal power relations balanced to achieve gender equality and enable women and girls to fully enjoy their rights, realize their full potential**, and attain dignified lives.

Besides other international human rights protocols, our work is guided by feminist frameworks that recognize women's rights as human rights and the imperative of gender equality and justice in development as important prerequisites for women and girl's wellbeing. These include feminist principles and values as guided by the **Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists**.

The envisaged change occurs when women as rights holders reclaim their rights and duty bearers accept and enforce women's rights as a norm. This requires movement and resilience building; politicization and feminization of key processes, policies and outcomes transforming oppressive norms, policies, and laws; and strengthening women and girls' individual and collective capacities. Subsequently, FEMNET invests in further enhancing **solidarity** within the African women's movement; shifting gender **power** relations; and increasing the significance and visibility of African women and girls' **voices** and agency. FEMNET will consolidate her position as an inclusive, well-resourced and people centered pan-African feminist network with a **soul**.

Strategic Priorities/ Key Result Areas

Based on the context analysis and theory of change, FEMNET's work over the ten years (2020-2029) will be organized into the following strategic focus areas (which are our Strategic Anchors):

- **1. Feminist SOLIDARITY:** Strategic alliances and collective action are important strategies for campaigns towards attaining sustainable system level gender justice and women's rights. FEMNET will in this regard contribute to establishment of an authoritative, robust, and diverse pan-African feminist network as a vehicle for advancing gender equality and women/ girls' rights. We will work to ensure that we build a feminist movement that is resilient, visible and effective. Efforts will also be made towards creating and sustaining existing feminist spaces to be more accessible, safer, inclusive, and welcoming.
- **2. Shifting POWER Structures and Relations:** Power is about who controls the self, ideology, access, and resources. Power imbalances lead to structural inequalities and gender-based norms that perpetuate threats to women's wellbeing and violate women's rights. FEMNET will through this focus area aim to innovatively re-politicize, feminize, and disrupt orthodox power and oppressive systems, structures or processes, as a basis of creating equal gender power relations.
- **3. Amplifying Women's and Girls' VOICES:** This focus areas seeks to increase the visibility, significance, and legitimacy of African women's and girls' voice, choice and agency. This will include facilitating African women to build community, share skills, re-write or shift narratives and amplify each other's voices. FEMNET will also continue to be a formidable flag bearer for African women and girls in regional and global spaces.
- **4. Building and Sustaining an Organization with a SOUL:** FEMNET will build and sustain an inclusive, well-resourced, people-centered network with a soul, anchored in pan-African and feminist principles and practices. This focus area will seek to further strengthen FEMNET's institutional capacity and consolidate her position as an effective and respected thought leader, opinion shaper, influencer and strategic convenor.



Thematic Areas Of Focus

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)/End GBV

5.

To ensure depth and guarantee impact, FEMNET has prioritized five thematic areas around which her work on the strategic focus areas will be centered.

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

2.

Climate Justice & Natural Resource Governance

Tactics

Accountability (holding State accountable).

1. Access to women's human rights

3.

Agenda setting

5.

FEMNET will apply the following tactics across her program areas.

Awareness

2.

Analysis (research, evidence building,

4.

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Strategic objectives, Milestones (outcomes) & Major interventions

1. Feminist SOLIDARITY.

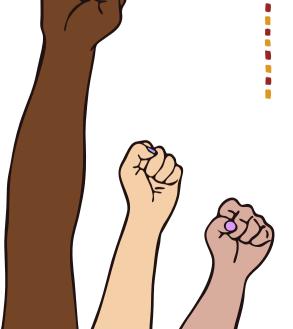
FEMNET's work and success is dependent on the strength and efficacy of her members, WITH and THROUGH whom she co-creates change. The members in this regard play critical roles of advancing gender equality and women's rights; constituency building; and advancing women's and girls' well-being. FEMNET will invest in strengthening and scaling the voice, power, and impact of the members; capitalizing on social intelligence to enhance collaboration.

Strategic Objective:

Contribute to the establishment of an inclusive, authoritative, robust, and diverse pan-African feminist network fostering the advancement of gender equality; women's and girls' rights.

- 1. Sustained and increased number and diversity of FEMNET members in 55 African countries⁸ and in the Diaspora.
- 2. FEMNET members effectively engage with/ influence institutions, policies and actions towards women's and girls' rights at national, regional, and global levels.
- 3. Increased responsiveness and contribution by members to jointly agreed upon agenda and or emerging issues.
- 4. Increased technical and institutional capacity of FEMNET members¹.

¹ https://au.int/en/member_states/countryprofiles2 Character of the network: external: vibrant, fiery, robust, politically aware, influential, and authoritative ... results oriented; internal: responsive, accountable, feminist, humane, healing space, solution providers



2. Shifting POWER Structures and Relations.

Gender inequalities are often rooted in uneven dynamics that give disproportionate power to one group over another. Out of the three key drivers of women's discrimination - limited economic autonomy, bodily autonomy, and political decision-making power - evidence shows that limited economic autonomy has had the least traction in the past two decades, especially at national levels. Macroeconomic policies and frameworks have also on their part largely remained blind to this reality, hence not adequately creating equal social and economic opportunities for women. As a result, women continue to be disproportionately affected by poverty, unemployment and inequality. FEMNET will in this regard work towards greater conscientization of women and girls; enhancing women's political participation; unpacking which boundaries to push, structures or norms to disrupt, and open invited or co-created spaces to engage on women's economic justice.

Strategic Objective:

Innovatively re-politicize, feminize, and disrupt orthodox power and oppressive systems, structures or processes, as a basis of creating equal gender power relations.

- 1. Members initiate and use disruptive approaches or methods in promoting women's and girls' rights.
- 2. Women's rights organizations/ actors affiliated to FEMNET effectively shift narratives and ideologies that 'de-politicize' the women's rights agenda.
- 3. Duty bearers act on (policy, legal, institutional) issues raised and or initiatives created by members.
- 4. Increase in the number of non-traditional gender equality allies including men and boys, cultural and religious leaders taking actions to influence gender equality policies and feminist practices².
- 5. Increased inclusion of women and girls in all their diversity in critical political, social, and economic decision-making spaces.
- 6. Increased access to and control over opportunities and productive resources by women and girls.







3. Amplifying Women's and Girls' VOICEs.

FEMNET regards communication as a strategic anchor for amplifying the voices of and connecting women and girls is at different levels for purposes of scaling impact. This includes creatively telling the African feminist narrative to strategically trigger transformative action. FEMNET will also seek to establish herself as an authority and newsmaker among major regional and international media platforms. This requires that FEMNET and her members strengthen their capacity to engage confidently and authoritatively with the media, and consistently generate content that triggers the desired impact. A key role of the Network and her members will be to filter information, and to make it simple, articulate, and authoritative.

Strategic Objective:

Increase the visibility and significance of African women and girls' voice and agency towards claiming their rights and equality.

- 1. Critical African women and girls' voices and narratives are captured and/ or re-written.
- 2. Content generated by African women and girls used to inform, amplify, and inspire actions towards advancing dignity and gender equality.
- 3. Women's rights organizations set the women's rights agenda before, during and after strategic events using mainstream and digital media platforms.
- 4. Citations, credits, reviews, references, and downloads by other stakeholders quoting and referencing African women's voices and content in FEMNET's information and knowledge products are a credible resource and authoritative reference on gender equality and women's rights in Africa.
- 5. Increased digital media footprint on women's rights issues (diversity of channels used, no of applicable articles etc.)



4. Building and Sustaining an Organization with a SOUL.

This focus area is concerned with the ability of FEMNET to deliver this strategic plan effectively and efficiently. Strengthening the functional capacity of the Network is fundamental for this. Priorities for capacity development will among others include strengthening the functions of policy advocacy, strategic communication, membership management, feminist MEAL (monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning), strategic partnerships and resource mobilisation

Strategic Objective:

Consolidate FEMNET into a diverse, well-resourced, people-centered network with a soul that is anchored in pan-African and feminist principles and values.

- 1. Increased adoption of the African Feminist charter of principles and policies by FEMNET's secretariat staff, board and membership.
- 2. A unified network with a collective vision, enhanced collaboration and mutual accountability to African women.
- 3. Motivated and highly performing and effective staff driven by the values and ethos of pan-Africanism and feminism.
- 4. Increased diversity and effectiveness of the FEMNET board membership.
- 5. A people-centered organizational culture premised on a safe and caring working environment.



Strategic Approaches and Organisational positioning



Role Distinction

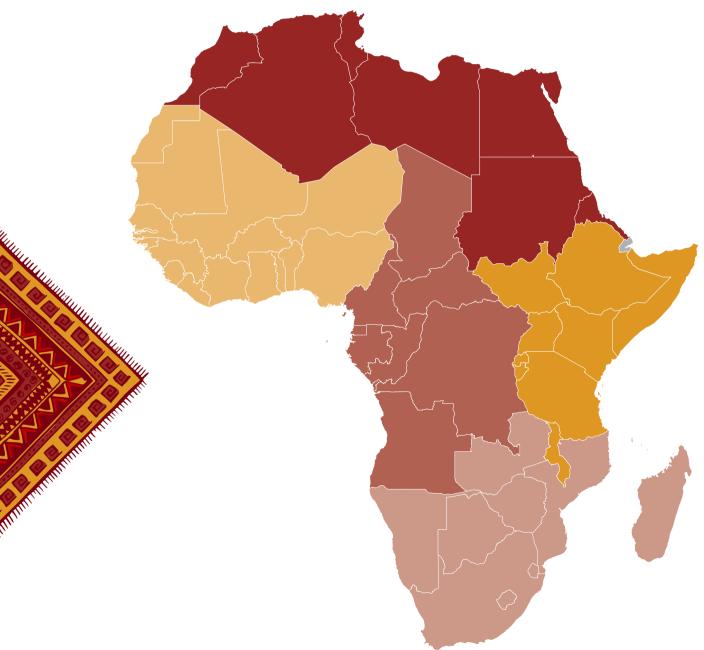
FEMNET will more dominantly engage in collaborative leadership, thought leadership, and facilitation roles at continental and global levels, working more with and through members and other independent but complementary stakeholders. In addition, the Secretariat will engage in 'direct implementation' for interventions such as knowledge generation, capacity strengthening, agenda setting, and strategic communications.

The role of members varies across different operational levels: At community levels, members are FEMNET's ambassadors besides actively promoting women and girls' rights, while at the national levels, they identify and take up advocacy issues in various spaces of influence. This includes interfacing with policy makers and holding States accountable towards implementation of various treaties and policies. The table below highlights some of the spaces that FEMNET will seek to be part of, the rationale thereof, and specific strategies to be explored.

Spaces	Agenda	Strategies
Spaces at national level National parliament	Influencing decision making	Endorsing/ critiquing; following up implementation of commitments
Regional Spaces (COMESA, SADC, EAC, AU,ACHPR, Pan African Parliament, ARFSD, ECOWAS, Africa Economic Forum etc.)	Representation, present African women's priorities and recommendations, influence women's rights language in the outcome documents	Advocacy Solidarity building
Global Spaces (ICPD, CPDE, CSW, HLPF, Beijing, UNGA, COP, World Bank, AWID Forum, Generation Equality Forum etc.)	Representation, present African women's priorities and recommendations, influence women's rights language in the outcome documents, solidarity with the global feminists e.g. Women's Major Group	Disrupting, Influence, changing narratives; Learning & linking; Articulating/voicing the African women's agenda.
Invited Spaces (ECA, GIMAC Gender Ministers, Finance Ministers, AU Standing Technical Committee etc.)	Be a hub on gender equality in Africa	Learning and Reflecting Amplifying Voice
Created Spaces (annual African Feminist Macroeconomics Academy triennial Programming Conference and General Assembly, Pre and Post Reflection Convenings ahead or after regional and global spaces etc.)	Operationalization of various global/ continental frameworks (protocols, treaties etc.) Strategic caucusing and co-creating of the African women's position statement and key recommendations	Programme delivery Movement building Review governance and accountability structures

FEMNET aspires to have members in all the 55 African countries. Currently, FEMNET has over 800 members drawn from 50 African countries (as of December 2019).





The Five Geographic Regions of Africa

Western Africa: Republic of Benin

Republic of Guinea-Bissau

Central Africa:

Republic of Burundi

Northern Africa: People's Democratic

Republic of Algeria Arab Republic of Egypt

Islamic Republic of Mauritania

Kingdom of Morocco Sahrawi Arab Democratic

Republic of Tunisia

Eastern Africa:

Southern Africa: Republic of Angola





Thematic Focus by Regions

FEMNET seeks to extend its reach across all 55 African countries. To assure greater contextualization and balance of service, the countries will be clustered into five regions: **Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western, and Central Africa.** The critical issues that will be addressed within these regions are presented in the table below:



Northern Africa

- Migration, security, and peace
- Harmful practices (Sexual and Gender Based Violence, early/ forced child marriages etc.)
- Access to rights such as education, SRHR etc.

Southern Africa

- Political instability and women in leadership
- Minority rights.
- Economic justice (inequality, exploitative capitalism, extractives etc.)
- Climate justice and Natural Resource Governance

Eastern Africa

- Sexual reproductive justice.
- Economic justice
- Governance, Peace and Security
- GBV
- Climate justice and Natural Resource Governance

Central Africa

- Women human rights, particularly access to education & SRHR
- Shrinking civic space
- Refugee and migration.
- Climate justice and Natural Resource Governance

Western Africa

- Political instability and women in leadership
- Economic justice and rights
- Peace and security
- GBV
- Movement building

NB: These priority issues/ areas of attention are examples based on consultations with FEMNET members in 2019 and are subject to review.





As a membership organization, FEMNET provides an authentic link between national organizing to regional and global policy and advocacy spaces for the advancement of the rights of women and girls.







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