

# NAIROBI+21

## COMMEMORATING THE THIRD UN WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN



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Compiled by the African Woman and Child Feature Service, with support from the Heinrich Böll Foundation - Regional Office for East and Horn of Africa

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ACHPR</b>	African Charter on Human and People's Rights
<b>AWC</b>	African Woman and Child Feature Services
<b>BPFA</b>	Beijing Platform for Action
<b>CDF</b>	Constituency Development Fund
<b>CIDA – GESP</b>	Canadian International Development Agency – Gender Equity Support Project
<b>CODESRIA</b>	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
<b>CRC</b>	Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>CRP</b>	Constitution Review Process
<b>ERS</b>	Economic Recovery Strategies
<b>FEMNET</b>	African Women's Development and Communication Network
<b>GEE</b>	Gender Equality and Equity
<b>HBF</b>	Heinrich Böll Foundation
<b>KISE</b>	Kenya Institute of Special Education
<b>NBI+21</b>	Nairobi+21
<b>NCGD</b>	National Commission on Gender and Development
<b>NCHR</b>	National Commission on Human Rights
<b>NFLS</b>	Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategy (These strategies are accessible in their comprehensive form from: <a href="http://www.un.org/womenwatch/confer/nfls/Nairobi1985report.txt">http://www.un.org/womenwatch/confer/nfls/Nairobi1985report.txt</a> )
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>PRSP</b>	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
<b>UAF-A</b>	Urgent Action Fund - Africa
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCW</b>	United Nation's Conference for Women
<b>UNIFEM</b>	United Nations Development Fund for Women

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## **PREFACE**

Twenty one years ago, at the conclusion of the UN decade for women (1975 – 1985), the first international women's conference on African soil was held in Nairobi, Kenya. This conference presented an opportunity for new forms of organizing, that would more clearly and for the first time, be informed by the agendas of women from the South.

Dubbed the Third World Conference on Women, the Nairobi conference was held on 15 – 26 June 1985. Close to 1,500 official delegates from 150 countries participated in the meeting, with another 15,000 women attending a parallel NGO forum.

The parallel NGO Forum generated new strategies, for addressing the needs of women at all levels of society. Fundamentally, the Nairobi conference resulted in the development of the 'Forward Looking Strategies for the advancement of Women' which were intended to be a practical and effective guide for global action to promote greater equality and opportunity for women.

Taking the lead in 2006, the National Commission on Gender and Development, in partnership with women's organizations and development partners led the Nairobi +21 process, a series of events and activities which were designed to offer a critical space for the reflection on the commitments of the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (NFLS) and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA). This then culminated in the Nairobi Conference held on the 27th of October 2006, which was a commemoration of the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategy.

This publication therefore documents the landmark meeting for women in Africa and the rest of the world. Particularly focusing on how far Nairobi +21 has invigorated and transformed gender issues on the continent. Importantly, it captures milestones that will continue to encourage women in their quest for gender equality. Further, it reiterates the enduring priorities of engagement for gender equality that include political and economic empowerment for women, peace and security for development, ending violence against women, addressing socio-cultural norms that constrain women's lives, and increasing women's participation in key decision-making environments.

Gender equality is officially on the agenda of most governments, what is now needed is for governments to respond more positively in a structured way by establishing stronger institutional mechanisms, with stature and resources equal to the task of addressing the goals of gender equality and women's empowerment.

Dr. Jacinta Muteshi  
Chairperson,  
National Commission on Gender and Development



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

***“Gender mainstreaming is about transformation, it is about power relations and it is not an overnight miracle”***

*Leticia Shahani, the UN Undersecretary General to the Third UN World Conference on Women in Nairobi, 1985.*



The coming together of several national and international non governmental organisations under the auspices of the Nairobi+21 Initiative early 2006, to plan, organise and implement a series of events commemorating twenty-one years after the Third International Women’s Conference in Nairobi, was a great mark of solidarity in the continuing struggle for women’s empowerment in Kenya, Africa and the world.

Driven by the common desire to strengthen the discourse on equality and empowerment for women particularly in critical areas such as public leadership and governance, environmental concerns, health and reproductive rights, human rights and social justice, education and the concern for getting younger women into the debate, several organisations came together to spearhead the Nairobi+21 initiative - a process that was primarily dedicated to commemorating twenty one years after the Third International Women’s Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya in 1985.

The organisations who collectively provided critical input in the overall handling of the process included the National Commission on Gender and Development who hosted the process and played a key link role with the Government of Kenya; The African Woman and Child Feature Service who managed specific media and publicity roles as well as playing a key logistical role on the Ford Foundation funded activities which included sector reviews by various consultants from the region as well as the production of two journals – work which was essentially undertaken by the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa CODESRIA and Agenda Feminist Project. As well as The African Women’s Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) who played a critical role on the various aspects of the project.

Donor organisations including The Ford and Heinrich Böll Foundation, UNIFEM, UAF-A and CIDA/GESP, provided critical funding support to the process, by way of supporting various activities in the course of the year.

The Nairobi+21 process was initiated to provide a critical space for looking back at the commitments that were made during the 1985 Third International UN Conference on Women in Nairobi, which ended with the adoption of the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies. The goals of the NFLS were intended to offer a practical and effective guide for global action to promote peace, development and equality for women.

Twenty-one years after the 1985 Nairobi Women’s conference seemed an appropriate moment to both commemorate the historic conference, which was proudly hosted in the region, as well as to pause for reflection, consider the gains made, challenges and the changed context since the adoption of the ‘Forward Looking Strategies for Women’s Advancement’ at the Nairobi conference two decades ago.

The Nairobi+21 initiative was thus motivated by the need to:

- To reinvigorate debate around gender based issues on the continent.
- To inform work around gender equality in new ways that continues to be guided by the NFLS and BPFA.
- To capture milestones that will continue to encourage women.
- To hold Governments accountable for the obligations they undertook on behalf of women.
- To enable the youth identify with the goals of the NFLS and BPFA.
- To reflect on the partnership between the women's movement, civil society, faith based organizations, governments and donors in promoting social justice for women.

Several activities were identified and executed to mark this historic moment. These included the following:

1. Monthly special public gender forums starting May to October 2006. The series of six gender forums served an important role in providing critical space for reflection as well as expanding the dialogue around women's rights in the country and the region. They tackled various issues linked to quest for equality and empowerment of women in diverse areas such as politics and governance, education and economic development among others.
2. Sector reviews along six themes reflecting the core areas of the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies were carried out by consultants from the region. Roundtable meetings were organised to discuss and enrich each of the thematic papers for final publication into a book.

3. Media work which included development of a media strategy to ensure adequate publicity for the process as well as opening up critical opportunities for engaging different sectors of the Kenyan society into the ensuing dialogue was developed. Several forums bringing together leading editors and journalists were also organised as a way of getting the media into the ensuing debate.
4. Development of two journals dedicated to the process by the Council for Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) and Agenda Feminist project: a South African NGO. These were primarily commissioned to provide a scholarship angle to the work around Nairobi+21.
5. Artistic activity, which included Drama performances by schools in Kenya during the National Drama Festivals with a special focus on the Nairobi+21 process. This activity was conceived to give space for younger voices to actively engage with the issues central to the Nairobi+21 process.
6. Consultative meetings bringing together the 1985 alumni.
7. Tazama: a local television series targeting the youth, and Agenda Kenya: a television series aimed at providing a platform for diverse voices on contemporary issues, were used to involve young people in the debate.
8. The final conference marking twenty-one years after the Nairobi International women's conference was held on 27th October 2006 at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre where the 1985 conference was held.

The one day event was graced by President Mwai Kibaki who was the day's chief guest. The day saw the President affirm the government's commitment to pursue human rights and greater empowerment for women in Kenya. The President also observed

that the government had already made a mark on this commitment when it set up the National Commission on Gender and Development as an institutional platform for mainstreaming gender in development.

This came against the backdrop of a governmental commitment to raise the stake of women in public service by reserving 30% of positions for women, which the President had formally announced a few days prior to the conference. Soon after, the President also made a further commitment that would see Maendeleo Ya Wanawake leaders in every constituency become automatic members on Constituency Development Fund (CDF) committees.

Over 1,000 women, mostly from Kenya attended the Nairobi +21 Conference. They were drawn from international bodies, alumni, current and young women in leadership, Kenya Women Parliamentary Association members, Commissioners of NCGD and its secretariat staff, Permanent Secretaries in the government, women judges, development partners, young women born in 1985, officers of the Ministry of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services and representatives from women's organizations.

The morning sessions were dedicated to opening ceremonies that included presentations of communicates from different sectors of the women's movement in the country, The President's official address and entertainment from various groups including the Muungano National Choir, Kibera Youth Group and Fahari Africa from Eastern Province.

The afternoon was spent taking stock and reflecting on how the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies had impacted on women's lives; capturing milestones that would continue to encourage women and enabling the youth identify with the goals of the NFLS and BPFA. A way forward was also charted.

Most of the keynote speakers acknowledged that gradually things have changed for women in Kenya over the last two decades. Women's concerns are now on the public agenda. However, what is needed is the strong affirmation that there would be no going back.

The way forward mainly hinged on continued lobbying and advocacy for implementation of policies and laws as well as for enactment of bills already in place. Specific steps and recommendations from the plenary were that:

- a) Political parties should translate the affirmative action policies in their manifestos into reality.
- b) A monitoring tool should be developed to hold government departments accountable to the international conventions and declarations they sign on behalf of the country.
- c) Establishment of rape desks in each constituency, which will be given adequate resources to address the problem.
- d) The government should form a fund for women.
- e) The government should form a fund for orphans.
- f) Kenya women should create inter-generational linkages to mentor young women into leadership.
- g) Women of Kenya to lobby for adoption of the African Union 50-50 representation on gender equality.
- h) Women should work in partnerships to share and work out ideas.
- i) NCGD, government departments and NGOs should make use of retired professional women who have much to offer.

- j) A committee/task force should be established to oversee effective grassroots information dissemination structures. NCGD to facilitate dissemination of information.
- k) Women organizations and individuals to develop proposals and present them to NCGD with clarity on the nature of support they need.

It was proposed that a committee be formed to harmonize, consolidate and expand the recommendations.

On the whole, the Nairobi+21 process has taken close to one and a half years, and seen the strengthening of discourse on gender and development nationally and in the region. It is worthwhile to also note that the process resulted into due advantage for the National Commission on Gender and Development,

whose profile has now overwhelmingly grown in Kenya and the region.

The useful collaboration that saw various organisations including the Heinrich Böll Foundation, CIDA/GESP, UAF-A, and FEMNET work together on the planning and management of the process had many advantages. Key among these was the possibility for collaboration and working together on a common initiative.

The different competencies that were brought by the various organisations also ensured a maximization of efforts as well as resources. Additionally the collaboration enabled a more forceful public response and involvement in the process. Critical linkages for future partnerships were created hence ensuring a level of continuity for the dialogue that was started through the Nairobi+21 Initiative.

## BACKGROUND

### Historical Background and Rationale

Over the last thirty years, the United Nations has organized four major World Conferences on Women.



These have been held in various major cities across the globe; Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995). These gatherings have in the process brought together the world's governments as well as tens of thousands of women from civil society with the aim of lobbying for the development of global and national level action plans that fully bring attention to women's rights in society.

The only one of these conferences to have taken place in Africa was the Third United Nations Women's Conference hosted in Nairobi from 15th to 26th July 1985. It brought together close to 1,500 official delegates from around 150 countries. Its central purpose was to appraise the achievements of the UN Decade for Women set at the Mexico conference in 1975. The three most critical areas of concern identified by the Mexico Conference included promotion of equality between men and women, ensuring the full integration of women in development efforts, as well as increasing women's contribution to strengthening world peace.

The Nairobi Conference did not only mark the end of the women's decade, but also provided a

useful platform for appraising the gains as well as reaffirming the three goals of the women's decade - equality, development and peace for the period 1985-2000. The Nairobi conference also brought a new and expanded analysis of women's issues, broadening the framing of women's concerns and providing the first world consensus on a Plan for Action known as the Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women.

As the first International conference on women on African soil, the Nairobi Conference presented an opportunity for new forms of organising that would more clearly and for the first time be informed by the agenda of women from the South - agenda that had been developed, clarified and strengthened during the women's decade. Indeed Fatou Sow has argued that the women's decade "permitted stormy confrontations of ideas and actions regarding the notions of underdevelopment, women's roles in development projects, modernisation and progress, the transfer of (appropriate) technologies; the impact of the international division of labour and world capitalism on the condition of women; of oppression and sexual inequality.

The Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (NFLS) offered a practical and effective guide for global action for promoting greater equality and opportunity for women. The parallel NGO forum at the University of Nairobi provided opportunities for activists, academics and policy makers from around the globe to exchange ideas and experiences and to develop mechanisms that would influence their respective governments and the international community on key areas for women's empowerment.

In addition, the Forums helped generate new strategies, organizations and coalitions worldwide for addressing the needs of women at all levels of society. In Nairobi, the Forum was structured around eleven thematic areas: equality, development,

peace, education, health, employment, refugees and migrants, older women, young women and girls, women in emergency situations and the media.

Additionally, the Nairobi conference also presented the possibility to document the legacy of the UN decade for women. Dr. Jacinta Muteshi notes that by the time the Nairobi conference convened, a global women's movement had been strengthening in the years of the women's decade bringing an increasingly trans-national involvement of women activists in each others' struggles. What was learnt, understood and shared about women's common experience at the Nairobi conference would mark the beginning

of an expanded international women's movement. Indeed women's non-governmental organisations, already an integral part of the achievements women were making world-wide, were key players at the Nairobi meeting but would proliferate after the Nairobi conference.

Equally important, as Amirita Basu has argued, for many of these organisations "a new relationship emerged, in which the local and global became interconnected in more complicated ways... that began in 1985 and culminating in the Beijing Conference on women in 1995."

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## IMAGES OF THE 1985 CONFERENCE



## The 1985 Third World Women Conference (Nairobi)

The Third United Nations Women's Conference in Nairobi aimed at appraising the achievements of the women's decade as well as reviewing the obstacles to the goals of Equality, Development and Peace first set forth for the Woman's Decade. In consequence, the Nairobi meeting provided a global plan of action - the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to guide renewed commitment at both international and national levels for the advancement of women.

Thus in the formulation of the Forward-Looking Strategies for the advancement of women it was agreed that:

The Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women during the Period from 1986 to the Year 2000 set forth in the present document's concrete measures to overcome the obstacles to the Decade's goals and objectives for the advancement of women.

**Building on principles of equality** also espoused in:

- the Charter of the United Nations,
- the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
- the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
- the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,
- the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and
- the Declaration on the Participation of Women in Promoting International Peace and Co-operation.

The Forward-looking Strategies reaffirm the international concern regarding the status of women and provide a framework for renewed commitment by the international community to the advancement

of women and the elimination of gender-based discrimination. (NFLS: Paragraph 6)

## The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies (NFLS)

In focusing attention on the situation of women at the end of the women's decade, the Nairobi conference recognised that it was women of developing nations who were most adversely affected by prevailing conditions of *"drought; famine; debt; and low-incomes as a result of structural imbalances and the continuing critical international economic situation"* (paragraph 8). The conference thus recognised that *"in order to stem such negative trends and mitigate the current difficulties of the developing countries, which affect women the most, one of the primary tasks of the international community is to pursue with all vigour the efforts directed towards the establishment of a New International Economic Order founded on equity, sovereign equality, interdependence and common interest"* (paragraph 8). In seeking to grapple with women's continuing inequality the diverse experiences of women would thus shape the discussions about the gendered nature of development, equality and peace processes.

Substantively, the Nairobi Conference and Forward-Looking Strategies was therefore, a very significant conference for women in advancing global recognition of the roles that women play in myriad critical areas that enhance their advancement. Thus attention was directed on women's crucial roles in culture and the family; in ensuring women's reproductive rights and improving their health status; in their political and social empowerment; in the realisation of their human and legal rights; in their self-reliance and for the attainment of national development; in the protection and management of natural resources and in the quest for peace.

The three guiding goals of the women's decade - equality, development and peace – now linked

to three sub-themes - employment, health and education would define how and why women are disadvantaged, the specificity of their problems and how governments, NGOs and international agencies would work together to overcome the oppressive structures and barriers that challenge women.

As guidelines the Forward-Looking Strategies reiterate throughout each of the identified areas for specific action the principle that women's representation and involvement in all policies, plans and actions, especially in decision-making was paramount for the achievement of equality, development, peace and the advancement of women. As a plan of action, the Forward-Looking Strategies consistently provided in each area of specific action directions with respect to:

- Enhancing women's participation in planning, implementation and administration of critical areas of concern;
- The creation of opportunities and encouragement for women's education and training to strengthen women's capacity to participate in all spheres of life;
- Necessary measures that prioritise the development of infrastructures to deliver necessary services;
- Recognising women's key contributions in every sphere of life; and
- Improving the status of women through legislation and reform institutions.

## Twenty-One Years after Nairobi

The period after the 1985 Nairobi women's conference, has seen unlimited activities particularly from civil society players working on women issues. The manifestation of this has been visible in the exponential increase of civil society groups involved in policy advocacy on diverse issues affecting women, care and service provision

for women among others. Governmental responses to the issues articulated in the Forward - Looking Strategies have also been incremental over the years particularly with the adoption of affirmative action laws in some countries.

It is also worth noting that the discourse around the three core issues of equality, peace and development in relation to the welfare of women has been stepped up and expanded to cover the diverse issues of daily life, the challenges posed by culture, economics and politics in a changing world, and new emerging challenges such as HIV and AIDS. Indeed, most of the objectives set by the Nairobi Conference have been reiterated in various regional platforms adopted prior to the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women held ten years after the Nairobi gathering.

More than ten years into the post-Beijing era, the questions that one is bound to ask are therefore:

- To what degree has the agenda arising from Nairobi and Beijing conferences been implemented?
- Can we attribute any changes to these conferences?
- In what ways have these conferences advanced the cause of justice and gender equality, particularly in Africa?
- Are we any closer to realizing the ambitions that the world conferences seemed to embody?
- How did the Beijing action plan differ from or try to take forward the Nairobi Strategies?

In many respects, we now live in a world that is significantly different from that of the pre-Nairobi era. Some of the new realities include liberalization, HIV/AIDS and the technological revolution brought on by information communication technologies. Consequently, the society has to grapple with the

challenges arising from these changes. In terms of gender relations, HIV/AIDS has for instance had a particularly heavier toll on women as compared to men. Equally in regard to democracy and other

social movements, there are challenges faced by women and those working towards the advancement of women.

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## RATIONALE

### Why Nairobi+21



Working against such a backdrop, the need to commemorate twenty one years after the Nairobi conference was seen as an important activity that would not only create space for reflection, but also afford the

critical opportunity to concertedly rededicate to the cause of a just society that fully and truly recognizes the worth of women.

Thus the main conference was designed to coincide with the actual dates of the 1985 conference, and would bring together, women luminaries, women's organizations and the general public in a three tiered structure assessing what Nairobi was, what it achieved and what challenges prevail with regards to women's empowerment.

In addition, the commemoration was expected to create an inter-generational linkage between those that were, and those that are for the sake of sustainable consciousness. As such, the main focus involved targeting the younger generation of women particularly those born after 1985.

In a nutshell, Nairobi+21 hoped to achieve the following:-

1. Reinvigorate debate around gender issues on the continent.
2. Inform work around gender equality in new ways that continue to be guided by the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies and the Beijing Platform for Action.

3. Capture milestones that will continue to encourage those working towards the advancement of women.
4. Hold governments accountable for the obligations they undertook on behalf of women.
5. Enable the youth identify with the goals of the NFLS and BPFA.
6. Reflect on the partnership between the women's movement, civil society, faith based organizations, governments and donors in promoting social justice for women.

### Nairobi+21: The One Year Planning Phase

The first planning meeting on Nairobi+21 was held in Naivasha in September 2005. During this meeting, Dr. Carla Sutherland informed participants of Ford Foundation's desire to review its gender work in the East African region, over the last twenty years. This, she noted, was critical in creating understanding as well as informing the Foundation's programming in the next 10 years.

To do this successfully, Dr. Sutherland noted that there was need to work with other people and authorities outside the Ford Foundation, in order to realistically reflect the concerns of the region. Some of the key partners who later came on board and played indispensable roles in the planning and implementation processes include; the National Commission on Gender and Development, Heinrich Böll Foundation, Urgent Action Fund, Canadian International Development Agency – Gender Equity Support Project (CIDA/GESP), African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and the African Woman and Child Feature Service (AWC).

A steering committee bringing together a committed team sourced from each of these organizations, held regular weekly meetings from January 2006 culminating in October 2006 when the conference begun. The objective was to plan around the various aspects of the project. The Heinrich Böll Foundation provided ample space for the committee meetings.

The National Commission on Gender and Development - a body established largely as a result of the recommendations from the Nairobi Conference, played a central role both as conference host as well as in the coordination of the other activities in the course of the year.

Some of the key commitments by the various organisations represented on the steering committee were as follows;

1. The Heinrich Böll Foundation, Regional Office for East and Horn of Africa dedicated its monthly gender forums to the N+21 process commencing May 2006 to October 2006. HBF also supported the media and publicity activities of the Nairobi +21 process. This included support to AWC to undertake newspaper articles and commentaries as well as radio and television programmes on the process. AWC also hosted senior women journalists and editors' respectively to provide strategic input on the publicizing and covering of the events with HBF support. The HBF office also committed to pulling together a group of alumni from the 1985 conference to various consultative strategy sessions and fora ahead of the main conference in October.
2. CIDA/GESP took an active role in facilitating the

participation of young women in the Nairobi+21 process. CIDA/GESP fulfilled this role by supporting eighty young women from all over the country to attend the main conference in Nairobi. Connected to this, CIDA/GESP organized a forum for the young women on the eve of the conference and a debriefing a day after.

3. FEMNET worked closely with the Heinrich Böll Foundation to make possible the forums bringing together the 1985 alumni members. FEMNET was also an active player in the implementation of the media strategy.
4. UAF-A supported the process financially through FEMNET.
5. UNIFEM provided funding to the NCGD to host the national conference.
6. Ford Foundation supported the bulk of the Nairobi +21 activities, including the production of the "Tazama" and "Agenda Kenya" television programmes, the archival CD by the Kenya Indexing Project, the CODESRIA and Agenda Feminist Media special edition publications, the Kenya Schools and Colleges Drama Festival gender competitive category, the Godown Performing Arts Centre's Sigalagala Women's Festival and the Sector based reviews.

On the whole, the steering committee held weekly planning meetings at the Heinrich Böll Foundation offices. The fundamental issues under review mainly included funding, updates on calendar of activities, coordination and administrative roles and the media strategy.

## IMAGES OF THE PLANNING MEETINGS AT THE HBF OFFICES



## NAIROBI +21 ACTIVITIES

Several activities were identified, planned and implemented in the course of 2006 as a way of supplementing the Nairobi International Women's Conference. Other than the originally planned Ford Foundation supported activities, several partners including the Heinrich Böll Foundation, CIDA-GESP, FEMNET and Urgent Action Fund also implemented various activities linked to the theme of Nairobi+21, which in many ways added value to the whole exercise. These included:

### 1. Series of Special Gender Forums

A series of special gender forums sponsored by the Heinrich Böll Foundation from May to October 2006 were organised on a monthly basis to create greater awareness on issues related to Nairobi +21. The forums took place at the Nairobi Safari club.

The first of these special gender forums, jointly managed by the National Commission on Gender and Development and the Heinrich Böll Foundation, took place from May 2006 and had the occasion to bring together a wide repertoire of speakers ranging from women politicians, educationists, alumni of women from the 1985 International Women's Conference, activists, younger women born after 1985 as well as women policymakers. The forums provided useful space for directly engaging the public with regard to the key issues around the Nairobi+21 initiative.

The first forum that served to officially launch the Nairobi +21 process in May 2006, had the participation of all the partner organizations and affiliates, who informed participants of the rationale, motivation and intent to commemorate the 1985 Nairobi Conference. The multiple activities contributing to the process were grandly elaborated

to the audience, who offered suggestions and insights. They also expressed a desire to be involved in these interactions more often.

The forums further deliberated on the current concerns of women, which included; domestic violence, political participation, women's education and young women's issues. The forums were also honoured by the presence of luminaries such as Hon. Martha Karua, Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs and Hon. Julia Ojiambo, Chairperson of the Labour Party of Kenya and the first woman Assistant Minister in independent Kenya, who both urged for a reinvigoration of the women's spirit, and for concerted effort targeted at government recognition of gender concerns.

Moreover, the forums provided a critical space for the sharing of experiences among different generations of representatives of the Women's Movement via an "Inter-generational dialogue" pitting those that were around during the 1985 conference (also called the Alumni Women's Representatives), those that took on the mantle (Current Women's Movement Representatives), and the Young Women's Representatives (Emerging Leaders) with a view to understanding the gains made, as well as the challenges.

In the end, the forums helped inform and sensitise the participants on the gains and losses made in the last twenty one years, the key developments that have been witnessed in the evolution of the women's movement nationally and the link to developments within the global scenario. The forums stressed the need for strengthening the intergenerational linkages in furthering the debate around gender equality and women's empowerment.

## IMAGES SPECIAL GENDER FORUMS



## 2. Reunion and Fora of the Forum 85 Alumni

The Kenyan alumni of the 1985 Third Women's Conference were not left behind in celebrating the Nairobi +21 initiative. Through a series of reunion cum strategy meetings from August 2006 hosted at the Heinrich Böll offices, the surviving crop of committee members of the conference and its corresponding NGO forum, held various consultations charting out mechanisms for their contribution to the Nairobi +21 process. These meetings served not only to reunite the group for the first time since their initial dissolution after the original 1985 conference, but also to reignite the commitment of these cherished pioneers of women's activism to serve in their personal capacities post retirement.

The reunion meetings culminated in the participation of the alumni in two ways. Firstly, the alumni were incorporated into participating at the regularly scheduled gender fora as described above, in what was dubbed an "inter-generational dialogue forum" bringing together current and young women movement representatives. Secondly, the alumni organized a one-day consultative workshop to reunite a bigger group, and to strategize on either individual and/or coordinated initiatives to enhance women's advancement.

### ***Highlights of the "Inter-generational dialogue" Forum***

The gender forum held on the 31st of August 2006 was a remarkably one of a kind session. It provided a platform for the sharing of experiences among different generations of the Women's Movement; those that were around during the 1985 conference (also called the Alumni Women's Representatives), those that took on the mantle (Current Women's Movement Representatives), and the Young Women's Representatives (emerging leaders) with a view to understand the gains made.

In essence, it was a critical opportunity for a tripartite discussion on the issues, agenda and challenges facing the women's movement from each group's perspective. They explored the relationship between the three constituent groups, assessing and determining the areas that needed emphasis and strengthening.

The following represented the alumni: Njoki Wainaina; Founder of the African Women's and Communications Network (FEMNET) and gender consultant. Martha Mugambi who chaired the registration committee during the 1985 Conference and currently chairs the Regional Forum for American and African Business Women; and Esther Adagala; A communication and media specialist, wore two hats at the 1985 conference; both as an NGO and government delegate.

Current Women's Movement Representatives were Jean Kamau; a lawyer and Political scientist was an intern in Dr. Eddah Gachukia's office during the 1985 conference. She was initiated into the women's movement through participation in the conference's administrative and logistical duties. Daisy Amdany; a consultant on gender and human rights, Coordinator of Women's Consensus Building Committee during the Constitution Review Process (CRP). She considered herself as a beneficiary of all the work that has been going on in the women's movement and Dr. Margaret Hutchinson the Executive Director, Education Centre for Women in Democracy (ECWD); a lecturer at the University of Nairobi in Women and Agriculture and representative of the African continent on the board of the African Crop Science Society. Young Women's Representatives included Saida Ali; founder of the Young Women's Leadership Institute, Yvonne Khamati; the chair person of the Technical Committee, Environment affairs; Ford Kenya and Mary Njeri; the Deputy Executive Director, Education Centre for Women in Democracy (ECWD).

The forum helped inform and sensitise the participants on the gains and losses made in the last twenty one years on one of the themes of the Nairobi + 21 Project. The forum therefore dwelt on the requisite strategies for the strengthening of intergenerational linkages, in furthering the debate around gender equality and women empowerment. It was concluded that there was urgent need to reinvigorate the women's movement through ensuring the participation of the Alumni Women's Representatives, Current Women's Movement Representatives, and the Young Women's Representatives respectively to mobilise both the rural and urban women folk in Kenya to action.

### ***Highlights of the Alumni Consultative Workshop***

A special meeting of forum '85 alumni members held at the Hilton Hotel on Thursday 26th October 2006 was one of the many activities held on the eve of the Nairobi +21 conference. The meeting was aimed at bringing together all the women involved in the organisation of 1985 conference, reflecting on the achievements of the concerns of NFLS and BPFA (finished business), the unfinished business, and the state of the Women's Movement after 1985. The meeting was also meant to reunite the group of alumni women for the first time since their dispersion in 1985, as well as develop an action plan for the group post their retirement from the active women's movement.

In fulfilment of these objectives, the workshop participants brought with them memorabilia from

the 1985 conference, including the various vintage conference and forum reports, badges, scarves, bags and photographs – which items were displayed during the workshop and served to reignite memories of the auspicious occasion in 1985. Participants recounted with nostalgia their efforts (as students, women activists, civil servants, bankers, teachers, journalists etc) in the various committees (of Women in agriculture, Registration, Women in Politics, Women and armed conflicts, Women and Education, Women and Media, Women and Religion, Women and ageing, Women and Credit and Women and income generation) during the preparation of the '85 forum and specifically the inspiration drawn from one another.

The meeting then deliberated on the challenges that they have seen affront the women and the women's movement since their time, including the perceived disconnect between the national and grassroots level that has made it difficult to reach the woman at the grassroots. They also vilified the myth that there is a conflict between the grassroots women and the elite that had been used to fragment the women's movement. Discussions were also held on the increased women's workload perpetuated by escalating poverty levels that have served to fragment the women's movement further. They also deplored the fact that the solidarity among women was greatly weakened by the lack of support between women of different generations, especially the younger women.

## IMAGES OF THE ALUMNI CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOP



Strategies for the re-invigoration of the women's movement were also discussed, specifically the unity of the women of Kenya, concluding with the adoption and launch of a "Forum '85 network" to jumpstart the process of shepherding efforts to unify the women of Kenya and the women's movement. An 11 member committee was appointed to formalise the network, organise monthly meetings and programme and develop principles and strategies of the network's operations.

### **3. The Kenya Schools and Colleges Drama Festival**

The Ford Foundation sponsored a competitive category at the Kenya Schools and Colleges Drama Festival on gender and women's rights issues whose grand finale was held in Mombasa from 10th to 20th April 2006.

Art has proved to be one of the most graphic representations of themes touching both vices and virtues. The lessons taught are therefore too vivid to be forgotten. As a result, gender disparity injustices were masterfully and explicitly depicted through art. The aim was to provide a platform for young people to artistically apply their thoughts, skills and talents in reflecting the unfortunate face of gender issues, particularly the inequalities that women face in the society, twenty one years after the 1985 Women Conference held in Nairobi.

Over eighty of the one hundred and eighty four plays performed during the event were on gender issues. Drama festivals are normally a major highlight, thus incorporating art with gender issues was bound to lead to more public awareness in regard to gender disparity. It was also important to create an understanding of the fact that gender issues are not

a reserve of women to fight for justice single handed but the entire society had a role to play.

The winners of the Nairobi +21 themed events from the National School Drama Festival, performed at a special gala event at the Go Down Performing Arts Centre, Nairobi in September 2006. The winners included, St. Deborah Girls School for staging the winning choral verse and Mombasa polytechnic.

### **4. The Godown Performing Arts Centre's Sigalagala Women's Festival**

Further activities at the Godown Centre, branded Nairobi +21, included the hosting of a festival celebrating women performing artists. The idea was to appreciate the contribution these remarkable women have made in their different genre of music, and in essence, their ingenious creativity. The festival, which was dubbed the "Sigalagala Women's Festival" took place from the 5th to the 14th of October 2006.

The aim of the event was also to celebrate inspirational women in East Africa through music concerts and poetry performances, schools drama and dance, discussions and career days. Leading performers included the celebrated Bi Kidude, the diva of Zanzibari taarab music. Aged over 100 years old, the leading exponent of Zanzibar's "unyago" music entertained fans for several hours, proving herself as fit as she must have been decades ago.

The women's festival was an exciting platform to table issues and to appreciate local talent. The ten-days events saw the audience captivated, inspired and entertained as the performers exerted themselves to the limit, all in the noble course of celebrating womanhood.

## IMAGES FROM THE GODOWN



## 5. Archival Material Project

The Kenya indexing project, an online index of articles published in Nairobi newspapers on culture, law/governance, reproductive health, and other topics about which information is difficult to obtain, was sponsored by the Ford Foundation to put together archival material on how the Kenyan media has reported on gender issues in line with the NFLS and BPFA to date.

The media is indisputably the most powerful tool in creating public awareness around issues central to the advancement of any society. Not only does it raise awareness, the media also sets the public agenda.

In regard to its role in disseminating information and highlighting issues and in this case gender issues, a collection of 3651 articles from seven Kenyan

newspapers which brought together the press coverage of gender issues during the period 1985-2005 were put together on a CD with the support of the Ford Foundation. The expectation was that such a collection would provide useful ready material for research scholars, journalists, students, teachers, and others with an interest in the field of gender and women's rights.

The fundamental objective in putting together this collection was based on the understanding that it was only through tracking what has so far been covered in the media and the degree, that issues less covered can be outlined and accorded the necessary attention.

Furthermore, the society in accessing the information would be in a better placed position to forge a way forward and to make informed decision.

## THE ARCHIVAL CDs



## 6. Sector based reviews

Under the sponsorship of the Ford Foundation, a team of consultants was brought together to carry out sector based reviews which fundamentally were expected to link NFLS and BPFA along the following critical areas;

- (i) Human rights and social justice - It is unfortunate that rights which underscore the essence of been human are continually abused and placed at the periphery. Societies with the highest rate of social injustices consequently mark the least levels of development. The Nairobi-Forward Looking Strategies relate to the BPFA in their zeal to underscore human rights and to promote justice for all as long as people continue to live in a society. The kind of changes expected from women conferences can only be attained if the environment is conducive enough and if there is respect, dignity and well being among people.
- (ii) Environment and sustainable development - The society cannot exist in a vacuum. The environment is therefore important as it forms a background from which all form of development can be attributed. Development is not enough and cannot add much value if it is not sustained. These are some of the issues which bind the NFLS and Beijing, inextricably.
- (iii) Education - The need for people to attain quality education in any society cannot be overemphasised. Education is key to the attainment of the highly needed levels of development .In societies where people have the leverage to access this intellectual necessity; their living standards are consequently remarkable. NFLS underscored these insights generated during the Beijing conference.
- (iv) Media art and culture - These are the components which make one society distinct

from the other .The need for a growing and diverse media is crucial as is art and culture which in essence set people apart. NFLS and Beijing connect at this level, where there is a tangible appreciation of the role media, art and culture play in achieving, sustaining and reflecting the transformations people within the society have made.

- (v) Sexuality and reproductive health - Every individual has a right to enjoy what World Health Organisation , in relation to reproductive health ,defines as the ``complete physical, mental and social well being `` This is a fundamental issue that further strengthened the link between the NFLS and the BPFA.
- (vi) Governance - A society is a vivid reflection of the nature and of significance, the society's face of governance. Leadership is key to, for instance, the degree to which human rights issues are respected and social injustices brought to book. Further, sustainable development among other collective achievements can only be attained if people have unwavering faith in and are in support of the governance of the day.

Fundamental issues of masculinity and its implication on gender issues were also explicitly discussed. Later, some of these papers were presented at the monthly gender forums organised by the Heinrich Böll Foundation.

These reviews have been received and edited for final presentation in a publication format.

## 7. Six special television features of TAZAMA and four part AGENDA-KENYA special talk-show series

Media Development for Africa (Medeva) through the support of the Ford Foundation took up a gender campaign that would take stock of the objectives of Forum 85 through its programme “*Tazama*” – a special television series targeted at and appealing to

the youth and “**Agenda Kenya**” a leading forty-five-minute talk show aired on television and radio in Kenya. The objective of the TV programmes was to establish and highlight the gains made in improving the status of women in Kenya since the landmark conference.

***For it's Tazama programme, Medeva decided on a cross generational approach in highlighting the status and gains achieved by women in Kenya, with the aim being to engage mature women - preferably those who had participated in the conference – on the critical areas of concern highlighted at the forum and then have them introduced to the viewers, a younger generation of women whom they felt embodied the gains made for Kenyan women since the hosting of the 1985 conference.***

12 key areas were identified around which the series of TV programmes would be formatted. These included: *Women and Health* featuring Prof. Njeri Ngugi, lecturer University of Nairobi School of Medicine & Jane Wangari, former commercial sex worker. *Women and Media* featuring Eunice Mathu, Owner Parents Magazine, & Sheila Amdany, Proprietor Radio Simba FM. *Women and Education* featuring Sara Ruto, Lecturer Kenyatta University, & Halima Adan Sora, Teacher Eastleigh Boys High School. *Women and Law* featuring Rita Shako, Legal consultant & Jane Gitau, House wife. *Women and Arts* featuring Helen Mtawali, Music trainer and artist & Bi. Kidude, Elderly Taarab music artist.

*Women and Entrepreneurship* featuring Evelyn Mungai Owner Evelyn College of Design & Carol Munyua Business Lady in Wangige). *Women and HIV/AIDS* featuring Kamau Ndun'gu, SAFE GHETTO, Aids Theatre Group & Justa Thurania, Pumwani Health Centre). *Women and Sports* featuring Hellen Chemtai, former hockey captain, & Elizabeth Olamba, Sports Coordinator Kenya Prisons. *Women and Environment* featuring Maggie Koli, UN Youth Rep. Environment & Paulina Nadokila, Housewife in Ngong). *Women and Religion* featuring Judy

Mbugua , Religious Leader, & Naima Wamaitha, Chairperson Muslim Women Group). *Women and Politics* featuring Philo Ikonya, Freelance Journalist & Karen Magara, Aspiring MP, South Mugirangu) and the *Status of Rural Women* featuring Martha Ropp Civic Leader, & Ann Chirchir, Rural farmer both from Eldoret)

After an in-depth research and production process 12 - Six minute Gender features were aired on Tazama in January 2006. The features brought out the reality of the progress of change in societal attitudes towards gender issues. The women (and men) featured in the campaign were drawn from diverse social economic, professional and educational backgrounds and political spheres and this gave diverse nuances of thought on the issue of struggle for equality.

The features were very structured and uniformly directed and were packaged as a Tazama special campaign on women. After airing the features the reactions indicated that this was a key instance where women issues had been comprehensively discussed and the profile of the gender discussion raised from the typical 'battle of the sexes' to a serious encapsulation of what women are doing and need to do in order to participate fully in the development of the country. These features were also produced by two young women who are also a part of a new generation of women focused on playing their part in the development of the country. The programmes were aired on prime time television across Kenya and were well received by over half a million viewers from across the country.

The gender features clearly captured the opinions and attitudes towards the struggle for gender equality in the county. The majority of people featured in the campaign and even those who gave their reactions and feedback on the issues raised, felt that there have been some improvements in most social cultural and political spheres. But more

definitely needs to be done. The responses mirrored the fact that Kenyan women are slowly but surely breaking the barriers that have been the bottlenecks to their adequate participation in the development process. These bottlenecks include lack of access to information, land, credit and better health among others. A majority felt more positive change will come if and when policies, laws and structures to tackle poverty and retrogressive attitudes and beliefs, are formulated and implemented. It was also encouraging to note that the younger generation of women are more positive about their role in development probably because of increased access to information and awareness of their rights.

***The four part Agenda Kenya special talk show series was primarily aimed at providing a platform for diverse voices on contemporary issues and debates around gender and development in Kenya.***

Again the four part series basically means that, four different episodes were dedicated to debates around gender and development issues. The series tackled the topics of *Women and political participation* featuring Dr. Josephine Ojiambo – KANU official and Gender and Human Rights Activist; Paddy Ahenda, MP, Kasipul-Kabondo; Muthoni Wanyeki – Political Scientist and Former Exec. Dir. FEMNET; Ken Ouko – Sociology Lecturer, University of Nairobi; and Lorna Amutojo – African Director FIDA as panellists. *Gender and citizenship* panelled Dr. Marion Mutugi – Director, Institute of Tropical Medicine & Infectious Diseases – Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology; Sam Ongoro – Country Director, Computer Literacy Initiative of Kenya; Betty Murungi – Executive Director, Urgent Action Fund – Africa; Jacqueline Kamau – Advocate of the High Court of Kenya and Tony Odera – Lawyer and Legal Counsel/Programme Officer Child Rights Advisory Documentation and Legal Centre (CRADLE).

The third show on *Sexual and reproductive health* featured Dr. Ekuru Aukot – Executive Director, Kituo Cha Sheria; Dr. Laboso Abonyo – Commissioner,

National Gender and Development Commission; Dr. Njoki Fernandes – Resident, Obstetrics & Gynaecology, University of Nairobi; Pastor Ezra Okioma – Nairobi Central Seventh Day Adventist Church and Millie Odhiambo – Executive Director, Child Rights Advisory Documentation and Legal Centre (CRADLE). Finally, the last in the series on the *Role of men in promoting gender equity* invited Nderitu Njoka – National Chairman, Maendeleo ya Wanaume; Phoebe Asiyo – Chair, Focus for Women Leadership and former MP, Karachuonyo; Prof. Wanjiku Kabira – Consultant, Collaborative Centre on Gender and Development, Professor of Literature, University of Nairobi; Bwire Miller – Lawyer and Kennedy Otina – Coordinator, Men for Gender Equality Now.

The Agenda Kenya show successfully offered the crucial forum to stage, debate and realise a way forward in light of the various profiled gender and development issues in the society. With a well versed panel from the academia, civil society, government and political sectors, the audience was able to engage and exchange thoughts on the topics offered, and contributed towards making gender disparity and injustices a thing of the past.

## **8. A special edition of the CODESRIA-bulletin**

Through the support of the Ford Foundation, a special edition of the CODESRIA bulletin was commissioned to provide space for intense academic reflection by African scholars on what the achievements and challenges have been since the UN International Women's Conference, Nairobi in 1985.

The 1985 conference stipulated certain objectives and or goals it hoped to achieve after all the concerted effort. Many years later, it was therefore fundamental to look back and evaluate the extent and or degree to which those goals have been achieved.

Most of the contributors questioned the structural inequalities and social hierarchies manifest in

our society today which are informed more by stereotypes and prejudice than by the scientific reality of men and women as dynamic social actors, and how these as a consequence limit the rights of women.

The bulletin examined how the intellectual discourse on gender and development issues in Africa has evolved. Moreover, the bulletin sought to evaluate the ways in which NFLS and the BPFA+10 shaped and or transformed the face of this intellectual discourse on gender and development issues in Africa.

## **9. A special edition of AGENDA Journal**

Agenda, a feminist media organisation at the forefront of feminist publishing in South Africa, produced a “Nairobi+21 journal” that reflects 21 years of women’s activism since the Nairobi International Women’s Conference held in 1985. The journal, produced with the support of the Ford Foundation sought to inform a process of inter-generational dialogue between the generation of activists who attended the Nairobi Conference and a present day younger generation, who have more recently added

their voices in challenging gender inequality and agitating for gender justice. The journal is a critical resource for African and international gender activists and researchers alike. It encourages debate on the state of African women’s rights movements and proposes strategies and ways forward.

Contributors to Agenda’s Nairobi+21 journal advanced critical debate on how much has been achieved in the last 21 years since the Nairobi conference of 1985, the first women’s conference on African soil, and what still needs to be done for gender justice to become a reality. Writers also investigated whether the forward-looking strategies developed at the conference have been a useful instrument in the fight for women’s rights and if theories have translated into practice.

Each contribution analysed a different topic with regard to women’s rights movements, including media and Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), environment, activism, male gender activism, peace-building, HIV and AIDS and motherhood.

## CODESRIA / AGENDA BOOKS



## **10. Senior Women Journalists and Editor's Meetings:**

As one of the activities preceding the main conference on the 27th October 2006, the African Woman and Child Feature Service organized various breakfast meetings with senior women journalists and editors respectively from the Kenyan media.

The aim was to enable a process of reflection between senior editors and journalists, particularly in regard to how journalists have covered issues affecting women, attitudes within media houses, the challenges and opportunities for widening the debate on gender issues.

The first senior women journalists meeting was held on 17th May 2007, and brought together a wide array of prominent women journalists from across the range of print and electronic media. The meeting served to inform the journalists on the Nairobi +21 process and rationale, and invited participants to think through the role they could play in opening up the spaces for reflection and invigorate debate around the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies and the struggles of women since the 1985 conference. From the meeting, a strategy was put in place to have a collaborating engagement between the journalists and the partner organizations to ensure that news

items on various issues were sourced, interviews arranged and pieces published in the newspapers and electronic programmes.

Suggestions were also made to have the partner organizations organize sessions with editors of media houses who usually dictate the news items that would go into the day's news. This suggestion facilitated the organization of a subsequent Editor's breakfast meeting on the 6th of July 2006 organized by AWC. During the meeting, the editors from the mainstream and alternative media houses received presentations on the Forward Looking Strategies and the challenges of their implementation, and discussed the viabilities of considering their facilitation of publication of news items on the issues raised.

In a final preparatory move, AWC organized a women's journalist meeting on the penultimate date of the conference in which an analysis by the Kenya Indexing Project showing the trends of gender issue reporting was discussed. The poor findings of the analysis motivated a call for increased partnerships between the media and gender based organizations to ensure that a learning and knowledge based environment was created for individual journalists and editors, which would have a longer term impact on changing newsroom attitudes towards gender.

## SENIOR WOMEN'S BREAKFAST MEETING



## Media Coverage of Nairobi +21

From the multiple initiatives of the media strategy coordinated by AWC, and FEMNET, the Nairobi +21 conference and the various attendant activities received extensive coverage both in the local as well as international print and broadcast media (See attached media cuttings). Various newspaper articles, pull outs and commentaries highlighting the original 1985 conference, the Forward Looking Strategies and the Beijing Platform for Action agenda were broadcast, generating public discourse on the issues and challenges afflicting Kenyan women and serving to bring to the fore the agenda of Kenyan women. At the same time, electronic media coverage of the events through the FM radio stations and the main television broadcasters served to further disseminate information, and encourage discussion

on the Nairobi +21 event and its accompanying commemorative agenda. AWC also set up a Nairobi+21 website which became an important tool for very many people within and outside the country with an interest in the Nairobi+21 process.

***The Conference Paper;*** In addition, AWC put together a comprehensive and enlightening conference paper covering issues of peace, equality and development. The illuminating newspaper was funded by the Heinrich Böll Foundation and the objective was to create public awareness around issues core to the advancement of this country; peace, equality and development.

The pan-African audience was similarly updated with the progress of the commemorative event through media articles from FEMNET's bilingual centre based in Nairobi.

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## 11. Young Women's Briefing Sessions

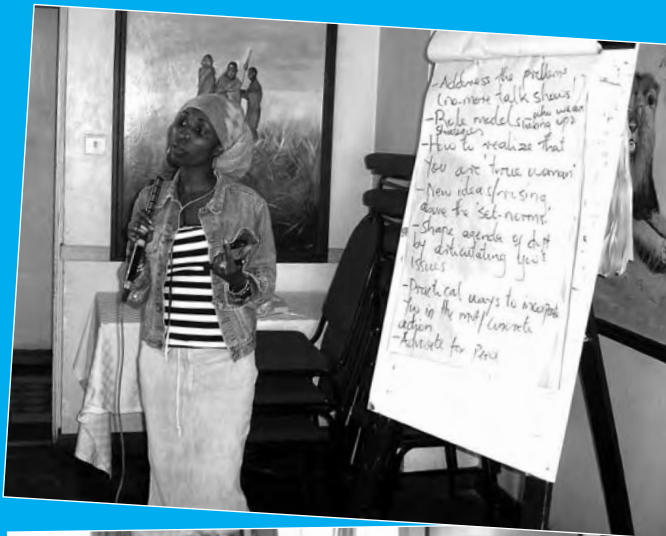
A crucial objective of the Nairobi+21 commemorative events was to engage young women born after the 1985 conference and to get them interested and involved in gender work. As such, a group representing a broad spectrum of young women ranging from those in remote geographical locations, those from rural setups, those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, physically challenged/ or HIV positive, those from informal settlements, institutions of higher learning, those in national/ local leadership and outstanding young professional women were selected to participate at the conference. With the support of CIDA – GESP, over 80 young women from the varying backgrounds were facilitated to attend the conference.

At a pre-conference briefing session held on the eve of the conference, the young women representatives held discussions with a view to enabling the diverse group come to speed with the UN conferences to date (particularly the 1985 Nairobi conference) and most significantly the emerging Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (NFLS). Facilitated by the Young

Women Leadership Institute (YWLI), the session was held at the Six Eighty Hotel in downtown Nairobi, and served to familiarize the group with the NFLS within the context and realities of young women; exploring the different issues affecting young women in their diversity; defining moments of the women's movement to date; identifying role models; defining strategies of bridging the inter generational gaps; situating young women in the women's movement; enabling young women shape their agenda and developing a way forward/action plan.

The conference itself provided a space for young women to present a communiqué to the president and other delegates, which highlighted the issues pertinent to young women within the framework of women's concerns. Thereafter, in a post-conference debriefing session, the group acknowledged their participation at the conference but reiterated the need for a cohesive women's movement that acknowledges the role of young women, identifying the unique challenges and needs of the group but more so, the contributions that they can make to the movement.

## YOUNG WOMEN'S BRIEFING SESSIONS



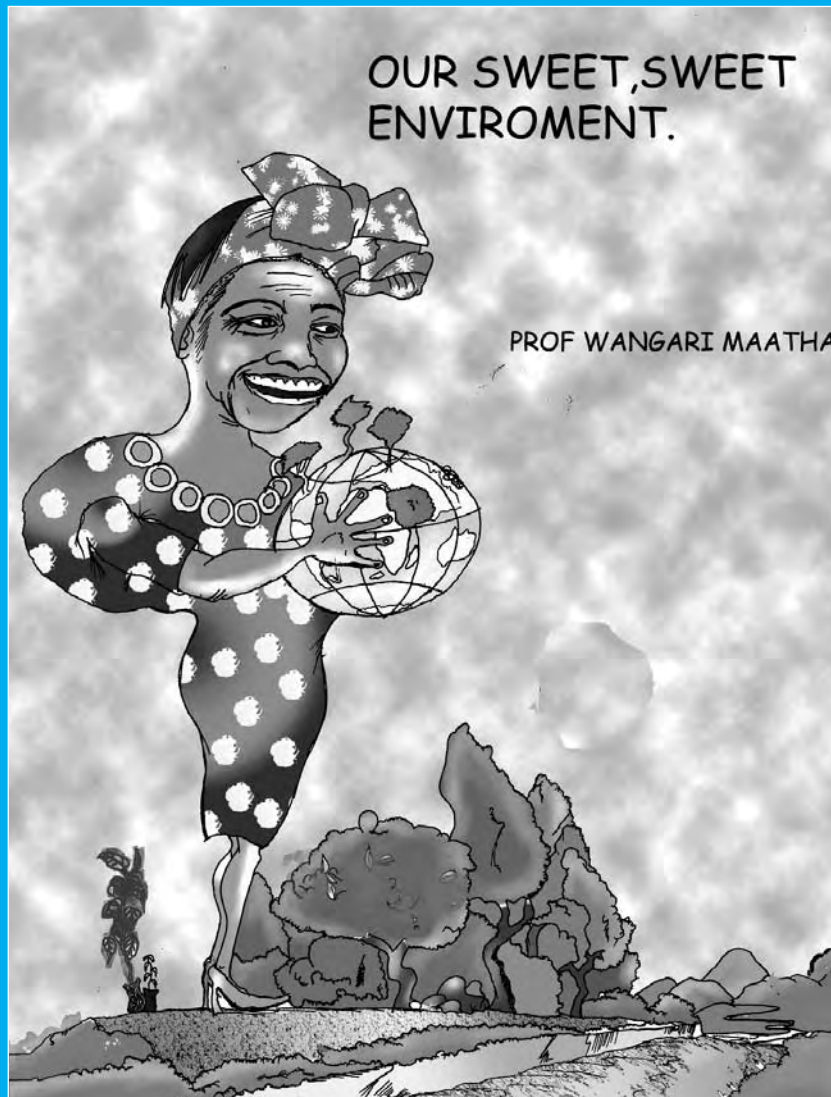
## 12. FEMNET cartoonist's competition

FEMNET organized a cartoonist competition that was held at the Kenyatta International Conference Center, Nairobi, on October 27, 2006 in tandem with the conference. The competition was part of FEMNET's Cartoon Exhibition under the theme – "Reflections on Nairobi+21" in which the organization partnered with the East African Cartoonist Association (KATUNI).

The aim of the exhibition was to promote an appreciation of cartoons as communication tools for awareness creation and generation of debate

on gender issues, and was organized to mark the achievements of African women since the 1985 Nairobi conference. Voting for the cartoon competition was done by the public that attended the Nairobi +21 conference, through a secret ballot. Eighteen year-old Alex Kirui emerged winner having received 42% of the total votes. The second prize went to Festus Mateso, a cartoonist working with the Kenya Times Daily, who managed 23% of the votes, while Alphonse Omondi, a freelance journalist, won the third prize after managing 21% of the votes.

## WINNING CARTOON AND WINNER PHOTO



## THE NAIROBI +21 CONFERENCE

This was the key event of the process, to which all the organisations represented in the steering committee were involved.

This event brought together a wide range of organizations that make up the women's movement in Kenya, as well as international personalities from across the continent and overseas to (a) reflect on what has happened since 1985; (b) to facilitate a cross-generational conversation on the movement and to secure gender equality and women's empowerment (c) to reflect on the impact of the Nairobi conference on the global women's movement.

The National Commission on Gender and Development took a lead role in managing the final steps to the actual conference on the 27th of October 2006. The conference was held at the Jomo Kenyatta International Conference Centre, the very venue for the Third UN International Women's Conference twenty-one years earlier. Tents were set up at the courtyard where several women's organisations displayed a creative array of products representing the diversity of issues and approaches on gender and women's empowerment that various national level and grassroots based women organisations in the country continue to grapple with in the search for equality and women's rights.

Over 1,000 women, mostly from Kenya attended the Nairobi +21 Conference. They were drawn from international bodies, alumni, current and young women in leadership, Kenya Women Parliamentary Association members, Commissioners of NCGD and its secretariat staff, Permanent Secretaries in the government, women judges, development partners, young women born in 1985, officers of the Ministry of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services and representatives from women's organizations.

The morning sessions were dedicated to opening ceremonies that included presentations of communiqués from different sectors of the women's

movement in the country, the President's official address and entertainment from various groups including the Muungano National Choir, Kibera Youth Group and Fahari Africa from Eastern Province.

Speaking at the Conference, Dr. Jacinta Muteshi - the National Commission on Gender and Development's first chair hailed the Government of Kenya for the remarkable steps it had taken to put in place an institutional mechanism such as the National Commission on Gender and Development for mainstreaming gender issues into national development.

The establishment of the Gender Commission, she said, was a response to the specific call of the first resolution of the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies that prioritized the establishment in every country of a high level Government body to advise, implement and monitor progress towards gender equality. In fulfilling its mandate, the Gender Commission was seeking to become the leading national institution providing oversight and putting forward proposals to realize gender equality as a democratic and human rights value in all aspects of development for a fair and just society.

The Nairobi Forward - Looking Strategies of 1985 directed all to the necessary frameworks and mechanisms for gender equality work. Thus in commemorating twenty-one years, the world was only just but affirming the importance of the duty of both the public and private sectors in taking responsibility as well as being held accountable for gender equality.

She emphasized that the conference expectations were to reflect upon the extent to which Kenya had implemented its international commitments to women, and whether such commitments indeed advanced justice and the dreams of Kenyan women. Additionally, the forum would seek to strengthen inter-generational dialogue among women as well

as considering the necessary involvement of men.

Fundamentally also, the forum was to provide an opportunity to engage Government, political parties, women's organizations, civil society organizations, and faith based organizations, in a substantive way in:

- Building on the progress made since 1985; and
- Recognizing that mainstreaming gender will be an indispensable tool for transforming public decision-making; and for the creation of the necessary equitable partnerships between women and men for sustained national development.

In his keynote address at the conference, H.E. the President Mwai Kibaki pointed out how much of an honour it was for him to participate at an important forum called to reflect on the status of women not only in Kenya, but also in Africa and the world. He further outlined the importance of the Nairobi Forward - Looking Strategies, and the responsibility they put on every country to establish a high level Government body to monitor and implement progress towards Gender Equality.

He outlined some of his government's achievements in this regard. For instance, the establishment of the National Commission on Gender and Development by an Act of Parliament in 2004 as a leading national institution central to the realization of Gender Equality and Equity (GEE) in all national processes. This, he said, came from the recognition that there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women.

In order to push ahead the Women's agenda in Kenya, the Kenyan Government had also put in place the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, and given it powers to investigate and prosecute any abuse of the Social, Economic and Political rights of women and men, boys and girls.

The President urged the conference to give due recognition to emerging challenges like HIV/AIDS among girls and women, the trafficking of girls and women who are forced to work as prostitutes and slaves, and the increasing rates of violence on women both in the private and public domain. He pointed out that new strategies must aim at giving women a secure environment where they have the right to live in dignity and peace.

In a nutshell, the president affirmed the Kenya government's commitment to the progress and empowerment of women across all sectors of society. This he noted had been addressed by way of concrete steps taken to fulfil the principles of Gender Equality and Equity in meeting the Socio-economic challenges for women and men in this country, especially with regard to the national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) and the Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS).

The President also underlined the fact that although the current parliament had the most number of women legislators in the country's history; it had clearly been an up-hill task for women to get into leaderships positions at all levels within political and legislative bodies in order to achieve parity with men.

He said it was imperative that a requisite Affirmative Action Strategy (AAS) be put in place to secure more seats for women not only in parliament, but also in other public offices where their presence is minimal. He urged political parties to consider ways to engender their structures and make them men and women friendly, while encouraging equal participation of both sexes. (Full text of the President's speech is annexed).

Communiqués from the current women's movement representatives, young women and rural women representatives (similarly annexed) highlighted this position, emphasizing on the issues that affected each of their respective constituencies to the

delegates, and called for continued effort by both women themselves and the state in enhancing women's empowerment.

The current women movement representatives recognized the efforts by the government, in passing legislation and policy that enhances the status of women, including the passing of the Sexual Offences Act as well as the 30 per cent affirmative action decree in regard to the appointment to civil service positions.

However, the representatives decried the increased levels of insecurity burdened on women, including the rise in incidences of domestic and sexual violence, the burden of HIV/AIDS on women and the feminization of poverty. Through the communiqué, they called on government effort to enact and enforce legislation that protects and upholds the human rights and dignity of women and girls and asked for concrete measures to end the culture of impunity and enforce punitive action against perpetrators of crimes against humanity particularly rape and other forms of gender based violence;

Further, the representatives called for the National Commission on Gender and Development to be moved to the office of the President with the requisite resources to ensure women's equitable representation and effective participation in peace, governance and development processes at national and regional levels is promoted, and further reiterated the call for an implementation of affirmative action for women at 50% minimum quota as set out by the AU at all decision making levels. To achieve this, the communiqué sought for guaranteed economic opportunities for women to access credit and own property including land, but more so, for the establishment of financial institutions and initiate investments to address gender inequality

The young women's communiqué reminded the delegates of their rightful place as young women to be heard, but more importantly, served to demand

for the recognition of the abilities, potential and willingness of the younger generation in taking up the mantle, and in building an environment where the rights of women are both a means and an end to development. They sought for affirmative action within affirmative action to ensure fair representation of young women in initiatives for advancement of women and girls and sought for the improvement of the capacity of young women to fully participate in national development processes. Young women identified issues that are of particular concern to them, including media, HIV/AIDS, employment and workplace, peace and security, sexuality rights and reproductive health services, early pregnancy and unsafe abortion, health, early marriage, ICTs, education and training and called for state and non-state intervention to ensure that the issues were adequately addressed.

The rural women's communiqué was more concise, and recognized government initiative in encouraging rural women's empowerment, more particularly through the rural health programmes, and the free primary education scheme. However, they emphasized that there were many challenges facing rural women including insecurity arising from unemployment amongst the youth, corrupt local law enforcement officers, lack of implementation of policies at the grassroots level, difficulties in accessing agricultural loans from institutions such as the Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC), lack of export market information and the exploitation of rural farmers by the international agricultural trading system.

The rural women's communiqué called for additional efforts in mainstreaming gender in rural institutions, and also called for the establishment of a fund for HIV/AIDS orphans to relieve child and grandmother "surrogate mothers" who were predominant in rural settings. They finally called for government to improve rural infrastructure especially roads, so as to aid in diversifying the marketing of agricultural

produce that is the mainstay of rural economic development.

Finally, the meeting's afternoon session served to reflect on the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies, and analysed their implementation 21 years later. The session was spent taking stock and reflecting on how the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies had impacted on women's lives; capturing milestones that would continue to encourage women and enabling the youth identify with the goals of the NFLS and BPFA.

Most of the keynote speakers acknowledged that gradually things have changed for women in Kenya over the last two decades. Women's concerns are now on the public agenda and many issues and concerns had been put in place. However, what was needed was a strong affirmation that the journey was still far from over, and concerted effort was required before women were able to reap the fruits of the forward looking strategies. The way forward mainly hinged on continued lobbying and advocacy for implementation of policies and laws as well as for enactment of legislation already in place.

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## EVENING GET TOGETHER ON THE EVE OF THE NAIROBI+21 CONFERENCE



## IMAGES FROM THE NAIROBI+21 CONFERENCE AT THE KICC



## REFLECTIONS



*“The battle for gender equality cannot be won unless women act collectively; that the mission of a fair and just society was a long journey and that the vision remains the same and is characterized by the fight for*

*equality. Women of Kenya have won some battles but the war remains to be won. The challenges are many and they include poverty, under representation, gender based violence, among many others.”*

**Professor Collette Suda,  
Commissioner, NCGD**

During the latter sessions of the conference, various contributors engaged in reflection of the 1985 conference and its Forward Looking Strategies and the impacts that have been had in the struggle for women's empowerment within the women's movement, the United Nations and other regional bodies in Africa. These reflective moments that serve to guide future action plans and strategies are captured in summary herein below:

### **The impact of the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies**

#### **i) On the Women's Movement in Africa**

Njoki Wainaina, co-founder of FEMNET began by recounting that during the 1985 UN Women's Conference in Nairobi, the city was taken over by women of the world. Kenya NGOs were given the mandate to host and prepare the agenda. The agenda was prepared from grassroots and culminated in a forum at Egerton College where themes – 13 of them – were developed. This was followed by

a regional conference in Arusha that was held in 1984 to work out details. African women met the day before to finalize and agree on the agenda. Throughout the planning and implementation of the conference, women of Kenya and indeed of the continent demonstrated shared inspirations, unity and commitment to the movement.

Among the activities the NGO forum accomplished during the 1985 conference were:

- Took women of the world and showed them NGOs' activities at all levels.
- Declared and affirmed that *we are women of the world and that the world is our country*.
- Demonstrated that women had a common agenda, which has not changed.
- Demonstrated the power and energy within women - but sadly men were watching.
- Generated the spirit of Nairobi, which travelled world wide and earned global recognition.
- The Forum allowed regional integration.
- The Forum saw the formation and acceptance of development language terminologies.
- Participated in creation of regional and international networks, such as FAWE, AAWORD and FEMNET among others.
- Resulted in recognition of NGOs by African Union and State Governments.

Through the formation of the 1985 Alumni Forum, she said, the Kenya women would create inter-generational linkages to mentor the young women into any leadership position.

#### **ii) On the Work of United Nations Worldwide**

Ms. Fumi Alexander, UNIFEM's Country Programme Officer represented the Regional Director, Ms Gumbonzvanda. She examined the various forums where women issues have featured – Vienna

Conference on Human Rights in 1993, Cairo in 1994, Beijing in 1995, Millennium Development Goals 2000, among others.

She credited the NFLS with redefining the space for talking about the development of women's issues. Expanding this space, Ms Alexander said, had not only forced the UN to work closely with the civil society organizations but had already led to the infusion of the language of rights in the work of United Nations.

"Issues of the girl child, sexual abuse, reproductive rights and choices have now become part of the UN development agenda" participants were informed. She however cautioned on the continuous erosion of some of the gains made by women as cases of sexual violence and gender based violence were rampant. She extolled the importance of transformative leadership for the benefit of women and girls and challenged women appointed to leadership roles to make an impact. This, she pointed out, would pave the way for others.

Showing initiative in finding out the criteria for prioritization of issues on the national agenda, she said, was crucial since this was threatening to marginalize women's issues.

Despite the above achievements, Ms Alexander stated, a lot still remained unchanged and needed to be addressed, some of which were:

- Erosion of gains as evidenced by increase of sexual abuse;

- Unpacking patriarchy and putting it back to development agenda;
- Lack of transformative leadership;
- National gender machineries not effective as they tend to practice tokenism;
- How UN can strengthen gender machineries;
- How to make government committed and accountable.

### iii) On the Regional Bodies in Africa

Ms. Thokozille Ruzvidzo, Director of the African Centre for Gender and Social Development, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia challenged participants to reflect on what the 21 years meant to them at personal level. *"We need to ask our governments what they have done in furtherance of women's issues in their countries. We need to demand more resource allocation of gender ministries both at the human and financial level, while giving an overview of how the strategies adopted during the NFLS have impacted regional bodies in Africa".*

She urged women to push for 50-50 representations in leadership roles as she called for revitalization of Women's Movement in Africa. "I miss the dynamic force that was Beijing", she said.

Ms. Ruzvidzo asked women to ensure that the state government reports on progress to national, regional and international bodies. The way forward, she concluded, should develop ways of strengthening reporting mechanisms.

## BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER: PRACTICAL STEPS ON A WAY FORWARD

Since the Nairobi Women's Conference of 1985, a significant number of changes relevant to the status of women and gender relations may be identified. The number of women parliamentarians has increased substantially. In the devising of new constitutions, women have been actively involved in the processes, enabling women's issues to be foregrounded and incorporated into gender responsive governance.

Women's civil society organizations have grown, expanding the democratic spaces for women to strive for equality and to safeguard gains for women. At the same time, these democratic processes have occurred with women's contributions, thus adapting democracy to reflect the entry of women. African nation states have also begun to respond to the demands to make laws responsive to women and to prohibit violence against women. Women now network globally to reshape processes.

### **However challenges remain.....**

Despite these positive developments, significant challenges remain. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has emerged and spread, exacerbated by violence against women. Insecurity and armed conflicts in many African countries has increased violent crimes against women and caused mass population displacements with gendered consequences.

Women's work burdens have increased as they have increasingly taken on responsibilities that their states have failed to assume as they deal with structural adjustment and privatization policies that constrain the affordability, availability and safe access to basic social services for many women and their dependents.

### **Much has remained the same...**

Women are yet to attain equality with men; they

disproportionately continue to perform most of the essential tasks of caring, nurturing, domestic work and holding their communities together.

Some of the key recommendations adopted during the one day conference included:

- Political parties should translate their affirmative action into reality
- An monitoring tool to be developed, which women can use to hold their governments accountable to some of the international conventions and declarations they sign on behalf of the country.
- That the Kenyan government to establish rape desks in each and every constituency with adequate resources to address the problem which is affecting many women in the country.
- That the government should form a trust fund for women like in the case of the youth.
- Through the formation of the 1986 alumni forum, the Kenyan women should create inter-generational linkages to mentor the young women into any leadership position where useful lesson can be passed on issues around women's rights and
- The use of transformative skills that women have and hence a realization of affirmative action.
- A proposal to incorporate gender education in school curriculum.
- A call to the NCGD to facilitate women 'to blow the whistle' in cases of discrimination and gender based violence and especially from pastoralist communities.

## APPENDICES

### Reflections of the Alumni 85'

They were there 21 years ago, an array of women from all walks of life. Both from urban and rural backgrounds, the alumni women of 1985 now look back at the momentous historic event (The United Nations Conference for Women) and reminisce over the gains, the gaps and the challenges ahead.

Back in 1985, when the whole world of women seemed to have converged in Nairobi, there was a lot of uncertainty. Apart from the pomp and color marking the convergence of women from diverse cultural backgrounds, many still were unsure about the course for equality.

Nairobi was the flag-bearer in the region. The pioneer Kenyan women hosting the Conference still recall the sense of anxiety on the hinges of a momentous historic event.

#### Christine Hayanga



Christine Hayanga, a women rights activist and alumni of the women of 85 says it was a great moment of reawakening.

"I must admit there was a point when we were not so sure of ourselves. We were a bit timid. There were

a lot of issues working against our course – these were women coming together in Nairobi for the first time, would the men understand? Would they allow it?"

But 21 years later, Christine looks back and says it was worth all the effort. "Oh, it was absolutely worth it and it has been worth it every step of the way.

Things have changed a lot. Look at all the women now owning property. This was almost unheard of by the time Nairobi 85' converged.

Now we have men supporting women and a vibrant law of inheritance. Even though there are still gaps between men and women regarding the ownership of property, a lot has been achieved," she observes.

There are still men who believe that women should not be opening their mouths in public; these are the few men who, Christine says, have been pulling the struggle for equality behind. Nonetheless, the train for women empowerment already took off; women ought not to be intimidated.

"Despite the gaps, women now walk tall with confidence. Yes, there might still be inequality like in areas of job distribution. But things are far much better than they were".

#### Pamela Mboya



Today, 1985 Women's conference alumnus, Pamela Mboya is happy that more men are increasingly proud of their highly educated women. This is a major change in the attitude of men towards the

empowered woman.

"The majority of men are coming up to accept the fact that equality is not a threat" says Pamela Mboya. According to her, every step of the way back in 1985 was extremely worth it. Women all over the world have been at a disadvantage for so long. It is time to fill-up the gaps to improve the status of women. Pamela insists that since women fill up 50% of the

World's population, then women are the majority, why then should they be the disadvantaged?"

The empowerment of women has for along time been constrained by traditions and culture and even though, the changes that can be seen since 1985, have not been as dramatic as would be expected. However many things have improved for example the education of the girl-child. "Kenya is still lagging behind Tanzania and Uganda in many areas and a lot still needs to be done.

Pamela was there when both rural and urban women put their heads together in the 1985, and she has been there when a gap seems to have developed. "Back then the grassroots women under the Maendeleo ya Wanawake were very vocal and active. But then, it seemed the urban woman forgot the woman in the rural areas. This is where we must find the courage to strengthen. The media must reach out to the women in the grassroots and we must put into place the machinery to address all these gaps".

### Mary Okello



If there is one thing that excites Mary Okello, it is the fact that women are now credit worthy, that a woman can access funds from financial institutions.

"I was in the credit committee during the Nairobi Conference of 1985. At that time, it was almost unheard of for women to have the freedom to access funds. Now women are enjoying this right from all corners. Even if we are still lacking in various management positions, the change that has come about since 1985 and it has

been meaningful." Mary recalls.

Of course the tide has not been flowing on the same direction for urban and rural women. However, Mary reckons that the link between the two still exists. "We are still learning a lot from rural women. Our links are with them and we cannot work without them. The infrastructure that governs women is that one leg is in the urban and the other in the rural area. We as women are not completely urbanized. It is therefore a myth to assume that urban women have cut links with the rural women".

Mary also points out at the glaring gaps in some thematic areas raised 21 years ago. For instance, the political arena still leaves a lot to be desired. "Affirmative action is still yet to be reflected in parliament, just look at the huge disparity between the men and women parliamentarians. Women are still too few."

### Pamela Kola



Oh Unity! Unity! Where art thou? It is the cry that fills Pamela Kola's mind when she reminisces the past 21 years. The major thing that stood out when women came out in 1985 was the amazing sense of Unity.

"We have lost the battle. 21 years ago, we were much more united than we are now. We were real advocates. We spoke with one voice. Now the split between the rural and urban woman is threatening this bond" Pamela lamented. Have there been some changes since 1985, according to Pamela, her answer is yes and no.

"Women have become more empowered in areas like education and other decision making positions. There are more women at the top than there were back then. The only problem is the lack of unity; women have become more closed-up in their own places, people have become individualistic" Pamela pointed out.

Still, the women empowerment campaigns must go on. Until we get the gender equation right, Pamela caution, women will still be lagging behind. "We need to bring up boys and girls as equal partners. Back then, because of unity, we achieved much more than what we have at the moment".

Commemorating Nairobi conference, 21 years later, Pamela calls for women to form a taskforce and to start implementing forward-looking strategies.

"In 1985, the call was for peace, equality and development. We have to ask ourselves what we have gained since then. We really must unite to achieve meaningful change.

### **Honorine Kiplagat**



"The success of putting forward the agenda of the girl-child means we have made some meaningful gains. The girl-child is the woman of tomorrow and because in 1985 we recognized the needs of the girl-child we have

secured the future woman. We need to accelerate the journey we begun 21 years ago. There is still a lot to be done," says Mrs. Honorine Kiplagat, the chairperson of the Kenya Girl Guides Association.

As an alumna of the women of 1985, Honorine

is optimistic that things will finally settle for the better. "There has been increased awareness on gender and the roles and responsibilities of women. Look at how much we have increased women in political representation; we still need more women in parliament. Rural women still have a big problem for instance when it comes to land ownership, we need to pull them along with us, the pace between the urban and rural women has not been the same."

Honorine is concerned that it is much easier for urban women to access basic needs but not so with the rural women. "We must strive to empower the rural folks".

Kiswahili was used in 1985 at the International women's conference to incorporate the rural women so that they could understand the proceedings better.

Honorine points out that since then the African Union has adopted Kiswahili as one of its official languages. The women's movement must endeavor to do the same – at least for the sake of the rural woman. "These were some of the things that made all the women so confident, so sure of themselves when they were presenting their views. Now it is time for the Women's movement to make evaluations and appraisals to see where they failed, to acknowledge the gaps and to focus and face them.

### **Dr. Julia Ojiambo**



Dr. Julia Ojiambo's name is as old as Kenyan politics. Hers is also a household name in the women's movement in Kenya. She is among the very first women to contest for and

win a parliamentary seat in independent Kenya. She won the Funyula seat at the 1974 elections when she was just in her mid twenties.

This was unprecedented, happening at a time when very few women had an interest in competitive politics. Her biggest achievement was however when on her debut, she got appointed to the Cabinet as an Assistant Minister towards the close of 1974, making her the first woman ever to sit in the Cabinet in independent Kenya.

Her appointment to the Cabinet created many opportunities for serving and excelling in public leadership. In 1975 she was appointed to the position of deputy head of the Kenyan women's delegation in the women's conference in Mexico. She coordinated the preparation of the document that the Kenyan delegation carried to the conference. Later, as head of the settlements portfolio in parliament she was tasked to lead the country's bid for hosting the global headquarters of the United Nations Human Settlements organization, HABITAT. Kenya's bid was endorsed and HABITAT headquarters moved to Nairobi.

Apart from sheer professionalism, her contributions in cabinet were also to a great extent driven by the unique values that women possess and which have a strong bearing on leadership. For instance her concern for the youths of Kenya led her to initiating discussions on the need for a youth policy. Indeed, the initiative bore fruit when in 1976 an official government policy for the setting up of youth village polytechnics was adopted for implementation. The idea was meant to provide a means of employment for the many young people in rural areas as well as stem rampant rural-urban migration.

Her concern for the disabled also led her to initiate discussions that would later result in the creation of the Kenya Institute of Special Education. Since its inception in the late seventies, KISE has been responsible for the coordination of educational

programmes for the disabled in Kenya.

In early 1979, Julia Ojiambo opened the Pandora's Box when she brought to the house a subject that had hitherto never been discussed in independent Kenya. No one had ever publicly talked about the need for family planning in national development. Her motion argued that population needed to be guided. This became the most heated discussion at the time, as leaders took advantage of the moment to excite public emotions through various populist utterances. She was vilified both in and out of the house.

All along, her motives for introducing this motion or its relevance to national development were however never explained to the people. The rates of maternal deaths and the wanting health of lactating mothers across the country created the need for urgently addressing the question of family planning and family life at national level.

The mainly male dominated parliament was quick to use the unpopularity of the subject to discredit her efforts. Her opponents back in her constituency would also use the same issue to campaign against her in the general elections of that year. However, Julia Ojiambo was not to be beaten. She defeated a parade of six other contestants- all men to take the 1979 general elections. A while later in the early eighties the concern for family planning, maternal and child health would become serious national priorities.

Although she lost the 1983 elections, Julia Ojiambo never lost her footing in Kenyan politics. She continued to serve in various public positions. In 1985 she was head of Kenya's delegation to the 1985 women's conference in Nairobi. The advent of multi party politics in the early nineties opened opportunities for competitive politics. Without any sense of giving up, Julia once more contested the Funyula seat in the first multiparty elections of 1992, but she unfortunately lost.

## OFFICIAL CONFERENCE COMMUNIQUÉS

### 1. Women's Civil Society Organizations Communiqué



*Presented by  
Betty Mwenesi,  
Chairperson,  
Federation of  
Women Lawyers  
Kenya (FIDA  
Kenya)*

*"As we  
commemorate 21  
years since the 3rd  
United Nations  
Conference on*

Women that took place in Nairobi in 1985 at this very place, where more than 15,000 were hosted, we the women of this country take pride in the fact that as a country we were able to host such an important conference which has formed the bedrock upon which countries all over the world make reference to formulate policies around gender equality and gender equity.

We realize that; the first UN conference on women was held in Mexico City in 1975, with women calling attention for the need to recognize women's rights at a global level. During the Mexico conference, development was important to women's empowerment, but within the Women's Decade, the focus then turned to equality and these goals continue to be reinterpreted and revisited in many ways even today.

And the second significant aspect of the Mexico conference was a key recommendation made to declare the next 10 years to 1985 as the Women's Decade. During the Mexico meeting, the UN established certain key goals to enter and guide women's discussions and intellectual work. These goals were: Equality, Development and Peace. They have subsequently been part of every international UN conference to the present. Although the focus

has shifted with each era, these values were still central.

We realize that, the aim of the 3rd UN Conference was to offer a practical and effective guide for global action to promote peace, development and equality for women, who followed in the foot steps of the First UN Conference on Women, held in Mexico in 1975 and the second one held in Copenhagen in 1980.

Indeed the Women's Decade was prompted by the realization of the unequal world that exists between men and women, and since then many international conferences have been held to come up with strategies to rectify this anomaly.

We also recognize that Kenya is part of the international community that has participated at these conferences and has signed the international conventions with an aim of promoting equality for a just society.

We reaffirm the spirit of the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (NFLS) which was about how women are to be integrated into development. The language that framed the NFLS was Women in Development (WID). However, women still remain the poorest among the marginalized and the challenge is in providing women with resources and skills. Yet it is not enough to give them skills and work alone.

Recalling the principles enshrined in international conventions, such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Commitment of the Beijing Platform for Action which calls for 30 per cent affirmative action and;

Guided by the African Union Declaration on Gender Equality and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights as well as the Protocol on Women's Rights in Africa adopted in Maputo (2003);

We, the women of Kenya, are committed to upholding the principles of democracy, transparency

and accountable governance, gender equality and sustainable development but still;

*Aware* that in spite of commitments made to increase the number of women in decision making positions, women still remain marginalized;

*Recognizing* that women still have limited access to resources and other key factors of agricultural production, they still remain major agricultural producers, workers, managers, traders, knowledge providers, and innovators;

*Remaining committed* to our core values of respect for diversity, empowerment of communities and enjoyment of human rights by all peoples of the region;

We are concerned by the increase of sexual and gender based violence and especially sexual violence which is rated as one of the highest criminal acts in this country and also the repeated victimization of women through the physical, social and economic violations that result from these brutal acts;

*Aware*, that the continued insecurity and sexual violence contribute to the acceleration of the spread of HIV & AIDS especially among women and children, even as they continue to serve as primary caregivers and heads of household;

*Conscious*, of the reality that women continue to carry the heavy burden of HIV/AIDS and that the internal conflict further increases their vulnerability and reduces their access to basic social, educational and health services;

*Further conscious*, of the deepening poverty and fragmentation of families, compounded by natural disasters like famine and insecurity;

We are *Concerned about* the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons that continue to maim the innocent;

In recognition of what the government has achieved in terms of development, and especially the recent

decree by His Excellency President Mwai Kibaki on the 30% Affirmative Action policy for public service employment, and prior to that, the enactment of the sexual offences bill;

We, the women of Kenya meeting today to commemorate the Nairobi +21 conference;

*Affirm* our resourcefulness in organizing for peace, stability, security and sustainable development.

*Reaffirm* our continued efforts to seeking ways and means of addressing impunity especially on gross violations of women's rights.

We call on you as the Head of State and Government to:

- Enact and enforce legislation that protects and upholds the human rights and dignity of women and girls;
- Take concrete measures to end the culture of impunity and enforce punitive action against perpetrators of crimes against humanity particularly rape and other forms of gender based violence;
- Put in place mechanisms and policies with a view to promoting equality in all areas of life;
- Move the National Commission on Gender and Development to the office of the President with the requisite resources to ensure women's equitable representation and effective participation in peace, governance and development processes at national and regional levels;
- Provide adequate resources for the effective implementation of all women and children's rights, peace and security instruments;
- Harmonize national policies for the treatment, care and provision of services to victims of conflict, those affected or infected with HIV/

AIDS and other vulnerable and marginalized groups, especially women and children;

- Harmonize national and regional policies on environmental protection for sustainable development;
- Implement affirmative action for women at 50% minimum quota as set out by the AU at all decision making levels;
- Provide access to both formal and non-formal education, health and other social services with special support to vulnerable groups;
- Mainstream gender in legislation, policies and programmes;
- Ensure the inclusion of gender perspectives in macroeconomic policies;
- Ensure establishment of financial institutions and initiate investments to address gender inequality;
- Guarantee economic opportunities for women to access credit and own property including land;
- Negotiate as a bloc on economic issues in order to protect women's interests from unfair trade practices and policies."

## 2. The Young Women's Communiqué



*Presented  
by Saida Ali,  
Executive  
Director,  
Young Women  
Leadership  
Institute*

*"We, the Young  
women's caucus,  
facilitated by  
the Gender  
Commission*

and convened by the Young Women's Leadership Institute, met on several occasions after the launch of the Nairobi +21 project to discuss the role of young women in the women's movement in Kenya and the issues affecting young women locally and globally. These meetings enabled young women to join in the celebrations that mark the various gains that Kenya has achieved in advancing the rights of women and girls.

As young women, we know that we are already contributing to this advancement in our own communities. We are prepared to share our experiences, learn from others and articulate new ways for progress and to move forward. However, we are often marginalized based on age both inside and outside of the women's movement. We seek adequate space to explore our own identities, both shared and unique, and demand a place at the table for our voices to be heard. Young women uniquely fall within two groups; the youth and women, both of which are in most cases sidelined in development processes. We commend the organizers of this conference for making an effort to reach out to younger women in this country.

This statement is an effort to claim our rightful place and to be heard. Most importantly, it is our way of making a call to our fellow Kenyans to recognize the abilities, the potentials and the willingness of the younger generation in taking up the mantle; in building an environment where the rights of women are both a means and an end to development.

The Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (NFLS) calls upon states and non-state actors to examine their commitment to alleviating the status of young women, addressing their vulnerabilities and building their assertiveness to ensure that they live to their full potentials. The NFLS recognize young women as a special category of women that needs special attention in addressing issues affecting them. Young women today, call upon the government to

re-examine these issues with the aim of ensuring that both the draft national youth policy and the gender and development policy adequately address those concerns. Young women also call upon the government to ensure that there is adequate and genuine representation of young women in government bodies and institutions set to address issues affecting the youth on one hand and women on the other.

### ***i. The Women's Movement***

As the movement knows from experience, a room of one's own is not necessarily always sufficient. Young women call on the women's movement to:

- Ensure affirmative action within affirmative action to ensure fair representation of young women in initiatives for advancement of women and girls.
- To improve the capacity of young women to fully participate in National development processes, young women recommend that:
- The Nairobi +21 conference and the National Commission on Gender and Development serve as the institutional memory for the young women's caucus, recognizing that young women are less likely to repeatedly attend conferences, may age-out of the young women's network and are less likely to sustain networks. The YWLI is prepared to assist the Gender Commission and the Ministry of Gender in the preparation of a guide on strategies and approaches for mobilization and empowerment of young women.
- The government through the relevant Ministries facilitates workshops on issue-training and technical assistance specifically for young women.

### ***ii. Young Women Moving Forward***

Young women, in their various network meetings

identified issues that are of particular concern to them: Media, HIV/AIDS, Employment and workplace, Peace and security, Sexuality Rights and Reproductive health services, Early pregnancy and unsafe abortion, Health, Early marriage, ICTs, Education and training. Of these, the following were identified as critical issues that are more often not adequately addressed by both the State and non-state actors:

#### *Media*

- The media plays a key role in shaping opinion and as gatekeepers of information. The media portrays young women as opportunistic, materialistic and sexual objects through soaps and the weekend magazines of most dailies.
- There is an overwhelming commercialization and sexualization of women's bodies as seen in advertisements. This has negatively affected the self-esteem of some young women and girls as they battle with the traits that are portrayed as desirable for a young successful person. It also perpetuates gender stereotypes.
- Need to use the media to re-brand the women's movement for a new generation – young women achievers are rarely in the media and make it appear as though young women have no opinion on matters of development.
- The media and the role of women in politics - women politicians rarely make the headline news and when they do, it is most often negatively presented.

#### *HIV/AIDS*

- Specific attention needs to be paid to the fact that young women are more vulnerable to HIV infection and to how HIV/ AIDS affect young women.
- There has to be inclusivity in addressing concerns of disabled women affected by HIV/

AIDS.

- Support for funding young women through the National AIDS Control Council (NACC), to work with girls/ young women affected by HIV/AIDS.

#### *Economic Justice*

- Creating sustainable employment and to address the economic –deprivation that has encouraged young women to engage in risky and illegal economic activities such as commercial sex work, stay in abusive relationships, be exposed to HIV/AIDS. There should be equal pay for equal work and an end to discriminative employment policies and practices such as screening for HIV and pregnancy aimed at dismissing one from work.

#### *Sexual harassment*

- Young women in the corporate sector; EPZs, flower farms admit to being asked for sexual favours so as to get a job, while those at the universities endure the same with male lecturers in order to be accorded higher grades. Young women also encounter indecent touches from touts and male counterparts in different situations.

#### *Sexual Health and Rights*

There needs to be more discussions and policy focus on menstrual health as an issue of sexual rights. The government needs to address:

- How menstruation affects girls' access to education and intersects with economic resources. The government should include supply of sanitary pads to girls as part of the package for the free primary education.
- Sexuality Education in schools as both a right and preventive measure to problems related to growth and development such as early

pregnancies.

- The lack of access to information, knowledge, and services on reproductive health.
- Lack of support for young mothers and young women infected with sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS.
- Low self-esteem and assertiveness among young mothers especially girls in schools.

### **3. Representing Rural Women**



Presented by Wilkister Onsando, former Chairperson, Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization and Mercy Mwamburi – Coast Province

Ms. Onsando acknowledged the opportunity availed to women to be with H.E. the President so that they could talk on their needs and express their gratitude. Twenty one years ago, she noted, gender issues were treated with disdain and suspicion, women could only dream of getting appointed to the Cabinet, becoming MPs or even heads of parastatals or universities. Today, she said, Kenya has 18 women parliamentarians; the highest in the country's history and more women have been appointed to the Judiciary and provincial administration as well as to other senior public service positions. Other progress areas were in land rights for women and women being able to open bank accounts without the approval of their husbands.

Despite these strides, H.E. the President was told, rural women were still suffering. Some of the many challenges that rural women face on a daily basis were:

- Insecurity arising from unemployment amongst the youth and from corrupt law enforcement officers.
- Lack of Implementation of policies at grassroots.
- Difficulty in accessing agricultural loans from Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC).
- Lack of information on export markets.
- Exploitation by middlemen on horticultural and export crops.

Ms. Onsando proposed raising the bar on affirmative action from 30 percent to 50 percent as a way of effectively eradicating these sufferings among women. She however urged that the directive given by H. E. The President – that 30 percent of employment in public positions goes to women – be effected even as the 50 per cent was being negotiated.

The former Chairperson of MYWO concluded by emphasizing the need for women to be included in

policy making processes at all levels.

Ms. Mwamburi assured H.E. The President that democracy was 'being felt' by the rural woman in several ways –National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) was improving the health of the rural women, the increase in pension amount impacted positively in rural communities and the free primary education had changed the face of the girl child.

However, she called for:

- Implementation of H.E. the President's directive of 30 percent affirmative action in all structures and institutions.
- Mainstreaming gender at rural institutions.
- Establishing a fund for HIV/AIDS orphans to relieve child and granny mothers.
- Establishing a fund for women in income generating enterprises.
- Improving Infrastructure especially roads to also improve marketing of agricultural produce.

## SPEECHES AT THE NAIROBI+21 CONFERENCE

### An Overview of the Nairobi +21 Processes



*By Dr. Jacinta Muteshi, Chairperson, NCGD*

"It is with great pleasure that I take this moment to welcome all of you to this very important conference hosted by the National

Commission on Gender and Development in collaboration with UNIFEM; with support from Ford Foundation, CIDA-GESP, UAF-A African Women and Child Feature Services, Heinrich Boll Foundation and FEMNET.

Today's Conference commemorates the 3rd United Nations World Conference on Women that was held in Nairobi, 21 years ago, in 1985. That conference brought forth the Nairobi Forward - Looking Strategies whose goal was to offer practical and effective steps for global action to promote peace, development and equality for women.

This landmark meeting for women, the first of its kind in Africa, addressed the following broad areas in the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies:

- The promotion of women to positions of power at every level and in every sector to achieve parity with men.
- Equality between women and men.
- The establishment of national mechanisms to advance gender matters.
- The recognition of women's unpaid work and the need to encourage sharing of the burden

of childcare and nurturing between parents.

- Equal employment opportunities for women.

It is indeed my privilege as the first Chairperson of the National Commission on Gender and Development to bring recognition to the remarkable steps that the Government of Kenya has taken to put in place an institutional mechanism such as the National Commission on Gender and Development for mainstreaming gender issues into national development.

Establishing the Gender Commission has been a response to the specific call of the first resolution of the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies that prioritized the establishment in every country of a high level Government body to advise, implement and monitor progress towards gender equality. The Gender Commission seeks to become the leading national institution providing oversight and putting forward proposals to realize gender equality as a democratic and human rights value in all aspects of development for a fair and just society.

The overall objective of this conference is to revisit the resolutions made by the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies and determine whether we have been faithful to the spirit and aspirations of those resolutions. We want to recognize positive movement forward in line with the strategies developed in 1985 such as increased social participation of Kenyan women in many spheres. We also need to note continuing critical areas of concern for Kenyan women, especially with regards to economic justice for women, violence against women and the burden of work on women.

It is significant to note that the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies of 1985 directed us to the necessary frameworks and mechanisms for gender equality work. It is now important that both public and private sectors take responsibility and be held accountable for gender equality.

This conference is therefore expected to reflect upon the extent to which in Kenya we have implemented our international commitments to women, and whether such commitments do indeed advance justice and the dreams of Kenyan women. The conference will also seek to strengthen inter-generational dialogue among women as well as consider the necessary involvement of men.

Finally, this forum is an opportunity to engage Government, political parties, women's organizations, civil society organizations, and faith

based organizations, in a substantive way:

- Building on the progress made since 1985; and
- Recognizing that mainstreaming gender will be an indispensable tool for transforming public decision making; and for the creation of the necessary equitable partnerships between women and men for sustained national development.

Thank you."

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## Hon. Mwai Kibaki, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, EGH, MP, President of The Republic of Kenya



"It is indeed a great honour for me to participate in this important Conference to reflect on the status of women not only in Kenya, but also in Africa and the world over. Allow me to express my sincere

appreciation to the Ministry of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services, together with the National Commission on Gender and Development and their partners for their hospitality and wonderful preparation of this Conference. I know that many of you have come from different parts of the world with a focus on one agenda - WOMEN.

You may recall that in 1985, Kenya hosted the Third World Conference for Women, just after the conclusion of the UN Decade for Women (1975 – 1985). The conference brought together 1,500 official delegates from 150 nations. It is therefore with great expectation that 21 years later, we once again converge here to reflect on the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women.

As you are aware, a landmark call in the Nairobi Forward Looking strategies was the need for every country to establish a high level Government body to monitor and implement progress towards Gender Equality. In this regard, my Government established the National Commission on Gender and Development by an Act of Parliament in 2004 as a leading National Institution central to the realization

*Commemorating the Third UN World Conference on Women*

of Gender Equality and Equity (GEE) in all national processes. This comes out of the recognition that there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women.

The Government has also taken steps to fulfil the principles of Gender Equality and Equity in meeting the Socio-economic challenges for women and men in this country, especially with regard to the national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) and the Economic Recovery Strategies (ERS).

In order to push ahead Women's Agenda in Kenya, my Government has at the same time put in place the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, and given it powers to investigate and prosecute any abuse of the Social, Economic and Political rights of women and men, boys and girls.

In recognition of the important role that education plays in the lives of women and men, my Government has spearheaded the introduction of Free Primary Education for all girls and boys in this country. The Government has also introduced Affirmative Action (AA) in Education by lowering girls' cut off points for entry in all public Universities. To ensure that the girl child gets easy and uninterrupted access to education, the government has zero rated all taxes labelled on sanitary wear.

In the year 2000, the Government created the Family Division of the High Court to provide greater protection for women and children in matters of adoption, custody, divorce and inheritance. Our Children's Act (2003) protects the rights of children in the spirit of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and outlaws Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) that has for a long time negatively impacted on the health and education of the girl child.

While I recognize that the current parliament has the greatest number ever of women parliamentarians in the history of Kenya, I must concede that it has been an uphill task for women in this country to access

positions of power and authority at all levels within political and legislative bodies in order to achieve parity with men. While I urge more women to be tireless in requesting for parliamentary votes from the public, it is imperative that a requisite Affirmative Action Strategy (AAS) be put in place to secure more seats for women not only in parliament, but also in other public offices where their presence is minimal. The political parties should also consider ways to engender their structures and make them men and women friendly, while encouraging equal participation of both sexes.

Just a short while ago, I signed the Sexual Offences Bill, making it a law in this country. Gender and sexual violence still remain a big challenge for women in this country. The emerging culture of rape and defilement must be contained to allow women to maximize their efforts in participating in national processes. The Task Force working on the National Framework on Gender Based Violence (NFGBV) is expected to release response guidelines to Gender Based Violence (GBV).

The Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies gave emphasis to Regional and International Human Rights Covenants that respect the rights of women. To this end, it is significant that Kenya ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) way back in 1984. The challenge, however, is the recognition that this covenant has not yet been domesticated in this country. I am aware, though, that the process of domesticating it has started and I will lend my full support for its realization.

My Government has been committed to all the other covenants ratified by Kenya in respect of women. We have been careful to engage all stake holders in the public and private sector, together with local and international NGOs in the periodic reporting on these international instruments, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

(ICCPR), the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) among others.

My Government has ratified the protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. This Protocol marks a significant step in promoting the rights of women within Kenya, in Africa and the world over. It gives due priority to women's rights and reflects our growing commitment to address the widespread discrimination and rights violations suffered by women. The protocol recognizes the critical role women play in sustaining the needs of our people, especially in the rural areas. This platform therefore gives me a rare moment to urge those Nations in Africa that have not ratified the protocol to make haste and not only ratify it, but move ahead and domesticate it as we have envisaged here in Kenya.

In line with the theme of this conference, we must ask ourselves whether we have remained faithful to the resolutions adopted in the Nairobi Conference (1985). I know that many of you can report great achievements from your countries in the last 21 years. I also realize that many challenges still lie ahead. It is good to keep in mind the lessons we have learnt in the past. It is also important to note that these gender challenges are not problems without solutions.

It is true that some great advances are recognized in women's participation in decision making, health, employment, human rights, politics, media, education and property ownership than ever before. We must now be brave to implement working strategies in order to remove women from positions of disadvantage. We must be willing to put more resources in these efforts.

We, gathered here today, must therefore reaffirm our total commitment to women specific needs for the realization of sustainable growth. This Conference

offers a unique opportunity to purpose to open a wider window of opportunity for women. I do not know of a better way of doing this other than to give maximum consideration to women specific needs in our national budgets, by entirely engendering the national budgeting processes.

We must also acknowledge emerging challenges

like HIV/AIDS among girls and women, the trafficking of girls and women who are forced to work as prostitutes and slaves, and the increasing rates of violence on women both in private and public domain. All our strategies must aim at giving women a secure environment where they have the right to live in dignity and peace.

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## BIOS OF PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

### 1. National Commission on Gender and Development (NCGD)

The Commission was established by an Act of Parliament in December 2003 and was officially launched on 24th November 2004. The Commission started work in January 2005.

The Commission was established to have oversight, advisory and monitoring roles on aspects related to the gender mainstreaming into national development policies and programmes and creating gender awareness and sensitivity in all the activities of the government. The Commission grew out of Kenya's ratification and signing of United Nations international treaties and documents that call upon state parties to these agreements to establish national machinery to support, coordinate, implement, monitor and account for gender equality.

NCGD Vision is *"To be the leading national institution central to the realization of gender equality and equity in all aspects of development for a fair and just society."*

### 2. African Woman and Child Feature Service (AWC)

The African Woman and Child Feature Service was founded in 1994, with the goal of presenting the views of women and children in the mainstream media. AWC's vision concerns Africa as a continent. With the mission to promote equal gender development through the media and research, the organisation understands and embraces gender equality as the cornerstone for development

Guided by its mission of equal development for women, children and men through the mainstream media using a gender lens, in the last ten years AWC Feature Service has disseminated information in feature article format to media houses in the region. In addition, AWC Feature Service has been active in training journalists and NGOs in the region and in the development of handbooks and training

manuals; gender mainstreaming and working with the various newspapers on their gender policies as well as in gender mainstreaming their content.

AWC Features has sought to break the deadlock by finding strategic entry points, and pursuing these in a systematic and coherent manner.

In light of the above ,AWC has identified various strengths in the following areas :

- Training women journalists
- Mainstreaming Gender Policy within the media and in legislation
- Production of training manuals and training guidelines in form of text books for media training institutions
- Assisting various NGOs and women activists on how to work with the media
- Holding the position of the Convenor of the Editor's Guild in Kenya
- Creating a working relationship with other media NGOs in the region namely: Uganda Media Women's Association(UMWA) and Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA).
- Co-ordinating the Media Industry Steering Committee which formed the Media Council of Kenya

These are areas the organisation has continued to diligently pursue with remarkable results.

### 3. The Ford Foundation

The Ford Foundation is a resource for innovative people and institutions worldwide. Its goals are to:

- Strengthen democratic values
- Reduce poverty and injustice
- Promote international cooperation and
- Advance human achievement

Created with gifts and bequests by Edsel and Henry Ford, the Foundation is an independent organization, with its own board, and is entirely separate from the Ford Motor Company.

The Ford Foundation recognizes that a fundamental challenge facing every society is to create political, economic and social systems that promote peace, human welfare and the sustainability of the environment on which life depends. That the best way to meet this challenge is to encourage initiatives by those living and working closest to where problems are located; to promote collaboration among the nonprofit, government and business sectors; and to ensure participation by men and women from diverse communities and at all levels of society.

Since its inception, the Ford Foundation has been an independent, nonprofit, nongovernmental organization. The trustees of the Foundation set policy and delegate authority to the President and senior staff for the Foundation's grant making and operations. Program officers in the United States, Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Latin America and Russia explore opportunities to pursue the Foundation's goals, formulate strategies and recommend proposals for funding.

#### **4. Heinrich Böll Foundation, Regional Office for East and Horn of Africa**

Named after one of Germany's most important and best-known authors who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1972 for his novels and short stories, the Heinrich Böll Foundation (HBF) is a German political foundation established with a mandate to support democracy, civil society, human rights, international understanding and a healthy environment internationally. HBF is affiliated with the German Green Party. Headquartered in Berlin, it has 25 offices worldwide.

The overall goal of the Foundation's engagement in the East and Horn of Africa region is promoting

democratization for sustainable development. As a result, most of HBF's activities have been in partnership with non-governmental organizations working on issues of Women's Rights and Gender Democracy, Environment and Sustainable Development, Peace Promotion and Political Dialogue and Networking via project partnerships and office implemented activities.

Gender Democracy is an overarching and crosscutting theme for all activities of the HBF. The programmatic work in the above thematic areas always integrates considerations of gender equality.

The foundation's women's rights and gender democracy programmes has been echoing the principles of the NFLS and its accompanying Beijing action areas through support for local women's initiatives in the spheres of economic development, human rights, governance, civic education and political participation. These focus areas are operationalized through emphasis on capacity building through trainings and learning platforms, enhanced networking within and outside the region, and commitment to research based advocacy work.

The programme similarly strives to inject gender awareness and perspectives in local, regional and international political processes and institutions such as the UN Millennium Development Goals, the African Union's various mechanisms, the World Trade Organization rules and various international environmental regimes.

#### **5. The Urgent Action Fund – Africa**

As the only international women's fund in the world designed to respond to situations as they affect at short notice, UAF-A collaborates with women activists in three primary contexts: peace building in situations of armed conflict, escalating violence, or politically volatile environments; potentially precedent-setting legal and legislative actions; and

protection of women human rights defenders.

UAF-A joins with local women to build civil societies that honor their experiences and include women at every juncture, especially in areas of armed conflict and war, where they are most at risk.

While UAF-A focuses on broad societal issues, it recognizes that women's human rights go beyond the civic and political arenas and encompass women's everyday life in the personal realm—in the home, the neighborhood, the village, and the workplace. UAF-A advocates for women's equality, not only as a matter of human rights, but also as a fundamental prerequisite for social justice, global security, and sustainable peace.

## **6. African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET)**

The African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) was set up in 1988 to share experiences, information and strategies among African women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs) through advocacy, training and communications so as to advance African women's development, equality and other human rights.

FEMNET aims to strengthen the role and contribution of African NGOs focusing on women's development, equality and other human rights. It also aims to provide a channel through which these NGOs can reach one another and share experiences, information and strategies to as to improve their work on African women's development, equality and other human rights.

FEMNET's specific objectives include:

- exchanging experiences in planning, implementing and evaluating women's programmes and projects through interaction with NGOs, development agencies and relevant regional and international intergovernmental bodies;

- promoting women's activities in Africa through the strengthening of existing organisations and the establishment of new ones as may be needed;
- playing vanguard and catalytic roles in the treatment of feminist issues which cannot be handled by government gender mechanisms due to the threat that such issues pose to patriarchal states;
- promoting the better utilisation of African women's NGOs by development agencies and regional and international intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) such as the African Union (AU) and the various United Nations (UN) agencies;
- Mobilising resources for African women's development, equality and other women's human rights by local, regional and international sources; and enabling collective action by African women's movements in order to tackle regional gender issues.

## **7. Canadian International Development Agency – Gender Equity Support Project (CIDA – GESP)**

The Gender Equity Support Project of the Canadian International Development Agency was launched in 1996 and continues to support large and small initiatives led by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), specific government bodies and various coalitions working strategically on gender equality issues. The GESP program focuses on women's legal and economic empowerment, women's human rights, women in leadership and decision-making, promoting gender equality at national, policy and governance levels as well as through research, advocacy, networking and awareness raising.

Canadian commitment to the spirit of the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (NFLS) as developed at the third UN Conference on women held in

Nairobi in 1985 is reflected in its continued support for initiatives that promote peace, equality and development as necessary components of women's empowerment. Even before the 1985 Conference was convened in Nairobi, Canadian aid had always supported initiatives to include women in development as guided by the 1976 Women In Development (WID) Policy. CIDA has supported efforts to achieve gender equality and development through targeted initiatives on women in development and gender equality as well as mainstreaming gender into all its policies, programs and projects.

Over time, CIDA funds on gender equality and women's empowerment have evolved with the lessons from each form. There have been shifts in approaches – from WID to women's empowerment, to gender equity - in recognition of the contexts and global trends in the area of gender and development.

In terms of focus, the current GESP has narrowed down to 5 critical areas which it recognizes as the backbone to the achievement of gender equality. These are: legal rights of women; economic empowerment; political participation of women; representation of women in decision-making positions; enhancement of gender equality at national policy levels and enhanced networking to build a stronger women's rights movement.

CIDA's bilateral and multi-lateral relations, recognize the importance of supporting youth initiatives. Within the gender sector and women's movement, CIDA through the GESP has been keen to advance the notion of multi-generational, inter-generational representation, which was the rationale behind our support for the participation of young women delegates at the commemorative Nairobi +21 conference.

## **8. United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM)**

UNIFEM was created by a UN General Assembly resolution in 1976 following a call from women's organizations attending the 1975 First World Conference on Women in Mexico City. Its mandate is to:

- Support innovative and experimental activities benefiting women in line with national and regional priorities.
- Serve as a catalyst with the goal of ensuring the appropriate involvement of women in mainstream development activities as often as possible at the pre-investment stage.
- Play an innovative and catalytic role in relation to the United Nations overall system of development cooperation (GA Resolution 13/125)

The organization provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies that promote women's human rights, political participation and economic security.

Within the UN System, UNIFEM promotes gender equality and links women's issues and concerns with the national, regional and global agenda's by fostering collaboration and providing technical expertise on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment strategies. The Sub-regional office for Eastern Africa based in Nairobi covers eight countries among them 7 Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) countries and 3 East African Community (EAC) countries. These are Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia and Tanzania.

UNIFEM's Eastern Africa strategy focuses on:

- Promoting women's economic rights and security

- Engendering governance and promoting transformational leadership to enhance women's political participation and decision-making at all levels
  - Reducing vulnerability, risks and impact of HIV infection among women and girls as well as reduce the burden of care and enhance capacity for mitigation especially amongst
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women in context of HIV/AIDS

- Strengthening and promoting local, national, sub-regional approaches to protecting the rights of women affected by conflict and supporting women's roles in conflict prevention, resolution and peace building
- Promoting women's enjoyment of all human rights







  
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