



**CIVIL SOCIETIES ROUNDTABLE IN ADVANCE OF
THE 12TH COMMONWEALTH WOMEN'S AFFAIRS
MINISTERS MEETING (12WAMM)
16 AND 17 SEPTEMBER 2019
MOVENPICK HOTEL AND RESIDENCES
NAIROBI KENYA**

1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the 11th Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting (11WAMM), held in September 2016 hosted by the Government of Samoa, Kenya was selected to host the 12th Women Affairs Ministers Meeting (12 WAMM).

The theme of this year's meeting is 'From Commitment to Action: Accelerating Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment for Sustainable Development.

The Foundation organized a civil society roundtable in partnership with the Government of Kenya as the host of the 12WAMM. The Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA-Kenya) co-convened the roundtable.

The roundtable discussion brought together civil societies from the Commonwealth regions to discuss on the theme and put forward a policy paper that is to be presented during the Ministers meeting. The policy paper will contain action points on how we can accelerate gender equality and empowerment to have a sustainable development

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The introduction of the roundtable discussion brought together Women's Rights Activists representing their organizations and Commonwealth regions ahead of the Senior's official meeting on 18 September and 12th Commonwealth Women Affairs Meeting (12WAMM) taking place 19 and 20 September 2019.

2.1 Objectives

Provide a platform for putting forward recommendations on how to accelerate results for the realization of the Beijing principles and SDG5 for discussion during the ministerial meeting with focus on;

- Ending Violence
- Women's Leadership
- Women and Climate Change
- Women's Economic Empowerment

The expected outcomes will reflect a regional common policy positions that will be consolidated into an outcome document/communiqué with policy recommendation and key priorities. This will feed into the senior officials meeting and considered for inclusion in the Women Affairs Meeting outcome statement and draft Declaration that will be submitted during the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM) 2020.

The meeting was officially opened by Myn Garcia, the Deputy Director General of the Commonwealth Foundation and Samson Ogechi of International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Kenya.

3.0 THE OVERVIEW

In the global context there are troubles, turbulence and tipping points that hinder development and some such as hyper globalisation capitalism are not easily tamed. In addition, transnational racial, religious, ethnic supremacy and authoritarianism in most countries is rampant a warning sign that may bring World War 3. Climate change is at the forefront of the agenda with the effects being felt at everyone's doorstep. We have increasing social unrest, protests and conflict hindering democracy. Increasing indebtedness of developing countries is a major debt crisis that needs international intervention. Most countries do not consider human rights as a priority nor consider inequality as a major setback to development.

Some of the reasons slowing down social progress and human development since the 1980s include;

- Reduced public investments and public goods
- Very low social security / social protection
- State disinvestment in public services
- Expanded measures of poverty beyond per capital income: multidimensional poverty index, challenging income poverty measures (\$1.25 per day?)
- Middle class also defined at very low income
- Beyond rhetoric, lack of social content/purpose to macroeconomic policies

3.1 In women empowerment these are some of the factors hindering progress;

- Women's unpaid labour continues to be the major obstacle to women's economic empowerment: 50% of women are outside the labour force (i.e.. not counted as looking for work) - still not counted in macro-economic policy
- Women's economic empowerment dependent on the overall socio-economic situation and highly dependent on collective ownership of goods and services, redistributive policies, international human rights norms
- Support for women's entrepreneurship but lack of access to/ownership of the means of production: land, labour, capital/finance, technology, information/knowledge
- Women face high levels of workplace sexual harassment, bullying and the widening gender gap

3.2 Gender based violence and VAW - do we need new theories of change?

As we learn and expand our understanding of different forms of GBV the problems still remains and new forms such as online bullying and harassment emerge. There is no progress in enacting policies and laws on GBV but lack of investment in implementation is still a woman

issue. There are more men joining the anti GBV struggles but there are limitations such as patriarchy. There is also still a lot of dependence on donor funding towards GBV efforts, rise of religio-political conservative forces and anti-feminists. To eradicate GBV, we need to look at it from a macro level and not from the micro level where it currently is. This is a major global concern.

3.3 Factors increasing women & girls' risk

Increased pressure, particularly on already stressed female headed households, for women to maintain families and assets

Intersectional factors - age; geographical location; income; voice; ethnicity; legislation, policy (and the extent to which the state is able to implement and police these) and oversight

Education -the poorest communities such as Kenya may still prefer to educate boys and emphasise girls' role in care giving. Adult women without education cannot access and understand extension, technical and weather related information and services.

Structural barriers -- access to or ownership and control of resources, persisting discriminatory customary and cultural practices affect women's ability to adapt and recover.

3.4 Harmful coping strategies;

Early marriage - as a perceived escape route from poverty or as a result of forced marriage by parents seeking to reduce their care burden.

Migration -- women primarily seek informal trade. Cross-border migration risks for women include SGBV, harassment, robbery, and corruption, a risk of contracting HIV where sex is exchanged with border, transport and other officials for entry across borders.

Absenteeism and School Drop Out - Girls in disaster prone communities will often reduce school attendance or drop out entirely to help with the increased workload at home or to seek work to support the family.

4.0 Post-Beijing milestones in Women's Political Representation

- Many UN Member States took action, with a massive push from women's rights organisations and activists, to increase the numbers of women in politics and decision making this was achieved through constitutional and voluntary party quotas and signing and ratifying protocols to achieve minimum levels of women's representation
- Globally, the rate of adoption of legislated gender quotas increased from 3% of countries in 1990 to 40% in 2015.
- By 2010, 43 chambers in 24 countries had reached the UN target of 30% or more women in Parliament.

- In the Commonwealth, 12 countries in the Africa, Caribbean and Americas, and Pacific regions have more than 30% women MPs.

4.1 Best practices to support women in Parliament

Adopting gender mainstreaming strategies to ensure that the Parliament as a whole considers all of its policies and process from a gender perspective

Dedicated gender equality infrastructure, such as a Parliamentary Committee on gender equality or a Women's Parliamentary caucus that focus the attention of the parliament on the goal of gender equality

Formation of women's or gender caucuses, in each respective country allows for women to work across party lines to champion issues of women's rights and gender equality.

Strengthening, supporting and funding gender equality advocates outside the Parliament, is critical to accelerating the rate of Women's Advancement to Parliament and their true participation in legislative processes.

5.0 REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON BEIJING+25

East, West and South Africa discussion

5.1 East Africa

The three countries have the necessary legal and policy frameworks to promote the rights of women. Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda have domesticated the CEDAW and the Maputo Protocol. The Countries have also the necessary gender machineries with strong institutional mechanisms. There are almost free and fair elections, cross border trade, civic competence, inter-sectionality of ethnic groups, strong cultural and traditional practices and infrastructural linkages within the countries and without.

Some of the factors contributing to violence against women across the region includes;

- Patriarchal cultures.
- Economic inequalities.
- Normalization of violence.
- Lack of coordinated state response.
- Burden of proof on survivors.
- Culture of silence on GBV.
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5.2 The Legal and policy environment

Despite the strengthened legal and policy frameworks, violence against women and girls persists in Uganda and manifests itself in forms of sexual violence (defilement, rape, sexual harassment at work and commercial sex exploitation of young girls), physical violence, emotional and economic violence as well as harmful traditional practices.

These practices cut across most of the East African Countries. Rwanda, however, has strict rules and guidelines based on the Maputo protocol. In the prevention and Punishment of Gender-Based Violence a program like Isange One Stop Center (IOSC) have been established in the Country and is Co-ordinated by the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion. The aim is to combat all forms of gender-based violence and provide justice to victims. The Country has also categorized GBV as a National security, Human Rights and Development issue.

In Kenya, the National Policy on Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence (2014) provides a cross-government framework to eliminate GBV. Furthermore, the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act (2015) tackles discriminatory cultural norms, practices and traditions, and protects victims of domestic violence. The Prohibition of FGM Act 2011 declared FGM prohibited in Kenya.

5.3 Economic inclusion

Ugandan has expanded infrastructure and connectivity, and established the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP), an initiative launched in 2015 to improve women's access to banking and other financial services. Rwanda has policies to expand access to credit, banking, and financial literacy, and Rwanda has one of the highest rates of female labour force participation in the world. Kenya has very high rates of women who use digital banking – higher rates than three quarters of the world's countries. The women in Kenya can also access the Women Enterprise Fund that gives women loans for starting businesses within their backyard.

5.4 Women in leadership

The percentage of Parliamentary seats held by Women in Uganda is 34%. Rwanda is above 60% after the 2013 elections while Kenya is 21.8% in the National Assembly and 31% in the Senate.

6.0 South African Development community region

SADC has put in place a far-reaching Regional Strategy for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) 2019–2030, and a corresponding Score Card to measure progress. The SADC Gender Protocol Alliance is using this instrument in tandem with the Gender Protocol to push for SRHR for all in the region through the *#VoiceandChoice* campaign.

Ban on child marriages and legal age of marriages: In line with the Post 2015 SADC Gender Protocol that fixes 18 as the minimum age of marriage, there is a growing momentum around the campaign to end child marriages. The Mozambique National Assembly approved a law to Prevent and Combat Child Marriages.

SADC has introduced a Regional Strategy and Framework of Action (2018-2030) for addressing Gender Based Violence. This strategy will facilitate the implementation and monitoring of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development.

The region is experiencing declines in new infections. However, with the resurgence of HIV infections especially among young women focus on prevention of HIV and AIDS is being revived. Anti-retroviral treatment is also expanding.

The region is now home to six Countries where homosexuality is decriminalised after Angola and Botswana lifted a ban on homosexuality in 2019. Other countries in the region that have decriminalised homosexuality are Mozambique, Seychelles and the DRC.

Twelve Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries offer Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in primary and secondary schools and have national CSE policies in place; to keep the girl child in schools countries such as Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe have recently put in place a policy and Revised Education bill that seek to protect pregnant school learners. South Africa continues to lead the way in women's political participation in the region with 46% women in the House of Assembly and provincial legislatures and 50% women in cabinet in the May 2019 elections. All the speakers in the National and Provincial legislatures are women.

The region has also put in place strategic instruments that will guide gender responsive efforts in promoting peace and security in the region. These instruments will also be accompanied by the strategy has an accompanying action plan.

The red lights

- Dual and contradictory legal systems: Parallel customary and in some cases religious laws undermine constitutional and legislative provisions to gender equality. They promote contradictory and discriminatory laws and some harmful cultural practices.
- GBV remains rampant and under-reported: The in-depth studies of GBV prevalence in seven SADC countries show that lifetime prevalence of GBV ranges from 25% to 85%. Much

of this violence, including emotional, verbal and economic abuse, is never reported to the police.

- Only two SADC countries, South Africa and Mozambique, have provisions for safe unrestricted abortion: Many of the laws governing abortion in SADC are inherited from the colonial era and are out of sync with modern rights-based laws. In 2018, Angola's parliament approved an amendment to the abortion law, making all abortions, without exception, illegal and punishable by between four to ten years' imprisonment
- HIV and AIDS resurgence among young women: There is a worrying resurgence of HIV amongst the young women which may undo the fragile gains that have been made on eliminating HIV and AIDS and remove the regions potential of benefitting from the demographic dividend.
- Teenage pregnancies a public health issue: Teenage pregnancies are increasingly becoming a major public health issue in the region.
- Protection of LGBTI persons is weak: Although there has been legislation pushed to protect the rights of LGBTI persons there is continued resistance and non-tolerance through political rhetoric which is also buttressed by legislation
- Gender parity targets in decision-making still far from being reached: With an average of 26% women in parliament and 24% in local government, gender parity is still far from being reached in the SADC region, with great variations between countries at both national and local level.
- Economies are still male dominated: Women constitute the majority of the poor but lack access to productive resources. SADC countries have increasingly rising debt levels posing a significant threat to development. Women continue to bear the brunt of reduced economic opportunities as a result of increasing debt levels in the region. Women's participation in the formal economy remains undervalued.

7.0 West Africa Region

VAWG is a problem in the West African region. Evidence from the 2008 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey indicated that 38.7% of married women have experienced some form of violence from their partner in their lifetime. The survey further found that:

- 36.6% of women aged 15–49 reported experience of physical violence since age 15;
- 17.2% reported experience of violence in the 12 months preceding the survey.
- 18.8% of women age 15–49 reported experience of sexual violence

In Ghana, the Acts such as on sexual offences are there but there are no government shelters. The existing ones are run by NGO's who often run out of funding.

In Sierra Leone, there is the legislative framework, DV Act, Sexual Offences Act, Devolution of Estates Act, Family Support Unit but lack of effective implementation/Enforcement of these laws.

In Cameroon, there are Cultural barriers, no access to land or resources no inheritance rights. There is low representation in decision making processes e.g. in Gender laws.

In Nigeria, Violence against Persons Prohibition Act, a Federal legislation, is not operational in all states. So far 101 states have adopted the law.

Women in leadership

There is low and under representation in politics, and public life. (13.8% out of 275, in Parliament in Ghana; cabinet is 26%; Nigeria 21 out of 360 house of representative members, 6 senators, ministerial appointments is 7 out of 43; Serra Leone is 12.33% of women in a 146 member Parliament, 6 out of 32 member cabinet. Cameroon in 2018, 11 women out of 70 ministerial appointments but for the lower house, 31 % and for the upper house 26 percent , and 1 out of 11 constitutional judges.

8.0 The Asian Region

Some of these social political and economic changes have affected the Asian Region since Beijing+25.

- Strong economic growth – pushback on social infrastructure
- Growth of Corporate capitalism – FDI, Global value chains: women pushed into precarious work
- Digital economy - growing violence in digital spaces
- Divisive, right wing politics across the region
- Increasing political and civil conflicts - women and children bear the brunt
- Shrinking space for civil society - Dissenters at risk
- Influence of China in the region - Belt and Road Initiative – positive for some, heavy impact on environment and governance for others
- Increased conversation on VAWG

Successes

These are some of the success strategies from the Asian commonwealth countries;

- Legal Breakthroughs
 - Progressive provincial legislation- Pakistan
 - Changes to the Penal code section 377 – India
 - Domestic Violence Legislation
- Feminist movements (National and Regional)
- Collective advocacy/mobilisation by CSOs/activists.
- Participation in global advocacy – e.g. Gender and Trade Coalition

- Global changes
 - ILO convention on sexual harassment in the workplace is yet to be implemented.
 - Post-Rana Plaza activism – changes in the apparel industry

Women's economic empowerment

Asia is strongly patriarchal and religion controls most of the decision making processes. Some factors also contribute to economic disempowerment of the Asian women. They include

- Unfavorable household gender dynamics
- Lack of access to opportunities for decent work & remuneration
- Limited control over earnings and ownership of resources
- Unpaid care labour
- Trade agreements hostile to women's economic empowerment
- Instrumentality of micro-credit and women's enterprise development
- Job creation within current neo-liberal/capitalist context pushes women into precarious employment.
- Labour exploitation from migration – domestic work/plantation work.

Violence Against Women and Girls contributing factors;

- Patriarchal social norms enabling VAWG
- No recognition of complexity of VAWG –
 - limited to physical violence/domestic violence within certain relationships in the household;
 - No recognition of marital rape or IPV on un-married women
- Increasingly diverse forms of violence
 - honor killing, acid throwing, e-violence, child/forced marriage, FGM
- VAWG during conflict and disasters
- Intersectionality
- Structural violence - the violence of the dominant economic system - the violence of exploitation
- Legal protections exist but lack of implementation

Women in leadership

There is increase in the number of women in leadership positions; this has led to women friendly legislations and policy making. However, the nature of the leadership is problematic with reproduction of patriarchal norms affecting it.

Gender and climate change

There is need for mobilization for women movements to prioritize climate change as a critical factor for women development. There is lack of research on climate change thus lack of awareness. There are also the natural disasters, agriculture being affected, displacement and migration. Women need to be involved in climate change strategies, policy formulation, and implementation as well as assessment.

9.0 Beijing+25 pan African emerging positions; presentation by FEMNET

Since the adoption of the Beijing platform for action, there has been gradual progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment. Governments and civil societies and other stakeholders have translated the BPfA commitments into concrete strategies. While noting the gradual progress being made, structural inequalities still persists in many countries preventing the full achievement of women's rights and gender equality

Globally there is recognition that gender equality and women rights are central and critical to inclusive and sustainable development yet gender equality remains the greatest human rights challenge of time

On the African continent and across the world, Beijing 95 accelerated activism within the women's movement and Government setting up Women Affairs Ministries which overtime have grown into Gender Ministries.

There are gradual progress being made by some Countries through institution of affirmative action and the enactment of women's right and gender responsive laws and setting women's funds.

However, structural inequalities still persist in many Countries preventing the full achievement of Women Rights and Gender Equality

The slow pace of progress must end, the women's feminist movement is deeply concerned with the slow implementation and lack of political will and accountability by governments in resourcing and translating women's rights and gender equality commitments made over the years in their full totality to address issues faced by women. These include;

- Poverty, low status at all levels
- Gender based violence
- The burden of care
- Marginalization, discrimination
- Bad governance
- Conflict
- Economic instability

In resourcing, the current development context is characterized by dwindling resources with shrinking donor funds for Women's rights and Gender equality work. The average budget allocation of women's rights on the continent is 2%. This is a grave concern to the women's

movement as it defeats the purpose of advancing women's human rights, gender equality and the full emancipation of women and girls.

Gender bias

Africa still holds the continent with the highest number of female presidents with Rwanda having the highest number of women, 61% in parliament. Political parties remain the epicenter of power and women are still relegated to women's leagues. In post parties the male own and dominate them hence hindering the women from actively participating in politics without being controlled. Some of the women in politics do not champion for affirmative action and there is continued violence and lack of financing. Most women attack themselves with some saying that women have invaluable contribution to their countries and the continent. It has emerged that patriarchy and societal norms continue to be the biggest barriers to women's elevation and participation in electoral and decision making process.

Women's economic empowerment is the key to achieving the African union's agenda 2093, a continental framework for socio-economic transformation of the continent and several goals in the UN 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

Women and climate Justice

The world is hurtling towards a climate crisis in which Africa and particularly peasant and working class women will be the hardest hit. Women's efforts and actions should be supported through the research and in the longer-term through the fossil fuels, energy and climate justice campaign to mitigate the effects of climate change.

There is need for youth and women's rights strengthened to influence social norms and policies of inclusive climate justice. More funds need to be availed for women and youth rights organizations and a feminist inclusive vision on climate change promoted.

It is time for us to change the narrative from passive to boldly state the root cause. There is also need to demand action and accountability as we know VAW still remains one of the highest indicators of the persistent gender inequalities, toxic masculinity and patriarchy.

10.0 Group work session

Identify and propose solutions for closing resource, institutional and accountability gaps in financing, implementation, enabling economic development policies and tackling structural power imbalances and violations in these four areas;

- VAW
- Women leadership
- Gender and climate change
- Women's economic empowerment
- Inter-sectionality and movement building

Women's economic empowerment

Finance;

A minimum of 15% of all sectoral budgets should go to women's empowerment particularly agriculture natural resources, trade and industry and infrastructure Women's enterprise development to be financed to promote women in the informal sector and this can be enhanced through national budgets, reviving co-operatives and rural development banks.

In implementation

Women need a Legal and policy framework that supports our proposals for financing. Gender Ministries must track compliance of the gender mainstreaming in all ministries, especially agriculture, and natural resources, trade and industry infrastructure. There is also need for gender ministries to have strong financial economic and legal expertise and to also participate in trade agreements and budgeting.

Macroeconomic policy and public policy

The Women's ministries experts must participate in the negotiations on policy issues to ensure the protection of economic rights of the women. There is need to monitor foreign direct investments and public private partnerships and ensure that these economic investments do not impact negatively on women's rights. In addition, promotion of fair tax policies and 40% of all public procurement for women needs to be adhered to.

Structural power imbalance

There is need to build capacity and political will of national trade and loan negotiations to comply with the international and legal instruments for gender equality

Gender based violence

Finance

Budget allocation to be increased to curb GBV as shrinking donor funding prohibits progress. There is also need to establish proper functioning of one stop centers, shelter, family courts with proper funding.

Implementation

There is need to raise awareness in the community on violence against women. Comprehensive sex education for both youth in and out of schools and the state to come up with standard guidelines to enhance response to victims of the perpetrators

Macroeconomic policy

- There is need to prosecute persons who are aware of their offenses.
- Financial reparations and justice for victims
- Universal sexual and domestic offenders registry to be established
- Legislations in place must have a framework for its implementation
- Charter at place where one goes to seek redress such at the police stations, gender desk and hospitals.

Structural power imbalances

- Government bodies to partner with CSO organizations with the aim of broadening the frontiers of public awareness and action against GBV
- The states need to legislate against customary laws and traditional laws that are in conflict with National laws
- Women's Ministries and Gender Ministries must partner with Civil Societies Organizations to play an inter-sectoral coordinating role in addressing women's rights.

Women and leadership

- Ensure women's can have access to resources such as credit, land, skills and technology particularly through public investment
- Meaningful and effective participation of women on the policy process
- Member states must ensure at least 10% of the National budget for national gender machineries
- Private sector to be obligated for implementation of the Gender agenda

Accountability

- Member states to ensure meaningful and equal participation of women in all private and public decision making including economic legal social and political life
- Opening up of shrinking spaces for civil societies
- Women in power and leadership roles to be held accountable for advancement of the gender agenda

Women and climate change

- There are increasing dynamics of the reality of women's issues in particular those imposed by the impacts of climate change
- No much discussion on the loss and damage, loss of land and limits biodiversity, loss of forest and human life.
- Climate change impacts on the access to quality education
- Increasing barriers to new innovations that are in place to support the enhancement of social economic rights
- Women have been continuously denied to participate in the protection and management of humanitarian goods during humanitarian crisis.
- There is need to develop good policy framework to protect and safeguard the rights of victims of climate change
- Women must be recognized and given the legal authority to take lead in reporting and managing humanitarian resources during climate and disaster crisis.
- Women and girls as climate warriors must financially be supported to build their capacities

11.0

11.0 STATEMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETIES ROUNDTABLE IN ADVANCE OF THE 12TH COMMONWEALTH WOMEN'S AFFAIRS MINISTERS MEETING (12WAMM)

We representatives of Civil Society Organizations from Africa, Asia, Pacific and the Caribbean met in Nairobi, Kenya on 16th and 17th September 2019 ahead of the seniors officials meeting on 18th September and the Ministers meeting taking place on 19th and 20th September 2019 in Nairobi under the theme *'From Commitment to Action: Accelerating Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment for Sustainable Development*.

We highly appreciate and are encouraged by the commitment from the host Government, Commonwealth Foundation, Commonwealth Secretariat, Senior Officials and the Commonwealth Ministers commitment to engage with the Civil Societies represented by women's rights activists from the Commonwealth regions.

Recognizing that 25 years since Beijing and ICPD commitments, with just 11 years to go until 2030, nearly 40% of the world's girls and women (1.4 billion) still live in countries that have failed to achieve gender equality, with majority of the Commonwealth countries in Sub-saharan Africa, Asia and the Pacific and the Caribbean falling in this category.

With reference to the four pillars of the commonwealth gender priorities, gender and climate change, violence against women, women leadership and women's economic empowerment, we urge member states to action the following recommendations;

Resources

Allocate at least 15% of all sectoral budgets to women's economic empowerment particularly agriculture, natural resources, trade and industry, infrastructure credit, skills and technology

Allocate at least 30% of the national budget for national gender machineries inclusive of ministries, civil societies and communities and the realization of gender equality commitments.

Provide affordable public finance for women and marginalized groups such as through the revival of rural development

Demand meaningful international climate financing to address the gender impacts of the climate crisis for mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage in countries of the global South, particularly Small Island developing States.

Allocate resources towards measures to recognize, reduce, redistribute and reward women's unpaid care work particularly through the provision of affordable public services.

Institutions and leadership

Legislate quotas of minimum 50% women in politics and decision making in compliance with SDG, CEDAW, Beijing Platform for Action and the Maputo protocol

Build strong financial economic and legal expertise in gender ministries to enable them to participate actively and effectively in trade, loan agreement and national budgeting

Partner with Civil Society Organisations to play an intersectional coordinating role in addressing women's rights.

Update and clarify the roles and autonomy of women's ministries for enhanced relevance to women's rights in the current challenging global context.

Accountability

Gender Ministries must track compliance with international commitments and National laws across all sectors, especially Agriculture, Mining, Natural Resource, Trade and Industry, Labor and infrastructure.

Monitor foreign direct investments (FDIs) the private sector and the public sector partnership to ensure that these economic investments do not impart negatively on women's economic rights and agency

Support clarity, understanding and dissemination of information on states human rights obligations to duty bearers the general public, particularly marginalized groups and other stakeholders

Collect data through research for documenting women rights violations as they relate to the four pillars stated above.

As civil society, we are fully committed to partnering and collaborating with you towards fulfilling the commitments made by our Governments to achieve gender equality and realize women's rights

Thank you

12.0 Conclusion

The two day roundtable discussion was a success with the statement presented during the Senior Ministers meeting and the Ministers meeting. The Commonwealth Foundation Director thanked all the participants for their input into the discussion. She further stated that human rights have to be taken radically to achieve sustainable development in our respective regions. In addition, women need to have a collective sense to move to action, have practical strategies and involve the grass root women who are affected by the four pillars.