



Gender Transformation & Empowerment

THE AFRICA WE WANT

An Africa Women's Position Statement on the Post 2015
Development Agenda

An Information Brief developed by UWONET with support from the United Nations Joint Programme on Gender Equality*

1.0. Introduction

As the discourse on the post 2015 agenda across the globe grows, representatives from women's rights organisations, faith based, wider civil society organisations and media from over 14 African countries

convened from the 23rd-25th June 2014 to deliberate on strengthening African women's voices in the post 2015 processes. Building from her earlier district, regional and national level dialogues and gender forums,

UWONET gladly participated and informed the Africa Women's meeting in Kampala from which now this Africa position statement is developed.

* UWONET wishes to acknowledge the contribution of Everse Ruhindi in the development of this Information Brief

1.1. Why this Brief

This Brief is intended to share as widely as possible the agreed position on the post 2015 among African women. It is envisaged to

lay basis for processes geared toward influencing a gender responsive post 2015 development agenda that will equitably and inclusively address the development concerns and

aspirations of women, men, boys, girls, rural, urban, young, disabled and elderly among others in its design, implementation, resourcing as well as monitoring and evaluation.

2.0. Background–From MDGs to Post 2015

The adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 was one of the boldest steps undertaken by the United Nations (UN) to improve social, economic and environmental development. Since then, there has been growing attention and visibility towards efforts aimed at poverty eradication. According to the MDG Report 2013¹, African countries have recorded substantial progress towards achieving universal primary education, combating HIV/AIDS,

Tuberculosis and Malaria and to some extent promoting gender equality. However, it is important to note that the focus on quantification of the MDGs led to little focus being placed on: **equity; social justice; and human rights;** components required for social transformation. A good example is highlighted through Goal 3 that seeks to promote gender equality and empower women. Despite having over half the countries in Africa achieving gender parity in primary school,

early marriage, maternal deaths, household power dynamics and low economic opportunities for women are among factors that have been highlighted as bottlenecks to achieving gender equality.

Recognizing that the MDGs did not address the root causes of poverty among which are gender inequalities, a series of interventions have taken place at the global and regional levels to draw up a new framework that promotes a sustainable and

1 MDG Report 2013: Assessing Progress in Africa toward the Millennium Development Goals



transformational development agenda. In July 2012, the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post 2015 Development Agenda report² made a case for a stand-alone goal on gender equality and for mainstreaming a gender perspective in all other goals. This recommendation was in the realization that MDG 5 on maternal health is the most off-track of the MDGs. Additionally, the failure to mainstream a gendered approach across the goals created barriers to them being achieved. The Panel’s recommendation was later reinforced by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network report³ and the Global Compact report⁴. All three reports propose goals or elements of goals on gender equality and empowering women. Collectively, the reports are a testament to the emerging consensus that achieving gender equality, women’s rights and women’s empowerment is a central element of efficient and sustainable development.

3.0. Journey towards Gender Equality in the Post 2015 Development Framework–Africa CSOs

Early 2012 consultations on post 2015 began and the African women’s movement has been actively mobilizing to engage African women so as to ensure that their needs and realities are captured in the new development agenda. In October 2012, FEMNET and other key regional women’s rights

2 *A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development – The Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda*
 3 *SDSN Network – An Action Agenda for Sustainable Development: Report For The UN Secretary-General*
 4 *Report to the United Nations Secretary-General Corporate Sustainability and the United Nations Post-2015 Development Agenda Perspectives from UN Global Compact Participants on Global Priorities and How to Engage Business Towards Sustainable Development Goals*

CSOs⁵ mobilized and convened a women’s regional meeting in Monrovia, Liberia to advocate for the inclusion of a gender goal and gender mainstreaming throughout all proposed goals. In January 2013, FEMNET facilitated a women’s round table during the UN High Level Panel (HLP) global Consultation in Africa which also took place in Monrovia, Liberia. Women from across the globe articulated their expectations of the new development agenda to the members of the HLP. These advocacy efforts proved successful as the Report of the High-Level Panel included Goal 2 on ‘*Empower Girls and Women and Achieve Gender*

Equality’ with targets previously not highlighted in the MDGs. This included: Prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against girls and women; End Child marriage; Ensure equal rights of women to own and inherit property, sign a contract, register a business and open a bank account and to eliminate discrimination against women in political economic and public life.

In a subsequent meeting held in November 2013 in Addis, The African Women’s Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) in partnership with other organizations working on women’s

rights hosted a meeting to map out the key priorities African women want in the Post 2015 Agenda. The outcome of which was a position paper, *The Africa We Want*⁶ which has since been used at global, regional and national advocacy to provide the rationale for a transformative stand-alone goal to achieve gender equality, women’s rights and women’s empowerment that is grounded in human rights and tackles unequal power relations. Additionally, participants mapped out key targets and indicators⁷ that can be used to ensure gender mainstreaming in the Common African Position on Post 2015 (CAP).

5 FEMNET and other members of the African Women’s Rights Steering Group: , Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD), Eastern African Sub-Regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI) and Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF-WA), Southern African Development Community (SADC); Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMwA); and the Gender Protocol Alliance prepared a position paper in partnership with the International Planned Parenthood Federation – African Regional Office (IPPF-ARO), Oxfam and Urgent Action Fund – Africa.

6 <http://www.femnet.co/index.php/en/other-publications/item/275-the-africa-we-want-position-paper>

7 <http://femnet.co/index.php/en/other-publications/item/244-achieving-gender-equality-in-the-africa-common-position-post-2015>

This proved timely as the information was disseminated at the Committee on Women and Development which comprises of Ministers of Gender from African States. Additionally, the information was sent to Government representatives working on Post 2015 including sherpas (representatives of each member of the High Level Committee) and Heads of States in the High Level Committee on Post 2015. At the AU Summit in January 2014, FEMNET, Ipas Africa Alliance, ACORD, Equality Now, World YWCA and the Solidarity for African Women’s Rights (SOAWR) hosted a side event calling upon African governments to prioritize gender equality, women’s rights and women’s empowerment in the Common African Position. The report of the High Level Committee, chaired by H.

E Ellen Johnson–Sirleaf was adopted at the Summit and later launched in N’Djamena. The CAP will inform the basis of Africa’s position in the global negotiation process on Post 2015 and currently highlights the importance of women’s empowerment under pillar 3 on People–centered development.

3.1. UWONET’s Role and Contribution

UWONET with support from the United Nations Joint Programme on Gender Equality (UNJPGE) steered a number of country level regional and national convenings and forums whose observations and recommendations have and continue to inform UWONET’s involvement and engagement with the post 2015 processes and spaces at national,

Africa region and global level. Key among the forums held include: 1) A national gender forum under the theme: *The Status of Gender Equality in the Socio–Economic and Political Uganda Today*, May 2013; 2) A regional Gender Forum in Gulu under the theme: *Rising Beyond the Barriers*, April 2014; 3) a parallel session held during the national CSO Fair 2014 under the theme: *The EAC Integration and Trade Agenda: Exploring Opportunities and Entry Points for Women*, June 2014; 4) a regional gender forum in Pallisa under the theme: *The Future We Want for our Women and Girls in Eastern Uganda: Building a Focus on Girls Education and Eliminating VAW*, July 2014.

4.0. Engaging African Governments

The momentum to forge alliances around a Common African Position on Post 2015 and subsequent negotiation at the global level presents an opportune moment for African organizations to engage with policy makers in the continent.

Uganda has long since been considered a champion in women’s political participation having reached the target of at least 30% of women in the national parliament and having a female Speaker of the National Assembly. This has been attributed to the explicit adoption of legal frameworks for a fixed minimum number of women representatives in parliament. Additionally, at least 40 percent of the ministers in Uganda are women. Efforts have also been made to improve the reproductive health of women in Uganda through the

provision of family planning supplies and services. However, just as is the case in several African countries, particular attention is required to address persistent discrimination against women on reproductive rights given the high incidences of unsafe abortion, child and forced marriages.

Engaging with the Government of Uganda is critical at the time when our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hon. Sam Kutesa is the incoming President of the UN General Assembly for the period September 2014– September 2015, a period when the Post 2015 Development agenda will be negotiated. Uganda will therefore play a pivotal role in steering the global community towards the adoption of the next development agenda. This is NOW our chance as Ugandans and Africans to do whatever it takes

to ensure that our interests and aspirations are taken on board.

In light of the above, FEMNET, Ipas Africa Alliance, Akina Mama Wa Africa, Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE), the United Nations Millennium Campaign (UNMC), the Africa Working Group, the National Agency for Development convened a High Level two day meeting co-hosted by the Government of Uganda between 23rd–25th of June 2014 to deliberate on the **Africa We Want**. The forum attracted women’s rights and CSOs from over 14 African Countries across the Continent to which UWONET participated.

The main output of this meeting was a position paper and UWONET is pleased to share the key highlights of the paper as presented below

for continued dissemination and engagement with the broader 2015 process:

The strong commitments stating “No person—regardless of ethnicity, gender, geography, disability, race or other status—is denied universal human rights and basic economic opportunities” by the Common African Position (CAP) was recognized. The document that was endorsed by the Heads of States at the African Union Summit and later launched in march 2014, notes the achievements of gender equality and women’s empowerment as key components of People Centered Development.

At the global level, goal 5 of the 17 focus areas in the zero draft of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has included gender

equality and women’s empowerment. However, it is essential to include women’s rights as gender equality and women’s empowerment is necessary but not sufficient to achieve a truly transformative and sustainable development agenda. In addition to the stand alone goal, it is essential that gender be a cross cutting priority across the entire framework.

In order to achieve our aspiration for Africa, it is imperative that we include women’s rights as this was the missing gap that led to the MDG 5 being termed as the “unfinished agenda” of the Millennium Development Goals. It is equally important to flag that we cannot achieve sustainable development without peace and good governance including gender parity—something that is clearly articulated in CAP.

The proposed priority areas therefore are:

- A. A transformative goal on gender equality, women’s rights and women’s empowerment.**
- B. Recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care work**—the burden of care falls disproportionately on women and girls and must be shared among men and women; the state; private sector and communities.
- C. Eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls**—in policies, laws and practices. This includes FGM, early and forced marriage. Recognizing the importance of positive cultural values, to work with men and women who are custodian of culture to eliminate harmful practices.

D. Universal access, to sexual and reproductive health and rights

–which would address unacceptably high levels of maternal mortality, teenage pregnancies, transmission of STIs, HIV/AIDS.

E. Access, control and ownership of resources and assets

including land, energy, credit, information and technology.

F. Mobilise domestic resources through innovative financing

such as curbing illicit financial flows, eliminating tax havens, instituting progressive taxation, gender-responsive budgets, reallocating military expenditures and eliminating corruption.

G. Ensuring gender parity in decision-making, transparent and accountable governance at all levels.

5.0. Conclusion

We urge you to keep the spaces open for meaningful CSO engagement in all stages of the formulation, implementation and monitoring of the Post 2015 development framework. We also call upon all citizens to look-out for spaces and

engage our leaders and government in all the above mentioned stages. What is presently required of you is to critically examine the above proposed areas and come up with the priorities and non-negotiable areas.

Contact;

The Executive Director

Uganda Women’s Network
Plot 710, Block 216, Mirembe Close
Bbuye–Kigowa, Ntinda, Kampala
P. O. Box 27991–Kampala, Uganda

Phone: +256 414 286 539,

Email: info@uwonet.or.ug

Website: www.uwonet.or.ug

Blog: <http://uwonetnews.blogspot.com>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/uwonet>

Twitter: @uwonet



UN JOINT PROGRAMME ON GENDER EQUALITY
Supported by UKaid from the Department for International Development