



Breathing Life into the Maputo Protocol

SOAWR Members' Meeting Report

24-26 January 2015
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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The Coalition would also like to thank all the partners, amongst them Sigrid Rausing Trust, Ipas Africa Alliance and Oxfam – Sida who made this gathering possible.

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SOAWR also acknowledges the entire Equality Now team, and Equality Now Nairobi Office which has been serving as the Secretariat for the Coalition since its inception 10 years ago. Special thanks to Faiza Mohamed, Director of the Nairobi Office; Jane Serwanga, Project Manager – SOAWR and AGLDF; Kavinya Makau, Program Officer, SOAWR; Medline Murumba, Program Associate; Mariam Kamunyu, Consultant.

SOAWR also sincerely appreciates the work of Dr. Awino Okech, who facilitated the three days meeting and Helen Yosef who documented the proceedings.



Acronyms

ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
AGLDF	Adolescent Girls' Legal Defense Fund
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AU	African Union
CAFOB	Collectif des Associations et ONG Feminines de Burundi
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSW	Committee for the Status of Women
DPA	Department of Political Affairs (AU)
EAC	East African Community
EASSI	The Eastern African Sub-Regional Support Initiative
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
FEMNET	African Women's Development and Communication Network
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HTP	Harmful Traditional Practices
ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IPM	International Partnership on Microbicides
MEWC	Make Every Women Count
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEWA	Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PAP	Pan-African Parliament
PrEp	Pre-exposure Prophylaxis
PSD	Peace and Security Department
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SC	Steering Committee
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SOAWR	Solidarity for the African Women's Rights
SR	Sexual Rights
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights
VAW	Violence against Women
WRAPA	Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative
WANET	Women's Advocacy and Communication Network

Introduction



The Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR) Coalition is a regional network comprised of 44 national, regional and international civil society organizations based in 24 countries, working towards the promotion and protection of women's human rights in Africa. Since its establishment in 2004, SOAWR's main area of focus has been to advocate for African states to urgently sign, ratify, domesticate and implement the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (referred to as 'the Maputo Protocol').

So far, the Maputo Protocol has been ratified by thirty-six (36) of the 54 African Union member states, the latest of which are Cameroon, Guinea and Swaziland. Several states are in various stages of its domestication and implementation. The Coalition has committed itself to utilize the platform of the African Women's Decade (2010-2020) to intensify efforts to compel African States to deliver on their commitments to women's human rights through accelerating ratification, domestication and implementation.

The SOAWR member's meeting was held from 24th-26th January 2015, on the margins of the 24th AU Heads of State Summit. The meeting was an opportunity for coalition members and key partners to critique, reflect on and analyze SOAWR activities for the past year, share experiences and best practices, evaluate the activities, and strategize jointly on how to move the campaign forward. The discussions held were anchored on SOAWR's five year strategic plan (2014-2018).

The meeting brought together coalition members and key partners for the objective of:

- a) Reflect on the progress made by coalition vis-à-vis 2013-2018 Strategic Plan;
- b) Draft and adopt a blue print for the coalition's strategic engagement in 2015 in view of AU's 2015 theme *Women's Empowerment and Development Towards Agenda 2063*;
- c) Elect new Steering Committee (SC) and capitalize on comparative expertise;
- d) Reinforce the coalition's shared values;
- e) Celebrate 10 years of SOAWR's existence.

The meeting was designed to ensure active participation, cross-learning and sharing, candid deliberations and reflections. A diverse range of methods was used to achieve this, including; world café style conversations, panel presentations, working group discussions, and strategy building sessions. The meeting was conducted with simultaneous interpretation in English and French. The convening provided an opportunity for celebrating SOAWR's ten year milestone and launch of the [African Women's Decade Annual Report](#).

Setting the Stage

The meeting began on a high note with Ms. Christine Musisi from UN Women; Mrs. Emma Kaliya, FEMNET Chair and Ms. Jane Serwanga, AGLDF and SOAWR Project Manager Africa Equality now.



Musisi congratulated the SOAWR Coalition for its achievement and great advocacy work towards the Maputo Protocol ratification and domestication. She further requested the coalition to continue and intensify its advocacy work to seize this moment of 2015, as a year of African Women Empowerment and mid-term of the African Women's decade as well as the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals.

UN Women focuses on women's economic empowerment and specifically addresses agriculture and the extractive industry. She added that UN Women was open to partnership with different CSOs in areas such as in its new innovative technology promotion initiative aimed at reducing the suffering and time burden of women so as to improve productivity and add value. The partnership between private sector, government and others was raised as crucial in the area of extractive industry and not only as a factor that negatively affects the women, but also as an opportunity where women can benefit as employees and also employers. Musisi acknowledged the work of CSOs in providing evidence for advocacy, policy making, capacity building.

FEMNET Chair, Mrs. Emma Kaliya recognized the collective achievements of the past ten years in the ratification, domestication, popularization and implementation of the Maputo Protocol. She recalled the great euphoria when the protocol was signed, ratified and subsequently entered into force 18 months after its adoption, making it the fastest AU instrument to come into force.

“We are convinced the Maputo Protocol is important for us and future generations. It is this very instrument that we use at global levels to make sure that the rights of African Women and girls are respected and not undermined or dismissed as Western Agenda”.
-Emma Kaliya

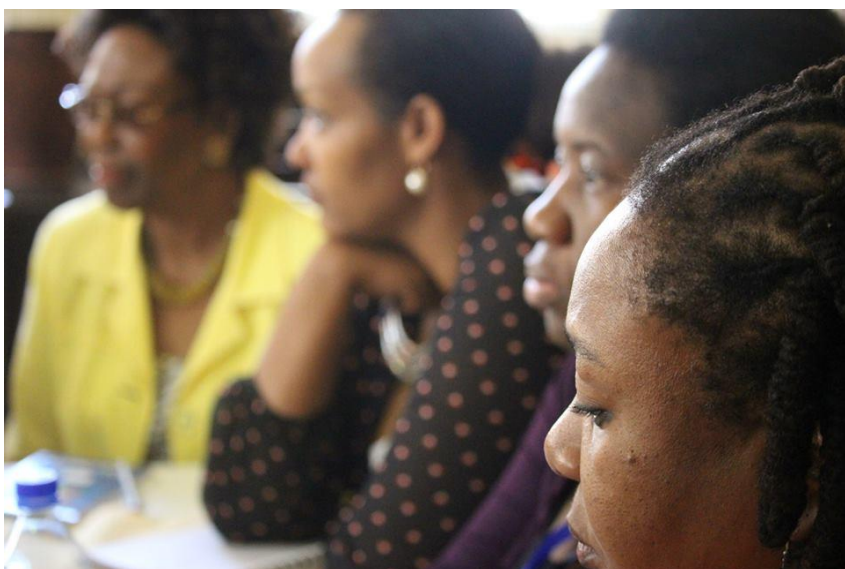
She further reminded the participants that the gathering was aimed at exhausting the different strategies to organize and marshal the eighteen countries that have yet to ratify the protocol by the end of 2015 as well as concretize what to do collectively and individually.

She shared the experiences of the SADC region where the Maputo Protocol inspired the sub-regional Protocol called the ‘SADC Protocol on Gender and Development’, and the ‘East African Protocol on Gender Equality’ steered by EASSI, as well as the Protocol for the ECOWAS region.

2015 marks the 20th Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women that took place in Beijing, 1995. This is yet another opportunity to take stock of the 20-year journey of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and to look forward to concrete actions of leaders in bringing an end to the unprecedented increase in conflict, militarism and rising fundamentalisms across the globe, which continues to negatively affect women in many ways.

She underlined that 2015 is a pivotal year for women and girls in Africa making it a time to engage with the Heads of States, policy makers, media and other stakeholders with a key

message – **Let’s Act! And achieve gender justice on our beloved continent!**



Ms. Jane Serwanga, AGLDF and SOAWR Project Manager Africa Equality Now welcomed the participants on behalf of Equality Now, the secretariat of the SOAWR Coalition. Serwanga noted the diversity and inclusiveness that was present in the room was the basis for the coalition’s success.

Members of the coalition need to revisit reservations on the protocol such as article 14 by countries like Kenya and Uganda, while also focusing efforts on implementation after the ratification. Serwanga reiterated the need to

¹ These are Algeria, Botswana, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Madagascar, Mauritius, Niger, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Sao Tome & Principe, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Tunisia.

build capacities on increasingly emerging issues such as the extractive industry, coupled with further development of strategies so as to work within current contexts.

The opening was followed by a round of introductions and consensus building of common values. The participants further reflected on the importance of identified values, noting them as a basis for informing the coalition's ways of working to advance the rights of women and girls.

A Decade and Counting: Reflection on the SOAWR Coalition's 10 Year Journey

SOAWR's ten year journey was documented in [SOAWR: A Decade On](#), a film which showcased the triumphs and hurdles overcome since the coalition was established. The film provoked reflection on personal experiences, and diverse and effective strategies in advancing the objectives of SOAWR. One such impactful campaign included the name and shame campaign which utilized scorecards and colored placards that symbolized the governments' commitments in pioneering the decisions made. This

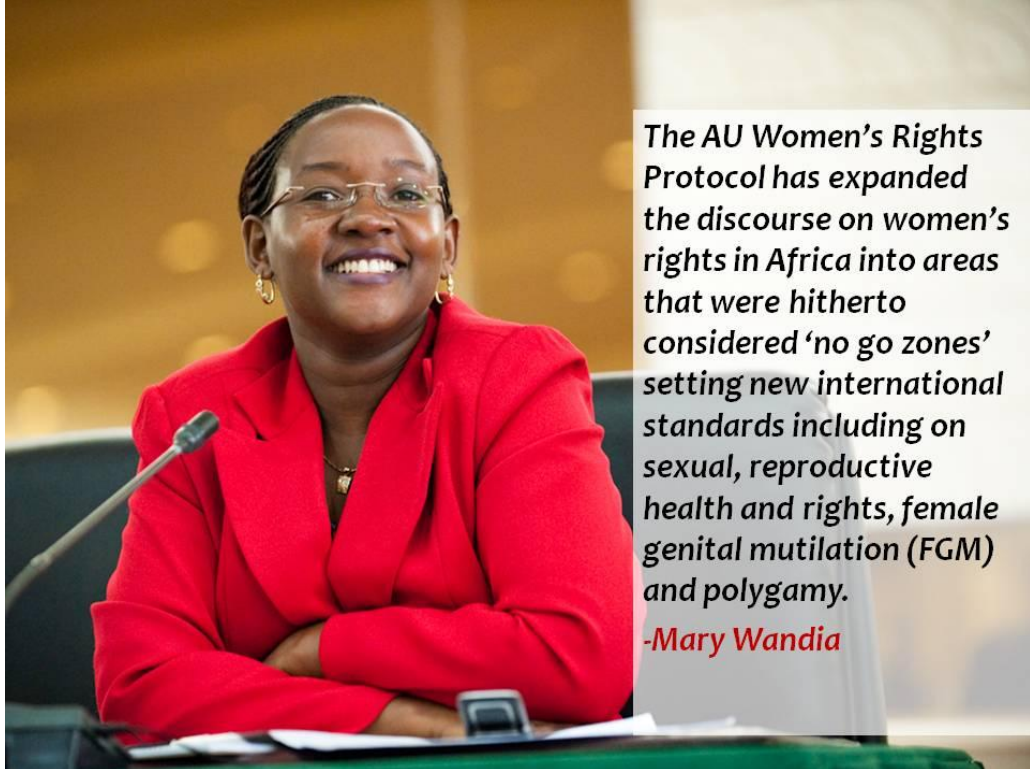


In 10 years of campaigning for the human rights of African women we have come a long way. We are at a tipping point in realizing the vision of SOAWR and 2015 offers us plenty of opportunities to accelerate the campaign forward. – Faiza Mohammed

resulted in advancing the agenda for the Maputo Protocol with subsequent ratifications being witnessed.

Members recalled that **over the past decade, resilience and perseverance have ensured consistency in advancing the campaign, but that adapting to shifting circumstances was necessary.** It was noted that the work of the coalition inspired initiatives on domestication of the Protocol and adaptation to sub-regional realities. This contributed to the adoption of the Gender Protocol by the SADC summit. Being a continental campaign, members appreciated the symbiotic relationship and value addition between national, sub-regional and regional initiatives. In addition, SOAWR's role in amplifying local, national and sub-regional demands was acknowledged and celebrated.

The work of SOAWR has highlighted the increased protection of women's rights as provided for under the Protocol. The coalition has led to the popularization of the Maputo Protocol and increased knowledge of its complementary role to existing national and global frameworks. The coalition was instrumental in ensuring



The AU Women's Rights Protocol has expanded the discourse on women's rights in Africa into areas that were hitherto considered 'no go zones' setting new international standards including on sexual, reproductive health and rights, female genital mutilation (FGM) and polygamy.

-Mary Wandia

that the Maputo Protocol was the fastest AU instrument to come into force and has the second highest number of ratifications.

The coalition has engaged with a wide range of actors in advancing its agenda including: the AU Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa; traditional and religious leaders; young people; men and boys as partners to support the campaign amongst others. Enhancing the knowledge and capacities of stakeholders within the justice system such as magistrates and lawyers, law makers and members of the parliament given their role in formulating laws and approving budget allocations and holding the executive accountable for implementation of the Protocol was seen as crucial to advancing the campaign objectives.

- While the founding members were celebrated for a commendable job, it was clear that much remains to be done to ensure ownership of the Protocol.

Major areas of discussion revolved around strategies of engagement with governments, continental and regional organizations with questions discussed including; *what does it mean for women's rights organizations and activists to come to these spaces? What have been some of the experiences of engaging in these spaces? How much has the space changed? How much of it remained the same or got worse?*

- During the ratification of protocols, there is strong resistance, at all levels. Due to the awareness and mobilization work done so far there are some visible changes, however, violence is becoming more rampant. Both women and men are getting more involved and showing solidarity. **Between the resistance and emerging voices and popular support, change is evident.**
- Throughout the engagements, **dismantling patriarchy** has been interesting. Nigeria is among the first to ratify many international protocols and instruments as a way of shutting down further movements, with limited implementation of these instruments. Domestication of protocols is often very challenging as claims are often made that the Constitution already provides a wide range of provisions. Patriarchy is rooted not only

in the culture but also in religion, both of which play critical roles in shaping and sustaining societal norms. Since 2013 there is a visible retrogression including the dwindling numbers of women occupying political seats.

- In trying to engage actors towards the protocol, one of the members of SOAWR came up with an insightful **power mapping** exercise to identify leaders at all levels including political, religious and traditional leaders which were believed to be crucial in ratifying the protocol.

Why should women's right organizations be involved/engaged in the space such as the AU? How much has changed and remained the same? What can SOAWR as a coalition do to engage better with these spaces such as the AU and RECs?



- Experience working with the AU and men in power has many dynamics. It is a space that is **male dominated and sexual harassment is rampant although seldom discussed and addressed**. The use of placards during an AU Summit as a way to ensure public accountability amongst leaders was one of the methods and mechanisms used during the process of ratification. However, some member states ratified, mostly for ego purposes, not a practical understanding of women issues. As women working on this space of the AU, the space is male dominated, mostly dismissing women and issues related to the advancement of their rights. It can be a very suffocating space, especially with the **sexual currency that surrounds spaces of engagement**.

- There is a problem of lack of confidence between the AU and other actors such as CSOs, and religious groups. When Madame Dlamini Zuma came to power, there was an expectation that she would put women's agenda on the forefront, especially in terms of fronting regional women's rights instruments such as the Maputo Protocol.

- CSOs have been producing shadow/alternative reports, and should also be able to devise other ways for states to be held accountable, providing mechanisms and procedures to facilitate domestication of the protocols. National gender policies should also help to support and complement efforts.

- Women's rights organizations definitely **need to engage in the AU space**, that the **Africans should solve African problems**. The institutions, instruments and structures that are put in place need to be used effectively. The institutions and policies need to be complementary to the work for the benefit of the organizations. **AU is becoming more and more open for partnerships** despite the challenges, this needs to be capitalized on.
- **Engagement with other organs such as the Pan African Parliament (PAP)** is critical as there seems to be a disconnect and a knowledge gap that can be strengthened –

particularly on using the Maputo Protocol to draft bills and monitoring implementation.

- The **voice of African women needs to be strengthened in global spaces.**
- Fighting for space and audience in various spaces, including the AU has been a struggle, and often a lonely journey. However, that engagement needs to be deepened so as to consolidate rather than revert gains that have been made.

Take away of the session;

- The coalitions, organizations and individuals need to constantly remind themselves why they do what they do and be clear on strategies they employ to advance the agenda of women and girls rights
- The importance of shaping the narrative and driving the agenda cannot be underscored.
- This work cannot be done alone. Alliance and movement building is critical.

Contextual Reflections: Women's State of Play

The image of African women in the past 12 months of 2014 has been gloomy. However, in terms of women's rights in the continent, there is a lot to be proud of. Much of this can be credited to the advocacy and lobbying work that has been carried out.

The **Special Rapporteur on Women's Rights in Africa, Commissioner Soyata Maiga** shared that she had the privilege to visit at least 30 African countries, and witness good practices. The visits facilitated discussions with authorities and CSOs, but also amplified the frustrations of the locals to the political arena. The data gathered and experiences were very rich.



The adoption of the Maputo Protocol was an exceptional moment, historical for the realization of the rights of women in Africa. Today, this instrument constitutes a model, a endless source of inspiration. Provided its ratification and full implementation, it can represent a real tool of action for the lasting transformation of our societies.

- Soyata Maiga, Special Rapporteur on Rights of Women in Africa

Countries must be held accountable to commitments they have made. Progress has been seen in the enactment of family laws, laws banning Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and others guaranteeing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

The major unresolved challenges are related to armed conflicts and rampant violence with no strong mechanisms to stop these violations, including the emerging trends of abductions and the devastating effect of Ebola as witnessed in West Africa.

Since Dr Dlamini-Zuma took on her role as Chair of the AUC two years prior, women's rights organizations have demanded increased attention to the rights of women and girls. A special envoy on Gender has been assigned, as well as a Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security. Women's rights activists and coalition members must take advantage of the new developments, including the themes of 2015 and 2016, have well-informed, precise, and well-written requests, which are documented.



Ambassador Dr. Eunice Brookman-Amisah, who is the Special Advisor to the Ipas President on African Affairs and representative of the International Partnership on Microicides (IPM) discussed the *Dapivirine Ring –Protection from HIV: Putting the Power in the hands of Women.*

Ambassador Brookman underlined the registered advances against HIV/AIDS which gave the world many reasons to celebrate. For the first time in the epidemic, more people were put on treatment than

were newly infected. According to her, AIDS-related deaths declined worldwide at the same time that access to treatment as well as prevention options like voluntary male circumcision and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) expanded. As we applaud these successes, there is need to amplify our response to the progress yet to be made for women and girls, who remain at a disproportionate and alarmingly high-risk of HIV infection. It is expected that IPM's dapivirine ring could soon be the world's first effective women-initiated, antiretroviral based HIV prevention product. In 2015, IPM will be working with regulatory agencies across Africa to meet country-specific regulatory requirements as they finalize manufacturing plans for potential scale-up to ensure affordable and widespread access to the ring.

Gains and challenges to women and girl's rights in 2014

Gains:

- Legal provisions;
 - o Uganda passed a resolution for crimes against humanity by LRA.
 - o Algeria passed a decree recognizing women as victims of terrorism.
 - o Morocco passed a law that criminalizes rape.
 - o In Mozambique, the penal code removed a clause that allows the rapist to marry the victim and introduced a law that allows women to have abortion.
 - o Tunisia adopted progressive laws as a result of constitutional making, lots of work done has been done as a result.
- Women have been engaged and pushed women's issues at regional and global processes towards having a stand-alone goal on gender equity in the Post 2015 framework.
- African women were mobilized for the 20 year review of Beijing, providing shadow reports and various perspectives
-

Key challenges

- SRHR has remained contentious, making it difficult to advocate for – often considered a foreign agenda
- The reduction, redistribution and valuing of unpaid care work, despite its importance, is still sidelined
- More focus on 'empowerment' and less on rights – not taking a rights-based approach to economic development
- Emerging issues such as terrorism, fundamentalism, land grabbing and the like are increasing in frequency and scale, with their own dimensions to the women's rights work.

Way forward

- Keep abreast of key processes, negotiations and other agendas – engage strategically.
- Ensure greater collaboration and engagement with the various AU organs and processes
- Establish strong strategic partnerships across various sectors and ministries
- Strengthen analysis of the issues at hand and systemic challenges

World Café I: Access to Decision Making



Women's political participation

1. *Engaging political parties.* There is a requirement of 50/50 political presentation in the Maputo Protocol. One strategy to achieve this, aside from quotas are the zebra system for political parties whereby the number of men and women fronted by political parties are equal and must alternate
2. *Capacity building* needs to be scaled up for candidates before and after holding political office. Capacitating in engaging the media, campaign management, fundraising and friend raising, public speaking and policy analysis and formulation among others.
3. *Monetization and commercialization* of politics needs to be curbed as it keeps women locked out.
4. *Holding male politicians accountable* for women's rights issues is critical as they have the duty of representing the people who elected them but also of the society at large
5. *Working with the electorate* is critical and can begin with ensuring civic education is rights-based and speaks to the rights of women and girls as well as transformative leadership.

From the five policy recommendations, engaging political parties, capacity building and holding male politicians accountable were recommended as priority areas for SOAWR to work around in 2015.

Civil Society leadership

1. *Pan African Parliament (PAP) engagement* – deepen engagement with PAP, provide them with expertise as well as resources

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2. *Identification of new actors* – religious and traditional leaders are key movers and shakers and opinion makers who shape decisions and norms at community levels. Academia and media are also important constituents which must be engaged with more effectively.
3. *Documentation* - SOAWR members must tell their own stories and shape the emerging narrative. Knowledge products must be produced and shared widely – including using new online platforms and existing websites of SOAWR members for greater visibility and outreach.

Private sector leadership

1. In order to grow the business and the informal sector, *encourage partnership* between local private sector and CSOs via SOAWR, access to land, property tax incentives to enhance the investment climate.
2. *Disseminating information* and *build capacity* in rights and business skills.
3. *Lobby government procurement* to adopt affirmative action for women owned business, as governments are the biggest procurers.
4. Encourage *employment of women* to implement the various protocols, 30% of women in the workforce
5. Develop *database of women* and what their expertise.



World Café II

Women's land and property rights (+ women's rights to inheritance)

1. *Title deeds* for women.
2. *Gender indicators* in land management, licensing, and procurement in the extractive industry.
3. Engage with revision of constitutions (Tanzania, Zambia,
4. Engage *AU land policy initiatives*, and link with regional coalitions and alliances on land and property rights.
5. *Research* – increase knowledge of this issue as well as proven practices

Access to comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health services

1. To make a compelling case for *including voices of adolescents and young women* in emerging policy spaces as well as *elimination of harmful practices*
2. The *information/message creation, simplification and dissemination* to be used in the policy spaces and to build capacity
3. *Unpack the 'R' aspect* of the SRHR dialogue.

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4. Lobbying for women in conflict and post conflict areas, for attention to funding and access to services of women (IDPs and refugees).
5. Decriminalization of SRHR – lobby against criminalization.

The rights of women living with HIV/AIDS

1. Identify spaces to influence where policy changes are currently being reviewed and implemented; Maputo Plan of Action is currently under review, Ministry of Health meetings



2. Better coordination at the governments, academia, CSOs and UN

3. Monitoring and evaluating implementation of policies

4. The dissemination of information, statistics, practices and support services at the regional level is very important.

5. Increased research by Africans members and the coalition need to work on how to coordinate those.

World Café III

Addressing Violence against Women (VAW)

Priority areas for consideration:

- a. Impunity
 - b. Budgetary allocation
 - c. Implementation
1. Promotion of access to and engagement with justice systems at all levels– policy reform to effectively address impunity
 2. VAW and conflict – International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), and the RECs have policy frameworks, how can SOAWR engage more effectively?
 3. Allocate adequate resources for rehabilitation and reparation.
 4. New strategy to address lack of implementation of policies and laws.

Harmful Traditional Practices (HTP)

1. Lobby for lifting of reservations on the Maputo Protocol regarding HTP.
2. Appointment of an AU special envoy on HTP.
3. Engage the regional networks of traditional and religious groups and leaders.
4. Create index of all harmful practices that are affecting African women and girls

Maternal Health

1. Financing of maternal health (Abuja declaration – 15% budget to health), article 10 of the Maputo Protocol, reduce militarization and redirect focus to maternal health.

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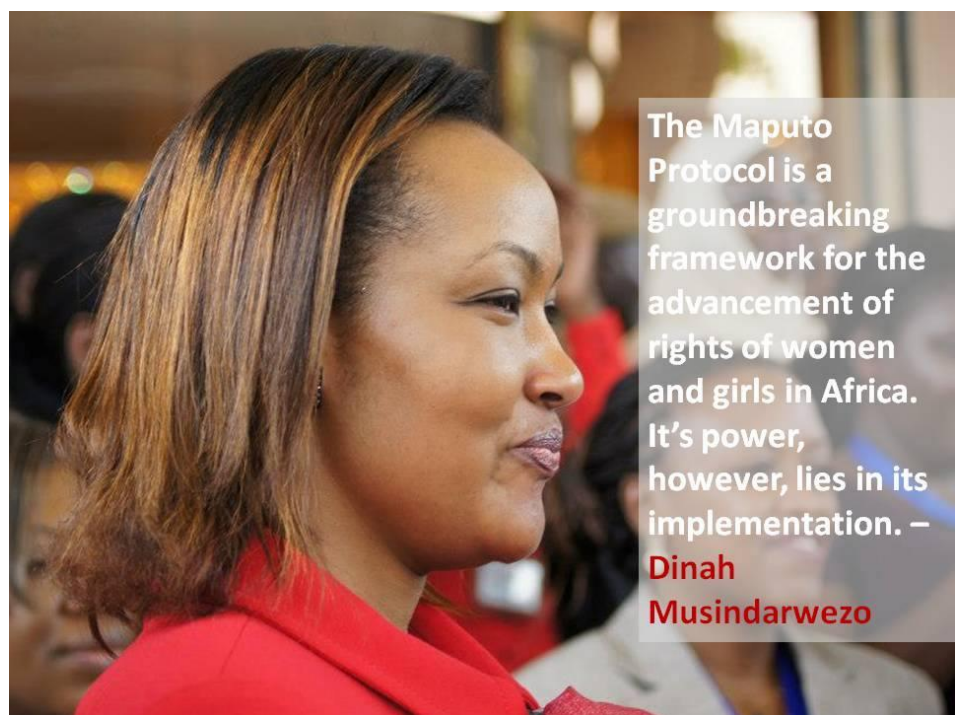
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2. *Advocacy* for maternal health at various levels, *campaigns*
3. *Data and statistics* - how members can use them effectively to advance policy and agenda
4. Decree for free maternal health – *quality, affordability and non-discrimination* framework.
5. Policy framework, human resource on maternal health, and domestication of rules.

Regional experiences from SADC and EAC Regions

The Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region has the SADC alliance on the rights of women, gender and development. Initially it was engaging with only NGOs, with less impact. In 2005 they decided to change tact and started meeting ministers and other actors, and formed the formal alliance. The same year, the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development came to fruition during the summit in Botswana. The alliance is mostly composed of women’s rights organizations, paired with national gender ministries. The alliance has worked with ministries to draft the SADC protocol, ensure its adoption and ratification and track implementation. The gender barometer is an effective tool that is used to monitor and track implementation at national and sub-regional level.

The engagement of CSOs with the East African Community (EAC), which is comprised of 5 member countries, began in 2008. Despite the existence of gender sensitive articles, there was no gender unit or human resources for gender. When the gender department was formed, it was not give the adequate mandate and space to operate. In 2010, an MOU was signed between CSOs and EAC, providing a framework for deepened engagement and observer status.



The Maputo Protocol is a groundbreaking framework for the advancement of rights of women and girls in Africa. It’s power, however, lies in its implementation. –
Dinah Musindarwezo

The organizations started working on a Gender Protocol. An attempt in 2010 to launch Gender and Equality Declaration did not succeed, so they proceeded to fast track what SADC did to popularize their gender protocol with 14 articles, by also forming an alliance. The document made it to the council, with many issues being taken up. The Gender and Equality Protocol was then proposed as a bill.

2015: Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Agenda 2063

The year 2015 is a rare and unique opportunity for women and girls of the continent and those who work to ensure the realization of women's rights. The AU has dubbed 2015 'The Year of Women's Empowerment and Development Towards Agenda 2063'. This is an important milestone as 2015 marks the first year of Agenda 2063, and is an indication of the importance of women's empowerment to the realization of Agenda 2063. The following year also provides an opportunity as the theme will be 'Human rights with a focus on Women's Rights'. Both years provide an important opportunity to fast track ratification and implementation of the premier instrument pertaining to women's rights in Africa – the Maputo Protocol.



A work plan was circulated detailing what the AU is planning to do, that involves the engagement and participation of women, and the plenary discussed which activities to be part of and how to strategically take part and push the protocol and other available instruments forward.

SOAWR Road Map: 2015 and Beyond

The SOAWR Secretariat upholds the values and ideals of the coalition, which emanate from the strategic plan. As a coalition, SOAWR is working towards the accelerated ratification of the Maputo Protocol, focusing on a few states for domestication and implementation. There is ongoing work on documentation and tracking at the national and regional levels, as well as

mobilizing the community to ensure the Protocol is not out of reach. The Secretariat, which is housed at Equality Now is charged with coordinating the day-to-day activities of the coalition, building capacity of its members, facilitating communications, enhancing visibility and fundraising for the work of the coalition.

The Secretariat has carried out advocacy missions in Sierra Leone, Burundi, Ethiopia and Sudan amongst others to push for ratification. Technical support, as well as lawyers and judges trainings to build capacity have been carried out to facilitate the domestication and implementation of the Protocol. Rapid response in collaboration with organizations such as WRAPA and Alliances for Africa in Nigeria around the abduction of the Chibok girls is an example that demonstrate efforts to uphold the provisions of the Protocol.

The secretariat seeks to enhance visibility for the coalition as well as for the promotion of the Protocol. It keeps members and partners informed – through various online platforms such as: social media; the website which has now been revamped and is much more current and user friendly (*this process has been mainly coordinated by FAHAMU with support from FEMNET and the Secretariat*) and through the SOAWR Newsletter which is available in English, Arabic, Portuguese and French.

SOAWR priority areas, strategic engagements and resource mobilization

Priority areas

1. Limited access of women in decision making

- a. Engage policy makers in adopting the quota systems (50/50) in leadership positions, both in political posts as well as positions of leadership in other sectors of Government and the private sector in line with the Maputo Protocol by building the capacity of institutions through the heads of institutions and owners of businesses.
- b. Also ensure the procurement policies at the national level include provisions for women, engaging the government and the private sector.
- c. At the regional level: Influencing Ministers of Finance, Ministers of Gender and Ministers of Justice.

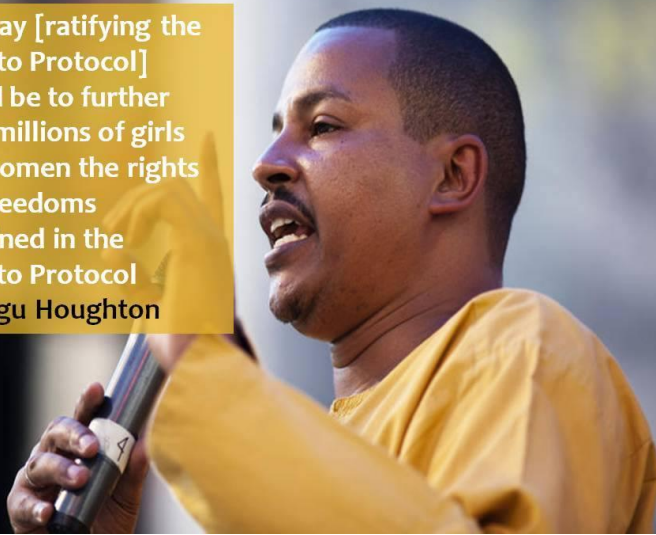
2. Access, Control and Ownership of land and property

- a. At the regional level – Lobby the AU land policy initiative and the regional coalition on land and property rights to enforce the National Constitutions and laws.
- b. At the national level - Advocate for progressive national Constitutions that enshrine property ownership.

3. Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR)

- a. Regional level – SOAWR to make statements condemning retrogressive laws in respective countries.

To delay [ratifying the Maputo Protocol] would be to further deny millions of girls and women the rights and freedoms pertained in the Maputo Protocol – Irungu Houghton



b. National level engagement with countries that have reservations on Article 14.

c. At the Global level, reach out to larger opposition blocs (religious and cultural) towards the Article. Restrictive access, for the article 14 to be implemented in its entirety.

4. Women and HIV

a. Regional level - Collaborate with CHR to integrate into their study research on adolescents and young adults living with HIV. Present the findings of the study at the NGO

forum that precedes the ACHPR ordinary sessions as well as the ACHPR ordinary session itself.

5. Maternal health

a. Regional level – SOAWR members (CHR, Alliances for Africa) have a communication to the ACHPR on the countries that haven't met the 10% Abuja Declaration and the Maputo Protocol Article 10.

b. National level – Through the multi-sectoral approach, disseminate the communication to relevant stakeholders.

6. Violence Against Women(VAW)

a. Regional level – Strengthening the promotion of States to ratify the provision of the Maputo Protocol to allow citizens to bring cases to the African Court.

7. Harmful Traditional Practices (HTP)

a. Regional level – SOAWR to lobby for States that have reservations on the HTPs provision on the Maputo Protocol.

b. To maintain the name, as it is how it is stated in the protocol (regarding the debate whether to call it Harmful Practices versus Harmful Traditional Practices).

8. Women and the private sector

a. Regional level - Advocating for laws that can improve the investment climate for women.

b. National level – Engage the local women's business associations to improve the investment climate for women.

Strategic direction

1. Concrete strategies and actions

a. As SOAWR, go beyond the region to ensure the voices of African women and young girls be heard at the global level – immediate engagement with initiatives such as CSW59

b. Convene events with government, AU and UN WOMEN, as well as the CEDAW committee.

c. Address disconnect between the regional, national and global efforts. Produce messages to give to the bureau and briefs to ministers on the issues and the disconnections, lobby for increased accreditation for CSOs, as well as for CSOs

- to be part of government delegations, and request for a meeting with the Executive Council at the June Summit.
- d. Mapping of organizations working on the Maputo Protocol and invite them to join the Coalition
- e. Engaging actively in relevant events throughout the year.
- f. SOAWR to give feedback to members on the impact of advocacy missions
- g. Facilitate ways for SOAWR to engage with the Commission on Human rights
- h. SOAWR to prepare position papers and policy briefs.
- i. Revisit previous strategies that were effective (such as the colored scorecards to hold member states accountable)

Resource mobilization

Conversations around resource mobilization resulted in the following recommendations:

1. Devise collective resource mobilization strategy for SOAWR – including a mapping of grantees and areas of interest
2. Target grant makers as a consortium.
3. Strengthen key partnerships (examples MEWC in the UK, amplify change, global Philanthropy Forum...).
4. SOAWR Secretariat to assume leadership and serve as a sub-grantee to members to support national efforts.
5. Target friendly governments such as Swedish, Dutch
6. Engage high-level philanthropists and corporates (CSR initiatives)
7. Look into income generating activities from members – such as sale of publications, consultancies.

Other major challenges raised regarding funding for women’s rights issues were the pool fund/bucket fund and the funding duration, as some are only 3-6 months long. Furthermore, due to volatile contexts such as South Sudan, the funds don’t come directly to the organizations’ accounts (but are rather deposited in another bank in another country) which causes additional burdens to women led organizations. Members agreed on the need for an assessment of the impact of unfavorable policies towards CSOs in countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda that is making the work of civil society and advocacy work in particular very difficult. The securing of resources to cover core costs – including salaries, rent and running costs was also expressed as a challenge as many donors are unwilling to have resources allocated towards those expenses – despite the importance of getting those costs covered in order for the projects to be achieved. Partnerships and the coordination of efforts to submit joint proposals were proposed as strategies to prevent competition amongst members and have funds channeled to the entire coalition.

After the issues and challenges were raised, grant making institutions shared their experiences and concerns.

Although Ipas is not a typical donor, it does provide some funds for projects and programs that are aligned to its vision. From IPAS’s experience of fundraising, the value for money

question is a big point and donors want to channel funds to mobilizations that have reached levels, so as not to make small grants. This is also to avoid the administrative burden.

OXFAM shared the trends that have been seen in the areas of funding where donors fund multi-country projects that have concrete indicators and clear mechanisms to demonstrate results. Donors are also more inclined to support collaborations with different organizations and entities – which provides an opportunity for SOAWR members to submit joint proposals. Increasingly, donors such as Oxfam are becoming more involved more in direct implementation.

The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) follows the Swedish government’s new feminist foreign policy direction that focuses on the three ‘R’s - Representations of women, Rights in all aspects and Resources, which signifies that there is the willingness and funds available to support women’s rights activities and organizations. Donors are keen to see results emanating from their supported projects and programs. SIDA focuses on the long-term results, with grants running for a minimum of two years with support for core costs in order to ensure stability and greater impact.

The UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is not a donor agency. Being the secretariat, it gives 30% of members’ contribution annually to advancing social and economic development. The trend over the last decade is that the resources allocated to women’s issues is declining. The African Center for Gender and Development, addresses four aspects one of which is gender. Over the years, the gender department has been shrinking in size and scope. It is essential to continue to raise the profile of these issues, enhance collaboration and strategize collectively as the attention and focus given to women’s issues is rapidly declining.

ICTs and Communication Strategy: Information and branding

The section focuses on how to communicate effectively about the work of the Coalition and the Maputo Protocol, communication for advocacy as well as popularization and accountability.

A communication strategy has been drafted for SOAWR and will be finalized. The [SOAWR website](#) which has been revamped and launched is one key communication channels which is at members’ disposal. Participants were requested to popularize and make use of the site and provide feedback to the Secretariat.



The listserv is another key platform for facilitation the exchange of information, ideas, strategies and experiences. This platform is not meant to simply be a one-way communication, that is from the Secretariat to members, but also for members to keep each other informed about what is happening in their respective contexts. SOAWR’s social media presence is also increasing – members were asked to engage actively with all platforms.

Enhanced media engagement is essential for the coalition to raise it’s profile and popularize the Protocol as well as hold policy makers to account. Work in this regard must build on existing initiatives, such as the work of FAMEDEV in training and engaging the media as partners to advance the objectives of the coalition.

Consistent branding is also important for visibility of the Coalition – IEC materials have ben produced and disseminated widely – with members encouraged to use and further disseminate amongst their networks.

Internal Reflections

SOAWR Value Clarifications

The core principles that shape SOAWR’s work and the key vehicle to achieve the change that the coalition strives for were revisited to ensure all members share similar basic values.

Values Statement;

- We believe in and are **committed to the full implementation** of the Maputo Protocol without reservations.
- We are in **solidarity** to drive transformative change in Africa. We envision SOAWR as a **collective force** in action for women’s freedom and rights.
- We are driven to **defend and uphold women’ voice, agency, dignity and rights** across the African continent
- We believe in **diversity and eliminating discrimination** by addressing the patriarchal and sexist character of institutions, norms and governing values
- We identify the importance of **courage to confront patriarchy** as key to women’s freedom. We therefore **work consciously in the margins** of society and work with and for women in the margins
- We **hold each other accountable** to the individuality of women’s rights
- We know that **freedom is central to social justice**. We are a force for African women’s freedom



A motion was passed not to negotiate the values, but rather maintain them as they are as SOAWR's core values that should be translated into various languages and shared with all members, as well as new members.

Election of the Steering Committee

Seven years ago, the founding members were elected as members of the steering committee (SC) of the coalition.

The current SC was elected in January 2013, for a two year term. The **roles and responsibilities** of the steering committee include;

- Convening the members annually
- Looking for expertise of the different members of the committee to take lead on specific activities, such as FEMNET and Fahamu for the website and communication.
- Generating/developing strategic and workplans
- Exploring funding opportunities
- Approving knowledge products
- Approving new members
- Managing process of sub-granting to members

Opportunities for enhanced effectiveness of the steering committee included ensuring a balance between Anglophone and francophone members – both at the level of the steering committee and membership – as well as ensuring all documents are availed in at least those two languages. Working closely with other coalitions such as the State of the Union coalition was also noted as a key strategy moving forward. Although the membership of the Coalition is growing, as is the diversity of the composition of members, resources are not matching the increased interest in this work.

The lack of quorum that hinders the legitimacy of the election was underlined, as well as the necessity of availing all relevant documents for members with regard to their responsibilities and mandate and the need to restructure the way the committee is formed was thoroughly discussed. Noting that the mandate of the current steering committee has expired, new responsibilities and expansion on the mandate with a wider scope was discussed.

A resolution was made to extend the mandate of the current steering committee with additional responsibilities. As a result, the steering committee mandate was approved for an additional year to work on the new tasks of the committee as well as election modalities and communicating updates to members.

The below organizations will support the current SC in delivering the newly assigned tasks;

- Akina Mama Wa Africa – Professor Maggie Kigozi,

- Women's Advocacy and Communication network (WANET) from Cameroon - Valentine Ngouetche Konlak Epse Ngwemetsi

Decisions Made:

- The election was postponed, with a decision that the Secretariat will oversee the process of the next election.
- Regarding the representativeness of the committee: 3 or 4 members out of 7 should be francophone
- A comprehensive list of all members with areas of expertise should be availed.
- The criteria of selection of members should also be clearly elaborated.
- The secretariat was tasked to avail the list to members, assist in the revision of the tasks and responsibilities of the steering committee, and explore modalities of the online election, and if budget allows, to physically bring all 46 members together.

“The **revolution and women's liberation go together.** We do not talk of women's emancipation as an act of charity or because of a surge of human compassion. It is a **basic necessity for the triumph of the revolution.** Women hold up the other half of the sky.”

THOMAS SANKARA