

# MEET THE ELP REFERENCE GROUP MEMBERS

## REFERENCE GROUP NIGERIA



### **Oby Nwankwo**

Oby Nwankwo is a lawyer of 30 years post call. She holds a Masters degree in Criminal Law and served in the Anambra State Judiciary for 23 years. Since her voluntary retirement from the judiciary in 2004, she has been at the forefront of the campaign for respect for women's rights, gender equality and good governance. She is a Human Rights activist, an election monitor, a community mobiliser, an independent gender and development consultant and a trainer/Facilitator. Oby has been involved in many research projects and authored several publications on gender and women's rights including "Achieving 35% Affirmative Action in Nigeria: Stakeholders' Roles and the Implication for National Development" 2010 and "Engendering the Budget Process in Nigeria" 2008. She is a past Chairperson and project Coordinator of the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Old Anambra state Branch.

Oby is also the founder and Executive Director of the Civil Resource Development and Documentation Centre (CIRDDOC) an NGO committed to the promotion of human rights, gender equality and access to justice and with offices in Abuja, Enugu, Anambra and Ebonyi states. On that platform, she represents Africa on the Steering Committee of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (ICC), a member of the ICC Gender Justice Team and Advisory Board member of Global Fund for Women.



## **Emem Okon**

Ms Emem J. Okon is the founder and Executive Director of Kebetkache Women Development & Resource Centre. She is a women's rights activist and advocate from the oil impacted Niger Delta region of Nigeria. She is a trainer, researcher and campaigner against all forms of violence directed at women and the environment. She holds a B.ED in Adult and Continuing Education from the University of Calabar. She has also undertaken many short courses on human rights, gender, research and leadership at reputable international development institutes and universities. She is currently undertaking a research into impact of militarism on women, a component of the Strengthening Women's Activism against Conflict and Militarism in the West African sub-region. She has coordinated many networks and coalitions including Gender and Constitution Reform Network (GECORN) south-south zone; National Coalition on Affirmative Action (NCAA) Rivers (2004-2010) among others. She coordinated the International Alert's Enhancing the Capacity of Leaders of Women's organizations in the Niger Delta Project (2002-2004). She was a team member in the compilation of the 6th Periodic CEDAW Country Report 2006 for Federal Ministry of Women Affairs. She has been involved in needs assessment/baseline surveys and participatory rapid appraisal for organizations and agencies such as Pro-Natura International – 2004, Rivers State Sustainable Development Agency (RSSDA) – 2009; International Alert women's training need assessment, 2002 and the baseline survey for Women Development Blueprint for Rivers State Ministry of Women Affairs – Jan – April 2011.



### **Saudatu Mahdi**

Saudatu is the administrative and programme head of Women’s Rights Advancement & Protection Alternative (WRAPA) responsible for the general administration of the organization at the national level. She has the overall responsibility for the design, technical and financial sourcing for programme work and implementation by the State Chapters of WRAPA. Under her leadership, WRAPA has implemented activities that have resulted in WRAPA’s positive reputation and expertise for touching the lives of Nigerian women. The sensitization and outreach activities of WRAPA led by Saudatu have contributed to the significant increase in awareness and respect for women’s human dignity as well as the achievement of positive shifts in the two critical institutions of faith and culture which significantly influence the extent of women’s rights enjoyment and empowerment in Nigeria. Saudatu’s legal team won acquittal for the internationally popular cases of Safiya Hussaini’s and Amina Lawal in 2005 (Nigerian women who were sentenced to death by stoning for adultery/having babies outside wedlock).

Saudatu is one of the Ms Magazine women of the year (2004). She is a feminist activist and a devout Muslim who argues passionately that sharia — Islamic law — treats women with equity when it is fairly implemented. Trained as a teacher, she spent most of her career in senior administrative posts at secondary schools, but in 1998 geo-politics and a sexist policy edged her out of her job. She joined the board of WRAPA, and the next year was asked to head the organization, which has 12 staffers plus a team of volunteers across the country.



### **Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi**

Abiola is the Executive Director of a National leading organization in Nigeria, the Women Advocates Research and Documentation Center (WARDC), a non governmental organization which focuses on the promotion of women's rights, governance, human rights and the rule of law. She has also led coalitions in Nigeria demanding for better representation of women. In 2005, she coordinated over 2000 women's groups in Nigeria to demand for gender accountability as the coordinator of the group called Women Representation for National Cohesion (WORNACO) and this led to the adoption of a WOMANIFESTO in Nigeria in 2005. She has also worked with diverse groups to support gender sensitive constitutions in Nigeria and have led the National Coalition called Gender and Constitution Reform Network. She participated in 2004 in a gender review of laws in Nigeria focusing on laws that promote gender based violence and was later part of the committee set up by the Attorney General of the Federation (Nigeria) on reforms of laws relating to violence against women in Nigeria and worked as an expert on the National Gender Policy in Nigeria and with organizations in Southern Africa as a consultant on the Southern African Women's Protocol. Abiola recently concluded a research on Gender review of sixty political parties in Nigeria with recommendations on how political parties can be engaged to mainstream gender.

## REFERENCE GROUP SOUTH AFRICA



### **Professor Amada Gouws**

Amanda Gouws is Professor of Political Science at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa. She holds a PhD from the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign in the United States of America. Professor Gouws' interests in Gender Politics, South African Politics in general, and Political Behavior is evident in her writing and work. She has published extensively on South African Politics especially electoral system, women's representation and the National Gender Machinery for Women and sexual harassment. In particular, her edited book (Un) Thinking Citizenship: Feminist Debates in Contemporary South Africa, a book that looks closely at the conditions of citizenship for women in South Africa was selected book of the month by Constitution Hill in February 2007. In addition, her co-authored book with James Gibson, *Overcoming Intolerance in South Africa: Experiments in Democratic Persuasion* was awarded the Alexander George Book Award for best book in Political Psychology in 2003. Despite her busy schedule as lecturer, researcher and activist, Professor Gouws has a regular political opinion column in a prominent South African newspaper; *Die Burger*.

Professor Gouws is formerly the Chair of the Women's Forum at the Stellenbosch University and is presently the Chair of the Advisory Committee on Sexual Harassment. She is President of the South African Association of Political Studies and Board Member of the African Gender Institute at the University of Cape Town. At present, professor Gouws is writing a book on the Women's Movement in South Africa since 1994.



### **Professor Shireen Hassim**

A political scientist and senior lecturer, Shireen Hassim is Associate Professor at University of the Witwatersrand since 1999. Her PhD dissertation in Political Studies from York University in Canada focused on the politics of the South African women's movement from 1980 to 1999. She holds an MA in African Studies from the University of Natal in South Africa and graduated with a BA (Hons) cum laude from the University of Durban-Westville in South African.

With a devoted interest to gender politics in South Africa, Professor Hassim is a prolific writer on diverse subjects in politics and development, politics of representation, social policy and citizenship. Some of her publications include *Women's Organizations and Democracy in South Africa: Contesting Authority* which won the 2007 American Political Science Association's Victoria Shuck Award for best book on women and politics, and *No short cuts to power*. She has also edited several books and published in peer reviewed journals.

Professor Hassim's commitment to women/ gender and political empowerment can not be overstated. She has worked with the South African women's movement for several years. In the 1999 elections, she was a member of the Gender and Elections Reference Group of the Electoral Institute of South Africa, and co-edited the Elections bulletin. She is a member of the Advisory Board of Women's Net.



### **Professor Sheila Meintjes**

Professor Sheila Meintjes has taught political studies at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa since 1989 and was Head of Department from March 2006 – March 2010. She holds a PhD in African History from the School of Oriental and African Studies at London University, an MA in African Studies from the University of Sussex and a BA. Honours from Rhodes University in South Africa. Her research interests lie in the fields of democracy, feminist theory and politics, gender violence and post-conflict transformation.

She is co-editor of *The Aftermath: Women in post-conflict Transformation* (2002, Zed), *One Woman, One Vote: the Gender Politics of Elections* (2003, Electoral Institute of Southern Africa), *Women Writing Africa: the Southern Region* (2003, The Feminist Press and Wits Press), and *Women's Activism in South Africa: Working Across Divides* (2009, UKZN Press). She has numerous journal articles and chapters in books.

As a full-time Commissioner in the Commission on Gender Equality from 2001 to 2004, Professor Meintjes led the Commission's governance programme as Commissioner responsible for Gauteng Province. She was involved in feminist and women's politics in South Africa since the early 1970s as a member of the United Women's Organisation in the Western Cape, the Natal Organisation of Women and the Women's National Coalition. She was also Chairperson of Tshwaranang Legal Advocacy Centre against Violence against Women and board member of Women's Net. Currently, she is on the Board of the Women's and Gender Studies Institute at the University of Pretoria and the Editorial Board of *Minerva*. She leads a research project on 'Safeguarding Democracy: contests of memory and heritage', which compares South African and Swiss democratic practice.



### **Joy Watson**

Joy Watson work as a Senior Researcher in South Africa’s Parliament specialising in the analysis of legislation and public policy from a gender perspective. She has seventeen years of experience in the areas of public policy analysis and women and politics. She has published several policy briefs and papers as well as produced a book on *Women and Lawmaking: An Analysis of Civil Society Engagement with Parliament*. Joy is a feminist activist and is the current Chairperson of the Rural Education, Awareness and Community Health (Reach), an NGO working in the area of gender-based violence in the Western Cape.



## REFERENCE GROUP KENYA



### **Prof. Maria Nzomo**

Professor Maria Nzomo, is a Professor of Political Science and International Studies with a PHD in Political Science and International Studies from Dalhousie University, Canada (1981); an MA in Political Science, McMaster University, Canada (1975) and a BA (Hons.) in Political Science, University of Nairobi (1974) and was the first Kenyan woman holder of a PHD in Political Science & International Studies. She is also the CEO of the Women's Centre for Leadership Public Policy (WLEAP). A former diplomat, Prof. Nzomo is the current Director of the Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies, University of Nairobi.

From 2003 to 2006, she was Kenya's Ambassador/High Commissioner to four (4) countries in Southern Africa (Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Swaziland & Lesotho) and subsequently from mid 2006 to 2009, she was Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva, representing Kenya in over 20 UN agencies and other International Organizations including the Human Rights Council, W.T.O, ILO, WIPO, WMO, UNHCR, UNCTAD, ITU, IPU, ICRC etc.

Nationally, she has actively participated in Management and Coordination of various human rights and gender NGOs and Professional Associations, as Chairperson and/or Member of Executive Boards of various NGOs, including: the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD), Centre for Governance and Development (CGD), and Co-chair of the Citizen's Coalition for Constitutional Change (4Cs). She authored the first set of Training Manuals for Women candidates vying for Political office; and developed several Civic Education Manuals for Grass-root Training. She also trained most of the women Candidates that vied for political office in 1992 and the 1997 Elections.

Prof. Nzomo played a key role in the Constitutional Reform process ensuring Gender friendly provisions were entrenched in the new Constitution. In 1993, she participated in drafting the first draft model Constitution, dubbed: “Kenya Tuitakayo/The Kenya We Want”. She was also one of the Delegates during Bomas (1) & (2) Constitutional Conferences and contributed towards Civic education in the run up to the Referendum on the new Constitution in 2010. Since the promulgation of the new Constitution, she has served as member of a team of Consultants assisting the Government to design a new architecture of Government consistent with the new constitutional dispensation. She has also played various roles in Election Monitoring nationally and internationally and served as a member of the International Eminent Group of Persons that monitored South Africa’s first multi-racial elections in 1994; and as a member of the African Union Election Observer Group for Nigeria’s Elections in April 2003.

Internationally, from 1998-2001, Prof. Nzomo served as Africa’s Regional Head of an Africa wide UNDP Program, for Civil Society Empowerment and Poverty Reduction in Africa, covering 12 African countries.



### **Hon. Rose Waruhiu**

Hon. Rose Waruhiu is an experienced public servant who has served as a Member of the Kenyan Parliament, and more recently served in the Assembly of the revived East Africa Community (EALA). She has held leadership positions in the Women’s Organizations and Civil Society serving as Chair/Convener of several initiatives in the pro-democracy movement in Kenya. As a senior administrator in the University of Nairobi, early in her career, and later as a development Consultant in the private sector, she brings a wealth of experience in organization management and analytical skills. She graduated with honours in Economics from Makerere University, and pursued postgraduate training in Management of Higher Education in 1975. She was appointed a Fellow at the Institute of Politics, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University for the spring semester in 1990.

Within the women movement she served for 9 years, in the University Women Association and National Council of Women. During her tenure in women leadership, she facilitated dialogue forums on the International Women’s Decade Agenda and the UN World Conferences. At the international level, she served on the Committee of the Status of Women Committee of The International Council of Women. In 1990 she joined the political movement to push for economic and political reforms and democratic governance. She set up a Women’s Trust “FREDA” to work on Women in Leadership and Policy Making, facilitating dialogue and focus groups to enhance women’s strategic interventions as political

actors. FREDA produced manuals and facilitated training of women aspirants to public office. She is among the founders of The Centre for Governance and Development, whose flagship programme was the strengthening of Kenya Parliament in the multiparty era. As Kenya's representative severally, she has attended conferences which required detailed preparation of position papers, negotiations and speaking on diverse issues of development. In 1998 she attended the Harvard Programme for Leaders in Development focusing on the economic and social transition of emerging democracies.

Rose is also a Founder member of the Democratic Party (DP) where she has served in various capacities since 1992 when the party was incepted leading the political party strategy team, among other responsibilities. In 2011, Rose was appointed to the Council of The Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT).



### **Prof. Nyokabi Kamau**

Professor Nyokabi Kamau is a Social Worker and Sociologist specializing in gender studies. She is an Associate Professor in gender studies and currently serves as the Director of the Centre for Parliamentary Studies and Training (CPST). Nyokabi holds a PhD and a Masters in gender studies both from the University of London - Institute of Education, an MA in Sociology and a BA in Social Work from the University of Nairobi. Nyokabi has worked as a University lecturer for over 20 years and has also consulted mainly as a trainer and researcher for a variety of local and international organizations specifically in the areas of gender, sexuality, politics, education and HIV & AIDS. She has published widely in books, book chapters, local and international journals, professional newsletters and has presented papers in various local and international conferences.

## PROJECT COORDINATION

The Project is directly managed by the three Gender Program Officers in the participating countries, namely, Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya who is responsible for designing and implementing country activities and supported by a part time Consultant based in Nairobi. The implementing team comprises of the following:

Ms. Azenaar Mohamed – Nigeria;  
Ms. Keren Ben-Zeev – South Africa  
Ms. Joan Birika – Kenya



### **Ms. Sarah Muhoya, Project Coordinator**

Ms. Sarah Muhoya, who has been part of the Kenyan Reference Group, took up the role of coordinating ELP on part time basis from April 2012. Her responsibilities as coordinator entails providing specialist overview and expert advice on women political leadership in Africa, designing and planning the project in collaboration with participating offices and Reference Group Members, coordinating the implementation of project activities, providing overall leadership in the management of the project, maintaining regular communication with various actors within the project as well as monitoring and evaluating project outcome. Ms. Muhoya also works with the Centre for Multiparty Democracy (CMD-Kenya) as the Gender and Inclusivity Officer responsible for programs that promote diversity within Kenyans national politics in general and women's political leadership in particular. She is currently pursuing a Doctoral studies in gender studies and has a Masters degree in Communication as well as a bachelor's degree in Education. Ms. Muhoya has a rich experience in managing complex projects and has a great grasp of the realities faced by women in political leadership. She is a strong mobilizer with wide grassroots networks and linkages with women leaders both in Africa.

Her contacts:- Sarah Muhoya: Project Coordinator. Heinrich Boell Foundation Email: [Sarah.Muhoya@ke.boell.org](mailto:Sarah.Muhoya@ke.boell.org). Tel: +254-722-704-392