



# WOMEN MUST LEAD

**Women as Marshals of Political Leadership in Kenya**

**Venue: Sosa Cottages, Vihiga**

**Peer Dialogues with Women Rights Organizations and Young Activists in the Lake Region**

**5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

# CONTENT

- \* Introduction - Dorothy Otieno – WPP Project Coordinator, FEMNET
- \* Welcome Remarks – Memory Kachambwa – Executive Director, FEMNET
- \* Opening Remarks - Hon. Hasna Mudeizi – Speaker, County Assembly of Vihiga
- \* Rachelle Ouko – WPP Program Officer, FAWE
- \* Dr. Joyce Osogo – Political Party Women League
- \* Easter Achieng’ – Executive Director, KEFEADO

# CONTENT...cont

- \* Caroline Agwanda – County Government of Kisumu
- \* Hon. Gladys Analo – Elected MCA, Busali Ward, Vihiga County
- \* Hellen Apiyo – Human Rights Advocate, Watoto Musilie
- \* Janet Anyango – Senior Legal Officer, FIDA Kenya
- \* Mercy Atieno – ToT Trainer, Ujamaa Africa
- \* Call to Action: I choose to Challenge
- \* Vote of Thanks
- \* Pictorials





DOROTHY OTIENO  
WPP Project Coordinator, FEMNET

Dorothy kick started the session on day one by welcoming and moderating the introduction of the participants from the eight counties (Kisumu, Siaya, Homabay, Busia, Kakamega, Vihiga, Kisii and Nyamira). She also introduced the team from FEMNET and FAWE; the conveners of Women Must Lead, Lake Region Chapter

She highlighted the objective of the forum and expected outcome as:

**Objective: Renew solidarity and movement building under women's political leadership**

**Expected Outcomes:**

- **Increase the confidence and skills of women and young activists to participate in Women Must Lead Campaign**
- **Strengthen the capacities of women to speak out against discrimination against women**
- **Create networks with women involved in politics**
- **Challenge women and girls to get involved in political parties and movements**
- **Inspire women and girls to vie or occupy political seats**

# WELCOME REMARKS



Memory Kachambwa

Executive Director

FEMNET

Virtual Welcome  
Remarks

KARIBUNI!!!





HON. HASNA MUDEIZI - Speaker,  
County Assembly of Vihiga

- ★ Honorable Mudeizi begun with a brief introduction of her career journey revealing that she is an advocate of the High Court with a degree in Political Science.
- ★ Being the only Muslim in the County Assembly of Vihiga, the honorable speaker divulged that her leadership cements the fact that leadership is not discriminatory on either gender or religion, but on merit and political goodwill.
- ★ She further pointed out that she had received ample backing from the political party, Amani National Congress (ANC), which she said has a strong policy on gender equality and women empowerment.
- ★ Sharing her experience as the speaker of the County Assembly of Vihiga, Hon. Mudeizi pointed out on the need to develop a synergy that is cognizant of both the legal and political dynamics at play in the legislative processes



- ★ Hon. Mudeizi further revealed the essence of collaboration among women, citing that her candidature was strongly supported by Hon. Gladys Analo; who is also affiliated to the same political outfit as herself (ANC); and fought tooth and nail to ensure that Hon. Mudeizi carried the day in a hotly contested seat that had attracted a total of 19 contestants where 18 were male and herself as the only female.
- ★ The honorable speaker further indicated that as a woman occupying an influential political position, it is critical that she make decisions on her feet. She divulged how she has embraced consultation to cultivate trust and respect from both sides of the house.
- ★ She also pointed out that women in leadership need to be independent minded and maintain their sense of self to ground a firm style of leadership.

- ★ Her sterling achievements include the ratification of the Vihiga County Public Participation Bill 2020, which requires the Assembly to hold sittings in the sub counties on rotational basis depending on the specific need of the sub counties.
- ★ According to her, this bill is a game changer as it will encompass the voices of women in the grassroots in the law making process, which have been conspicuously missing in the formation of laws in the past.
- ★ Hon. Mudeizi further divulged that the harassment of women is a common vice, having been targeted immediately after she took the Speaker's seat. She however downplayed the rumors, taking away the power of the malicious writers who had published the defamatory stories on the gutter press outlets.



- ★ Hon. Mudeizi is confident that her ascent to political leadership will inspire more women to shun stereotypical gender roles defined by the deeply entrenched patriarchy and challenge women leaders to participate in the political sphere
- ★ She is keen on offering mentorship to young women, to propel an attitude of upward mobility and have more women intentionally participate in politics





RACHELLE OUKO  
WPP Program Officer, FAWE



- ★ Rachelle began with an introduction of FAWE and WPP project in eight African countries. She also gave a brief of Women Must Lead campaign and the Peer-to-Peer Thematic Dialogue Sessions with WROs in enhancing WPP at the grassroots.
- ★ Rachelle listed the names of phenomenal African women who have risen to positions of power, calling on women to develop a culture of celebrating their victory.
- ★ Rachelle further asserted the importance of developing an exit strategy for women who are in leadership, to enable them maintain their dignity when they exit political offices.
- ★ She further noted that women in power need to invest in enriching their knowledge pool, using the networks within their reach for proper personal development to cushion them from falling back into less dignified positions after they exit the political scene

- ★ On the formation of women movements, Rachelle described the importance of women surrounding themselves with positive energy.
- ★ She played a 3-minute video that demonstrated the formation of movements, which showed how movements are formed. In the video, it showed a man dancing alone in a crowd, he was then joined by a second person, who was referred to as the first follower. The clip explained the essence of the first follower, who basically plays a part in showing the larger crowd that there is no harm in joining the lone dancer.
- ★ Rachelle conclusively explained that the first follower played an essential role to be emulated by women seeking political seats. She challenged women leaders to align themselves with first followers who believes in their purpose and will act as a magnet to attract larger following





**HON. GLADYS ANALO**  
**ELECTED MCA, BUSALI WARD, VIHIGA COUNTY**

- ★ Hon. Gladys Analo aka 'Mama Fresh' is the only elected woman out of the 30 men members of Vihiga County Assembly. She was elected to represent the people of Busali Ward under ANC Party
- ★ She challenged women to go for elective political positions to create more spaces for women in the special seats
- ★ She acknowledged the immeasurable support and mentorship she has derived from seasoned grassroots women leaders like Easter Aketch.
- ★ She first got into the Assembly in 2007 through party nomination after serving diligently as a Maendeleo ya Wanawake Treasurer (Women Caucus)
- ★ She faced protests and tribulations from the aggrieved party members and only relied on the support accorded by family members to overcome the political challenges



- ★ In 2012 she went for elective post and the people of Busali Ward elected her to represent them. Her fame rose out of her commitment to community development that pushed the community to rally behind her to go for the position
- ★ She is celebrated for supporting and campaigning for Hon. Hasna as the Speaker, an initiative that was not welcome but through her lobbying strategy she won the hearts of men who joined in electing the Speaker.
- ★ She is currently serving her third term at the Assembly, heads the Public Service and Administration Committee and the Speaker's Panel. In 2022 she is eyeing for MP, Vihiga
- ★ She challenged women to work closely with men and remain humble as they invest in knowledge, public service and community development
- ★ Her Busali Ward is recognized as the best performing Ward in Health, Education, Roads and Water



Sweden  
Sverige



Kuimarisha ujumuishaji wa  
wanawake katika siasa  
barani Afrika



ATTAC

Testing  
Unwanted Attention  
Unwanted Conversation  
Harassment  
Accusations

VERBA

← IRRITATION

DR. JOYCE OSOGO  
CECM ROADS, KISUMU COUNTY



- ★ Dr. Osogo began by listing her stellar achievements and journey to the top, how she began her training as a PP1 teacher at Kamagambo Teacher's college and furthered her education to the point where she is now a lecturer supervising masters students at the University of Nairobi.
- ★ Dr. Osogo is currently the Kisumu County Executive Committee Member for roads, a position which she admits comes with great responsibility and expectations, considering her predecessors were all male.
- ★ She explained the importance of women in political leadership in gaining knowledge from across various disciplines, to build a strong portfolio that can stand the propaganda and lead the women to challenge their male counterparts on an intellectual level



- \* Civic education is a critical component in movement building. Dr. Joyce encouraged women leaders to carry out grassroots sensitization and capacity building for women, and to cultivate a culture that will instill the institution of gender equality at the family unit and eventually cascade to the electorate







EASTER ACHIENG'

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, KEFEADO

- \* Identifying herself as an African feminist, Easter is confident that the future is indeed female if the efforts are galvanized.
- \* Having mentored hundreds of women to align themselves into the political sphere, Easter is a strong believer in shaking the table and rallying for women to take up their deserved spaces in the political arena and to add their voices into the policy making processes to have an equal society.
- \* Easter emphasized that women must rise and advocate for an all inclusive society that does not discriminate along the lines of gender, religion or sexual orientation.
- \* When women radicalize themselves and push to be seen for their intellectual abilities, the objectification of women will be a vice buried in the past



- ★ Women in politics as well as those that rally behind them ought to be consistent so that the pressure can yield results. The consistency can be bred from having a caucus that will have the founding principles to ensure continuity in the push to increase the quantity and quality of women participating in politics
- ★ Mentorship is a critical component to build the confidence and skills of girls, women and young activists. It is through mentorships that the upcoming generation can learn about where the movement building begun, the milestones achieved and what principles to push for moving forward to attain gender equality in politics and governance
- ★ Women movements have so far suffered the challenge of underfunding. Moving forward it will be critical that the women pool their resources and marshal for support from organizations that are passionate on gender equality in political participation and governance



CAROLINE AGWANDA

Disability Inclusion, Kisumu County Government

- ★ Caroline Agwanda is the advisor to the Kisumu County Governor on matters of inclusion of persons with disabilities in the county
- ★ She holds an exemplary track record in the formation of policies that assist persons with disabilities to shun the societal attitudes held towards them, especially women
- ★ Caroline is among the 50 women leaders in Kenya who were recognized by the UN Women for their transformative leadership
- ★ Women with disabilities are often overlooked in the political process, and are usually handed nominations as an afterthought, despite the many legal frameworks on inclusion
- ★ Coupled with security threats and the culture of violence towards women, women living with disabilities are at a great disadvantage in competitively vying for political seats.



- ★ There needs to be the adoption of a policy that will offer a level playing field for women with disabilities to enable them competitively engage in politics based on merit and their achievements in their respective fields. This includes the proposal for revision of the application fees for women with disabilities
- ★ There is also the need to offer more training and capacity building for women with disabilities especially in the grassroots who are often weighed down by the societal stigma





Hellen Apiyo – Human Rights Defender, Watoto Musilie



- ★ Hellen Apiyo, popularly known as Tuli Tulitu called on women to embrace their womanhood to demystify the notion that women in political leadership and those aspiring to rise to the political helm can be shamed using menstrual periods, being barren, unmarried, without children or single mothers
- ★ Women can lead as is demonstrated in the Agikuyu culture which is matriarchal in nature. It is therefore critical that women believe in their leadership and move away from the societal bubbles that seek to define a woman's role as secondary to that of men
- ★ Women have shown resilience and proved that whatever they are served, they multiply tremendously. It is with this breathe that the society should embrace and support women in leadership and governance to raise an exemplary and unbiased society
- ★ She challenged women to invest in family support, financial base, community goodwill, mentorship, self love and good grooming to keep abreast with the unleveled and harsh political field.



**JANET ANYANGO**  
Senior Legal Officer, FIDA Kenya



- ★ Janet begun by asking the participants to define violence and the forms in which violence against women in politics manifests
- ★ It was established that the violence is meted in various forms including verbal abuse, sexual harassment, intimidation, gender discrimination and objectification.
- ★ Women participation is hampered by cronies who have enough resources to influence the rigging of the primaries. She cited an instance in Kisumu where there was a seemingly intentional delay in the delivery of ballot boxes for holding party primaries.
- ★ When ballot boxes are delivered at 6pm, it excludes women from voting as a majority of them leave the polling stations for security reasons as well as the aforementioned gender roles that are common in the lake region.

- ✱ From the dialogue, it was established that such scenarios are deliberately created to make women easy targets for violence and often as a tool for intimidation to scare women off political participation
- ✱ Women were also found to be vulnerable, with spies that work for their opponents from within, often presenting themselves as philanthropic funders of their political ambitions but end up acting as sellouts by giving away the aspirants' strategies
- ✱ Financial constraints were therefore identified as a red flag in making women easy targets of violence. It was established that it is critical for women movements to have an autonomous funding models to avert instances of infiltration





Mercy Atieno-NO Means NO

- ★ Mercy gave the women a breakdown on the basic self- defense skills to apply when faced with the listed forms of violence in the continuum
- ★ Speaking up was outlined as an effective tool in taking away an abuser's power, calling on women to use their voices to name and shame the perpetrators
- ★ Mercy also gave the basic skills of repelling physical violence, which often manifests during the in person campaigns when women go out to mobilize for votes

**Self-Defense--Anything you DO, SAY or BELIEVE that helps keep you safe**



# CALL TO ACTION



#I  
CHOOSE  
TO  
CHALLENGE

# RESOLUTIONS

- \* The formation of Gusii Women caucus to spearhead the Women Must Lead campaigns in Kisii and Nyamira counties
- \* Influential women in Vihiga county will carry out resource mobilization to secure funding for women's movements
- \* Kisumu will continue with the capacity building of marginalized women's groups to ensure they come out in large numbers to grab space in the political arena



# RESOLUTIONS ...cont'

- ★ Siaya will carry out campaigns to create awareness among women on their role in decision making to enhance intentional participation in the political cycle and the need to diversify
- ★ Deliberate with women occupying political seats in Kakamega county and carry out mapping, training and mentorship for women and girls aspiring to vie for political seats

# RESOLUTIONS...cont'

- ★ Busia county will carry out grassroots sensitization to enlighten women on their political rights to inspire a generation of strong women leaders
- ★ Homabay county will work with the existing women groups in the sub counties to offer mentorship to aspiring women leaders



# CLOSING REMARKS



- ★ Concluding the dialogue session, Hon. Hasna Mudeizi, the speaker of the county assembly of Vihiga called on the women to implement the meeting resolutions to the letter to ensure that the quality and quantity of women involved in politics is improved in the upcoming 2022 elections and beyond
- ★ Hon. Mudeizi also gave special commendation to FEMNET and the consortium of partners, FAWE, WPP, International IDEA and Sweden Sveirge for convening the peer to peer dialogue, noting that such forums offer the promise of enhancing the inclusion of women in political participation and governance
- ★ Committing to offer mentorship to young girls and women, the honorable speaker Hasna Mudeizi declared the two day dialogue officially closed..... *the Ayeeees have it!*



# MEDIA COVERAGE

- \* SKY FM 106.3 – A Kisumu based community radio station that broadcasts in Dholuo with its reach in the Lake Region hosted Jared Awatt (FEMNET) and Rose Angiro (Homabay) on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 during the evening live show to discuss matters pertaining to the WPP Peer dialogue
- \* Citizen Digital Website also published the story

<https://citizentv.co.ke/news/mudeizi-urges-women-to-rally-behind-each-other-for-political-inclusion-11294189/>

# PICTORIALS



Participants pose for a picture at Sosa Cottages in Vihiga

Sky FM manager Jael Lieta poses with Mary Ger from Kisumu







Participants dance during a session to demonstrate the importance of movement formation

More dancing from the delegation





Easter Oketch, Executive Director at KEFEADO receives a gift after her reinvigorating presentation

Participants cheer during one of the sessions







Speaker Hasna  
commending Tuli Tulitu for  
expressing interest for  
elective MCA seat in  
Kisumu County

Dorothy Otieno of  
FEMNET addressing the  
participants





# #WomenMustLead

