

UN WOMEN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL NEWSLETTER

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Women need to play a substantive role in Extractive Industries



Deputy Regional Director, UN Women East and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO), Simone Ellis Oluoch-Olunya, speaking at the event..

Johannesburg, South Africa—There is a need to put in place measures to protect women against the risks they face and experience in their engagements with extractive industries operations and their surrounding communities, including harassment, gender based violence, HIV and extreme levels of violence in resource based conflicts.

This was said by Simone ellis Oluoch-Olunya, UN Women’s Deputy Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa during the Gender and Mining Forum held in South Africa in March 2015.

“It is important to not only mitigate the negative consequences for women, but also ensure that the economic and development opportunities brought about by the Extractive Industries sector are equally accessible to both men and women,” said Ms Oluoch-Olunya.

The Forum which was organised by the Australia-Africa Partnerships Facility on behalf of the Australian Government attracted about 100 cross-sector participants from across Africa, including eight UN Women attendees from seven different country offices.

Ms Oluoch-Olunya took the opportunity to highlight how natural resources on the continent could present a unique opportunity for shared growth and drastic reductions in poverty levels.

“The oil, gas and mining sector is an important driving force for economic development and promoting gender equality will unlock the growth potential for the African continent,” she said.

The Deputy Regional Director, however, added that if the extractive industries sector is not managed in a transparent and equitable manner, there are risks of severe negative consequences including environmental degradation, economic disturbance, displacement and accelerated levels of inequality and poverty; which if unaddressed, could further widen the gender gaps in resource access and opportunities.

The three day event included a dinner to celebrate International Women’s Day, which was attended by Hon. Minister Susan Shabangu, Minister in the Presidency responsible for Women, Government of South Africa. A group of school students from Moletsane High in Soweto were given the opportunity by the Australian Government to attend both the forum and the dinner and Hon. Minister Shabangu took great delight in engaging with some of South Africa’s potential future women leaders.

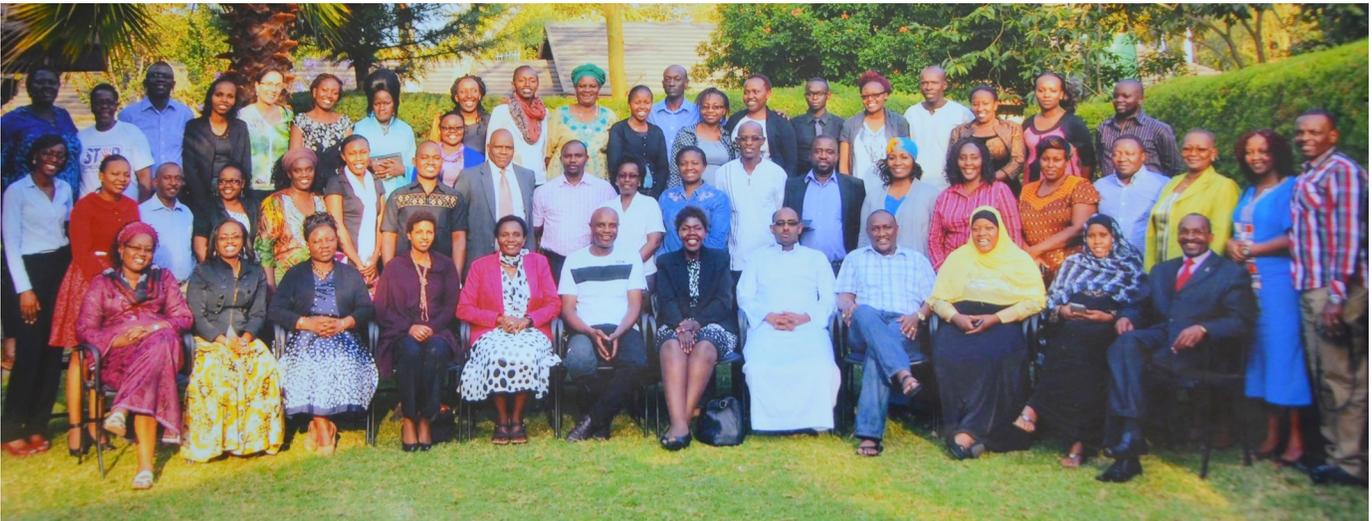


Students from Moletsane High in Soweto interacting with Hon. Minister Susan Shabangu. Photo credit: Chris Stamatiou



Attendees at the IWD 2015 dinner hosted by the Australian Government. Photo Credit: Chris Stamatiou

Kenya makes a big stride towards ending domestic violence



Some of the stakeholders during one of the meetings

Nairobi, Kenya—The Kenyan Parliament has passed for enactment the Prevention against Domestic Violence bill (PADV), erasing Kenya from the list of 20 countries in the world that have no specific law that criminalizes and outlaws domestic violence.

The Prevention against Domestic Violence bill 2013, which seeks to protect the family unit as the fundamental unit of society, is a response to domestic violence in Kenya. It seeks to address the gap that exists due to lack of any existing legislation addressing the issue of domestic violence. It is one of the three family bills including Marriage, Matrimonial Property bill and Protection against Violence bill. These two have already been enacted.

UN Women supported the complex process which calls for a momentum building process. The momentum building was facilitated through key strategies, which included strategic stakeholder mobilization, public mobilization and awareness raising, engagement of Members of parliament.

The process of law formulation is not easy, first, all the stakeholders must have a strong united voice and consensus on exactly what they would like the bill to address.

Secondly, there has to be clarity on leadership for the process. The Women's Empowerment link which brings together different stakeholders under the Mwamko Mpya initiative took the over the process to mobilize civil society and get support from the different development partners. This ensured clear communication structures and a central point for linkage with the diverse partners and stakeholders. It also ensured consistency in communication.

The next level entailed putting in place strategies for the

enactment. UN Women supported a technical working group to assist parliamentarians to put the bill together. Both Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA) and the Kenya parliamentary human rights association (KEPHRA) played key roles in this process.

A small technical working group (TWG) met severally to agree on content, then mobilized over 50 members of parliament to clarify thorny issues in the bill and lobby non-proponents of the bill towards supporting it, by clarifying contentious issues. One key winning strategy was the agreement that KEPHRA would drive the process in parliament, so that the bill would cease being viewed as a "women's issue".

The TWG then mobilized civil society and KEPHRA who met over a three day process to categorize the amendments that were proposed. There was an agreement on key non-negotiable aspects of the bill, such as the definition of persons in a domestic relationship, forms of domestic violence, key services that should be offered to survivors and a few more including the role of the police.

An interesting aspect of this phase, was to identify key skills among members of parliament to determine who was best placed to push for various amendments in the House.

One key lesson learnt from the entire process was the need for stakeholders to be in regular communication with each other and more critically to engage proactively with the process within the house.

The passing of the bill was a great milestone for Kenya and a great stride towards ending violence against women who form the majority of victims of domestic violence.

Police and Prosecutors Trained to fight violence against women and girls



Sisay Mengistu

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia— Close to 50 police officers and public prosecutors in Ethiopia have received training aimed at equipping them with the skills to prevent and respond to cases of violence against women and girls effectively. The training was given by Ministry of Justice with the support of UN Women as part of the Joint Programme on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

Speaking after the training session on evidence collection and weighting for cases relating to violence against women and girls, Deputy Inspector and Head of Women and Children's Unit at the Arada police station, Sisay Mengistu, said that the training changed her perceptions of how she should approach and handle victims of violence.

Sisay indicated that she will not rush to institute a case, but rather ensure the quality of the case. She said that it is all about the good will and persistence of a police officer to go above and beyond in investigating cases of violence. "I realize that I am dealing with people's lives and I need to ensure that I work closely with public prosecutor to ensure justice for victims of violence is served" said Sisay.

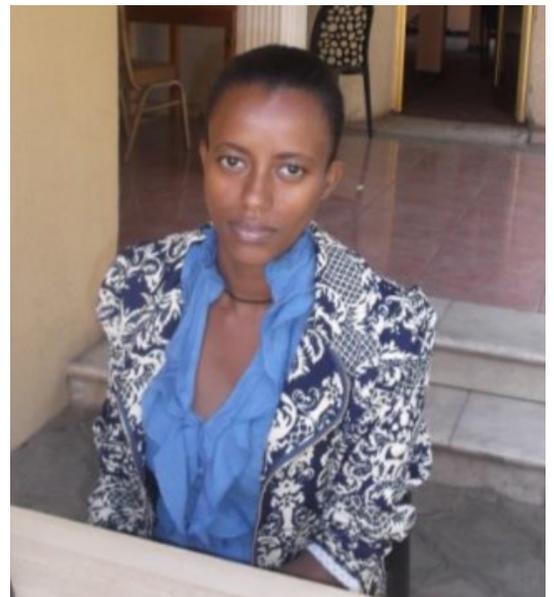
"I commit to share the information I have acquired from this training with my peers and other police officers. Using the skills I have acquired, I promise to protect women and girls from violence," she said.

Asahib Bizuneh, a public prosecutor at Nifas Silk Lafto sub city, applauded the training on evidence collection and weighting. The training exceeded her expectations and she noted that it was entirely in line with her work and therefore held a lot of relevance. "It was very inspiring and I found myself looking forward to the training each morning" she said.

She said that the training also helped her to change the way she works and to look at cases and approach victims of violence differently. She noted how she is now felt fully equipped to build her case from evidences that have been collected.

"The training has also allowed me to understand the significant role I play in the delivery of justice," she said as she committed to investigate all cases with due diligence and make sure all cases go to court. She said she is even looking forward to reviewing cases that have been closed in the past.

"The training has allowed me to understand the importance of all types of evidence and the process of collecting "relevant" evidence to prosecute cases of violence perpetrated against women and girls," said Asahib



Asahib Bizuneh

IFUW Regional Seminar on Perspectives On Women’s Education for Entrepreneurship in Africa



Panelists– R-L: Florence Butegwa– UN Women, Judith Owigar-AkiraChix, Danielle Castle-IFUW (moderator), Jane Maigua-ILO, Joy Mukanyage-RAUW

Nairobi, Kenya — The International Federation of University Women (IFUW) in partnership with UN Women, Eastern and South Africa regional office, held a seminar in March, on Perspectives on Women’s Education for Entrepreneurship in Africa.

The seminar highlighted the challenges and opportunities for women entrepreneurs in Africa, and how education and training for women’s entrepreneurship can help tackle economic and socio-cultural barriers.

The Seminar which was held in Nairobi, was moderated by Daniele Castle, Executive Director IFUW and the Panel members were Jane Maigua, National Programme Coordinator (NPC) - International Labour Organization Women Entrepreneurship Development project Kenya, Judith Owigar, Co-Founder and Operations Director, AkiraChix, Joy Mukanyage, Rwandan Association of University Women (RAUW), Former Rwanda Ambassador to Kenya, and Florence Butegwa, Senior Regional Advisor,

Leadership and Governance UN Women ESARO.

The panel discussion tackled challenges faced by women venturing into entrepreneurship and made proposals on how to address the challenges.

ILO’s Jane Maigua gave highlights on how the Government of Kenya has put in place strategies to encourage more women to go into business. These include the Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO), which allows 30 per cent of contracts to be given to the youth, women and persons with disability without competition from established firms.

She emphasized the need to educate women. “This is a gift that keeps on giving and benefits the whole society. Investing in women is indeed smart economics,” she said. She added that ILO is working to build effective women associations through which women can get training on business skills.

UN Women’s Florence Butegwa encouraged parents to begin imparting entrepreneurship skills in both boys and girls from a young age at home. This she said could be done by creating a savings account for them and helping them to develop simple business plans. She also encouraged women to have long-term visions in their business plans.

Joy Mukanyage, who is also a former Rwandan diplomat urged women to change their perception of entrepreneurship being a male field. She, however, emphasized that there needs to be a level playing field that rewards both men and women equally.

Judith Owigar, founder of AkiraChix encouraged women to venture into technology. She pointed out that women shied away from technology terming it as a male domain yet it is a field where women can perform equally well.

IFUW advocates for rights and equality and empowering women through access to quality education at all levels.



A participant asking a question to the panelists



Florence Butegwa, Senior Regional Advisor, UN Women ESARO.

Sudanese women work towards a new, gender-responsive constitution



From left to right: UN Women Acting Country Representative Abla Amawi, ECF gender expert, Suad Abdelal and Maria Abbas. Photo credit: UN Women

provisions as well as in leadership roles throughout the process of constitution making, implementing, and monitoring.

In January 2014, President al-Bashir called for a National Dialogue, a platform for debate on social, political and economic issues leading up to the drafting of a new national constitution.

This document is to replace the interim constitution drafted in 2005, following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement which ended decades-long war between Sudan and the now independent South Sudan.

A year, on in 2015, UN Women, the DSRI and the ECF has organized a three-day workshop to promote the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment issues in the upcoming constitution. The event, organized for the Engendering the Constitution Forum (ECF), brought together over 40 lawmakers, parliamentarians, women's rights advocates, national non-government activists and academics to discuss papers and recommendations by a panel of experts.

UN Women's Acting Country Representative, Abla Amawi, emphasized the necessity of national ownership of both the National Dialogue and the process of drafting a new constitution.

"This is an important moment in time for Sudan and the Arab region," she said, addressing the ECF. "Our hope is that the result of this workshop is a Common Agenda for advocacy, capacity-building and public awareness-

raising that unites the decisions and opinions of women and male supporters from all areas to realize women's empowerment."

During the first part of the workshop, participants examined the defining principles of an effective dialogue. "The success of any dialogue hinges on the belief that all participants have a voice and that they have ownership of the process," said workshop leader and gender studies expert Maria Abbas. "The sincere exchange of ideas and a sense of responsibility, compassion, humanity, and long-term thinking are essential."

On the second and third days, Ibtisam Sanhoury, a minority rights expert and university lecturer on constitutional law, led debates on a Common Agenda and model provisions for a gender-responsive constitution.

"What I hope to accomplish through our work here is a greater understanding of what women's rights and gender equality are and how that translates to helping working women throughout Sudan," said Sanhoury. "When I'm talking to female farmers, there's often a misunderstanding of that these terms are academic and too abstract to represent them. I hope to help reconcile these terms with what they say they need most: dignity, recognition and equal standing with their male peers."

In her closing remarks on the final day, Amawi expressed her hopes that the workshops provided "the momentum to work against backsliding and bureaucracy and that the coming constitution contains your inputs." She went on to state: "UN Women pledges to support you in the next phase, as you move towards creating a clear action plans, and that we can, with you - the government, CSOs and academics - realize this action plan."

Khartoum, Sudan—UN Women has made it a top priority to support government, civil society leaders and gender academics in promoting and protecting human rights, good governance, gender equality and women's empowerment in Sudan.

Since 2012, UN Women has supported a Gender Responsive Constitution Making Initiative in partnership with the Gender and Development Unit of the Development Studies and Research Institute at the University of Khartoum (GAD/DSRI) in Sudan. Based on this initiative, the ECF was formed, initiated by Sudanese civil society organizations (CSOs) and government actors and supported by UN Women.

The Engendering the Constitution Forum (ECF) is a collective formed by representatives of over 40 interdisciplinary groups all working to secure better representation for women at a national level. Their main objective during this series of workshops was to form a common agenda on advocating for a more gender-inclusive constitution. The ECF also aims to ensure that women are involved in all aspects of the drafting of substantive

Ethiopia Women's Run



Haile Gebrselassie and UN Women Deputy Country Representative Ms Funmi Balogun



UN Women staff and family members after the run

Addis Ababa- over 7000 participants took part in the 13th edition of the Women First 5K Race on March 15, 2015. The theme of this year's run was "Empower a woman, Empower a nation" and it was supported by OneUNEthiopia.

The race was flagged off by Ms. Funmi Balogun, UN Women Deputy Country Representative, on behalf of the UN Country team. Together with the renowned Olympic athlete Haile Gebrselassie, Funmi sent the female runners of all ages on their way. The UN Women Ethiopia Country Office staff and their families participated in race. All the way to the finish line, the runners were chanting and singing songs which were calling for implementation of commitments on gender equality.

Enhancing Women's Rights by Securing Land Rights for Women in Ethiopia - A Mission Possible

New York—UN Women Ethiopia in collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia organized a joint side event at the margins of the Commission on the Status of Women showcasing the Ethiopian example of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) through the provision of land rights to women.

The event provided an opportunity to share a practical examples of how women's land rights can be an entry point to making gender equality a reality.

A panel discussion comprising of the Minister of Women, Children and Youth Affairs of Ethiopia, H.E. Ms. Zenebu Tadesse, Ms. Lakshmi Puri, Assistant Secretary General and Deputy Executive Director of UN Women and Ms. Tarikwa Bezu, Leader of Women Cooperative of Melkan Women Group, among others, underscored the importance of women's empowerment as a strategy to hasten development.

"Today, millions of women in Ethiopia have land entitlements and are contributing positively towards overall poverty eradication by increasing the country's agricultural productivity, which has increased food security in Ethiopia," said Minister Tadesse.

She added that due to efforts by the government, 9.11 million women in Ethiopia have joint land holding certificates and therefore guaranteed land rights that protect their land ownership in the case of divorce or their spouse's death. "I now have a joint land certificate with my husband," the minister noted.

Through UN Joint Programme on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment that is lead by UN Women, the government has provided 17 hectares of land to a group of women farmers, which has resulted in women's increased income. "I had nothing and was not able to send my children to school, was not able to have three meals a day or seek health services" says Tarikwa Bezo, one of the women who have benefitted from the programme.

"The discussions of this side event has relevance for the whole of Africa. This is because land rights have a critical bearing on development in Africa which largely depends on agriculture," said Ms Lakshmi Puri. She stressed on the need to put in place legal provisions coupled with the right structures for implementation, as key towards promoting land rights for women.

Ms Letty Chirawa, UN Women Representative to Ethiopia, Africa Union, and the Economic Commission for Africa said that for the sustainable development goals to succeed, it is imperative that women become economically empowered. "2015 is the year of women's empowerment and it is time to make the SDGs and Agenda 2063 a reality for women," she said.

New UN Women staff get acquainted with the organization



Nairobi, Kenya—UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) organized a regional induction workshop in Nairobi, Kenya in March 2015. The aim of the induction workshop was to acquaint new staff with UN Women mandate, programme, policies and procedures and also to serve as a refresher for staff who transitioned into new roles within UN Women.

The ESARO HR team worked with colleagues in programme and operations to deliver this induction. The session was well represented by 27 staff from ESA Country Offices (South Sudan, Zimbabwe, Somalia, Uganda, Tanzania, South Africa, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Kenya). The three days sessions

were vital for new colleagues from the Region as it covered overview of key programme and operations procedures, systems and standard operation processes as per UN Women Rules and Regulations.

The induction also provided a platform for inter-country interactions, sharing of best practices as well as hands on sessions for participants on use of formats, ATLAS, etc. The HR Team from HQ also joined to welcome new employees; including the newest addition to the ESAR family – the Somalia team. They also provided an overview of HR strategies and services, and updated the participants on the work underway to streamline HR systems and processes.

UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa– about us

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

UN Women’s Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) is in Nairobi, Kenya and covers 25 countries in the region. In addition, UN Women has offices in the following countries:

Burundi

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office

Ethiopia

Kenya

Malawi

Mozambique

Rwanda

South Africa Multi-Country Office-(Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland)

Somalia

South Sudan

Sudan

Tanzania

Uganda

Zimbabwe



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