



FEBRUARY/MARCH 2026 NEWSLETTER

THE AFRICAN WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION NETWORK (FEMNET)



Disrupting the Status Quo: The February and March 2026 Dispatch

February has been nothing short of a whirlwind, and if the energy across the continent is any indication, the feminist future isn't just coming—it's already here. During this month, our collective compass was firmly set: all roads led to Africa Disrupt CSW 70. As we gathered for this powerhouse regional convening, the air was thick with the kind of radical brilliance and unapologetic joy that only African feminists can conjure.

This wasn't just a convening - it was our strategic heartbeat, ensuring that as we head toward CSW 70, the voices, demands, and dreams of African girls and young women aren't just heard, but are driving the global agenda. In this issue, we're diving into the highlights from Africa Disrupt CSW70, sharing key takeaways from our regional advocacy, and celebrating the "disruptive" spirit that continues to fuel our movement.

WHAT'S COOKING AT THE SECRETARIAT?

70TH COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW 70)



The seventieth session of the [Commission on the Status of Women](#) took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 9 to 19 March 2026. The priority theme was "Ensuring and strengthening access to justice for all women and girls, including by promoting inclusive and equitable legal systems, eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices, and addressing structural barriers. The review theme was Women's full and effective participation and decision making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls ([agreed conclusions of the sixty-fifth session](#))

FEMNET, in partnership with Women in Law and Development in Africa - Ghana (WiLDAF),

hosted a parallel event African women and girls transforming justice systems through policy and advocacy which aimed at strengthening women's meaningful participation and leadership in the legal and justice sector by unpacking gender-responsive policies and advocacy strategies that address systemic and socio-political barriers. The event highlighted lived experiences and best practices for promoting gender-sensitive legal reforms and eliminating discriminatory practices. By bringing together legal professionals, civil society, and policymakers, the session supported joint advocacy and helped strengthen efforts to make justice systems more inclusive and responsive to the needs of women and girls across Africa.

FEMNET, in close collaboration with NGO CSW Africa, also convened the Africa

Regional Caucus, which brought together over 100 African girls and young women to review position statements developed through a series of consultations on CSW70. These consultations, held in 2025, brought together 1001 women and girls.

[Click link to read more on the side event](#)



THE AFRICA DISRUPT CSW 70



The fifth edition of Africa Disrupt in Accra, Ghana, from **17th to 18th February, 2026**, was an electric masterclass in continental solidarity and strategic defiance, where we convened over 100 African girls and young women from 30 African countries.

Under the vibrant theme, **“Centering Justice, Ensuring Equality for African Women and Girls,”** we transformed three days into a powerful reckoning against the systems that keep justice out of reach - the fortification of our movement’s infrastructure. From the stirring opening call by Memory Kachambwa, Executive Director – FEMNET, reminding us that justice must be felt in the everyday lives of women—not just read in policy—to the deep interrogation of the legal and socio-cultural barriers that silence our sisters, the energy was unyielding.

We moved beyond merely diagnosing the gaps in inheritance, land ownership, and the harrowing rates of gender-based violence, choosing instead to center the lived realities of African women as the only true measure of progress. We thoughtfully reviewed the proposed Charter on African Family Values and Sovereignty, highlighting the potential concerns it raises, particularly in relation to the risk of reversing hard-won gains in gender equality. We stood on the shoulders of giants like [Dorcas Coker Appiah](#), echoing the truth that laws are meaningless if women cannot use them. This collective fire culminated in a landmark [Call to Action](#), a unified continental manifesto that we are now carrying forward to the global stage –CSW 70.

[Click to read more.](#)

A “Secret Sauce” to Sustaining Civil Society Engagement - Strategic Alignment for the META (Meaningful Engagement for Transformative Action) Project



The META Project CSO National Steering Committee, supported by the European Union in Kenya, recently convened for an intensive two-day strategic planning session, from 17th to 18th February 2026, focused on fortifying Kenya’s civil society ecosystem. With peace and security at the forefront, the committee took a deep dive into the evolving national context to ensure our 2025 targets and milestones are aligned with the country's most urgent priorities.

Innovation and governance took center stage as we explored the "secret sauce" for long-term sustainability: a well-regulated and coordinated civil society. A major highlight was the unveiling of the new Online Dialogue Platform, a digital gamechanger designed to revolutionize stakeholder engagement and spark transformative action across the country. The momentum shifted toward structural strength as we engaged with the Director General of the PBO Regulatory Authority, unpacking the legal transitions and national PBO governance regulations. By mastering these regulatory shifts, we are ensuring that civil society in Kenya remains a driver of impact, accountability, and collective action.

Teach-In on Data-Driven Advocacy to End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG)

On 25th February 2026, FEMNET convened a virtual Teach-In bringing together women’s rights organizations from across East and Southern Africa to strengthen feminist, evidence-based advocacy. The session equipped participants with practical tools on ethical data collection, interpretation, and storytelling, bridging lived realities with policy engagement.

Africa Commission on Population and Development (CPD) 59 Consultations

On **12th February 2026**, FEMNET convened the Africa CPD59 Consultation, bringing together feminist leaders and partners to shape a strong, united African position on population, technology, and research for sustainable development. The dialogue provided a strategic space to align priorities, amplify regional perspectives, and ensure that African voices and lived realities meaningfully influence global policy discussions at CPD59. Grounded in the principle of “Our voices, Our stories,” the consultation strengthened collective advocacy ahead of the 59th Commission on Population and Development and focused on ensuring that African advocacy meaningfully influences global policy frameworks, particularly as the international community navigates significant structural shifts within the UN system.

Regional Civil Society Roadmap Webinars Consultation Series on the New EU Kenya Civil Society Roadmap (4th Generation 2025-2027)

In a landmark effort to redefine engagement between the European Union and Kenyan civil society, the META consortium, in partnership with the EU Delegation to Kenya hosted a series of regional webinar consultations for the development of the fourth generation Civil Society Roadmap (2025–2027). The consultations served as a strategic space to interrogate previous engagement strategies, identify critical capacity needs, and co-create actionable recommendations that center the lived realities of our communities. The webinar series kicked off on March 9, 2026, and culminated in a final consultation for Nairobi stakeholders on March 17, 2026

1st Session of Co-Creating the African Feminist GBV Action Agenda

On 5th March 2026, FEMNET convened feminist leaders and Women’s Rights Organizations from across at least 15 African countries in a virtual co-creation process to shape the African Feminist GBV Action Agenda. This movement-led space consolidated continent-wide priorities, defined thematic pillars and cross-cutting principles, and drafted clear, actionable demands mapped to duty-bearers to strengthen accountability for the AU Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls. The convening marked a critical step in shifting from commitments to implementation anchoring the agenda in lived realities, evidence, and collective feminist power.

Regional Feminist Leadership & Cross-Country Learning Lab for Community-Driven Advocacy

From 10–13 March 2026 in Nairobi, FEMNET, in collaboration with UNICEF, convened women-led and feminist organizations from across the region for a transformative learning lab that focused on strengthening advocacy, survivor-centred programming, digital engagement, and movement-building. This four-day convening validated a regional toolkit, launched an intergenerational mentorship programme, and co-created bold strategies to advance collective action to end harmful practices and gender-based violence.

Resource Mobilization Webinar on Feminist Funding

The webinar on “Feminist Funding – Securing the Next Generation’s Rights”, held on 25th March 2026, highlighted the critical role of feminist movements in advancing gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), while underscoring the persistent challenge of underfunding. It emphasized how donor models that prioritize short-term results and exclude smaller organizations have continued to limit the transformative impact of these movements.

In response, the webinar created a strategic platform to explore the urgent need for flexible, sustainable, and feminist-centered funding approaches. Convened by FEMNET in collaboration with key partners, the session facilitated dialogue, shared practical strategies, and strengthened collective efforts to mobilize resources and secure the rights of future generations.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Commission on Population and Development (CPD59)

FEMNET will participate in the 59th session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD59), taking place from **13–17 April 2026** in New York, under the theme **“Population, Technology and Research in the context of Sustainable Development.”** Through its engagement, FEMNET will contribute to shaping a coherent African feminist position grounded in regional evidence, lived realities, and coordinated civil society inputs. The organization will engage in technical reviews, global advocacy spaces, and strategic dialogues to ensure that discussions on population, technology, and development reflect African priorities, including addressing digital inequalities, advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and tackling technology-facilitated gender-based violence. FEMNET will also work to elevate the voices of African women and girls and strengthen collective advocacy to influence outcomes and accountability within the CPD59 process.

Co-Creating the African Feminist GBV Action Agenda Session 2

Building on the co-creation process, FEMNET will host a follow-up virtual convening on 15th April 2026 as part of the ongoing process to refine and strengthen the African Feminist GBV Action Agenda. This session will bring together feminist leaders and Women's Rights Organizations from across the continent to further validate priorities, sharpen thematic pillars, and consolidate actionable "asks" with clear accountability pathways. Anchored in collective feminist knowledge and lived realities, the convening will focus on advancing a technically robust, movement-led agenda that strengthens coherence across advocacy efforts and positions feminist actors to more effectively influence the implementation and accountability of regional commitments on ending gender-based violence.

META Partners Inception Meeting

The Meaningful Engagement Transformative Action (META) Partners Inception Meeting is a foundational gathering designed to formally launch the implementation phase of a joint initiative between FEMNET, the SDGs Kenya Forum, and WECF International, with support from the European Union. The workshop which will be held in Nairobi from **April 21st to 23rd, 2026**, will bring together 16 diverse sub-grantee organizations—including youth-led, feminist, and indigenous groups—that operate across 22 Kenyan counties.

The primary objective of this event is to strengthen the technical and organizational capacity of these partners, ensuring they are fully equipped to handle project management, financial accountability, and the specific compliance requirements of EU-funded programs.

Ultimately, the meeting will serve as a strategic space for partnership building and collective advocacy and will aim to create a collaborative network where partners can align their thematic priorities—such as climate justice and gender equality—with global and regional policy dialogues. By the end of the workshop, these subgrantees will have a unified strategy for enhancing civil society's role in governance and inclusive development within the framework of EU-Kenya cooperation.

FEMNET at Women Deliver Conference 2026

The Women Deliver 2026 Conference (WD2026), taking place from April 27–30, 2026 in Melbourne, Australia, represents a landmark moment as the first regionally sponsored convening led by the Oceanic Pacific region. Bringing together over 6,500 activists from more than 170 countries, the conference will serve as a bold and inclusive platform for advancing feminist leadership, bodily autonomy, and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). Hosted on the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Peoples of the Kulin Nation, WD2026 also embraces a strong intersectional lens, connecting SRHR with climate justice, economic justice, and movement-building across generations and geographies. This vision closely aligns with FEMNET's mission to advance gender equality and women's rights through Pan-African feminist advocacy and collective action.

FEMNET's engagement at WD2026 is grounded in a shared commitment to advancing SRHR, climate justice, and equitable financing for public services, while countering the growing influence of anti-rights movements. Anchored in African frameworks such as Agenda 2063, the AU Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy, and the Maputo Plan of Action, FEMNET will bring forward strong Pan-African feminist analysis, evidence, and movement-building experience into global conversations. At a time marked by deepening inequalities, austerity, climate crises, and shrinking civic space, the conference offers a critical opportunity to amplify African feminist voices and connect them with Indigenous and Global South perspectives. Through this engagement, FEMNET aims to help shift global discourse from fragmented, project-based interventions toward a rights-based, redistributive, and structurally transformative feminist agenda that ensures accountability and lasting impact for women, girls, and gender-diverse people across Africa.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

1. African Women's Development Fund (AWDF): Feminist Movement Accompaniment

AWDF has issued a special call for African feminist consultants and practitioners to lead specialized programs that strengthen movement-building, collective care, and digital security.

- **Focus Areas:** Collective Care as Political Strategy, Digital Security & Collective Safety, Crisis Response, and Research & Advocacy Teach-ins.
- **Target:** Experienced African feminist practitioners and organizations (particularly those in French and Portuguese-speaking contexts).
- **Deadline:** March 20, 2026
- **Link:** [AWDF Open Call for Movement Accompaniment](#)

2. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA): GBV Advocacy & Social Norms Change

UNFPA is seeking regional NGO partners in East and Southern Africa to advance rights-based advocacy and address the root causes of gender-based violence.

- Focus Areas: Preventing and responding to GBV through feminist, rights-based social norms change.
- Target: Regional NGOs operating in East and Southern Africa.
- Deadline: March 10, 2026
- Link: [UNFPA East & Southern Africa Partnership](#)

3. Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI)

The CFLI provides modest grants for small-scale, high-impact projects designed and implemented by local partners.

- Focus Areas: Inclusive governance, gender equality, and the empowerment of women and girls.
- Grant Value: CAD \$30,000 – \$50,000
- Deadline: March 20, 2026 (varies slightly by specific country embassy)
- Link: [Canada Fund for Local Initiatives](#)

4. Vital Voices: Visionaries Program

In partnership with the Estée Lauder Emerging Leaders Fund, this program supports emerging women leaders who are visionaries in their fields.

- Focus Areas: Leadership training, mentorship, and access to a global network for women driving social change.
- Target: 50 emerging women leaders globally, including Africa.
- Deadline: March 13, 2026
- Link: [Vital Voices Visionaries Program](#)

5. Urgent Action Fund-Africa (UAF-Africa): Rapid Response Grants

While UAF-Africa accepts applications on a rolling basis, March is a critical time for organizations to apply for "Opportunity Grants" related to upcoming global convenings like CSW.

- Focus Areas: Urgent strategic interventions, protecting woman human rights defenders, and seizing unexpected advocacy opportunities.
- Deadline: Rolling (No fixed deadline, but ideal for immediate March/April actions).
- Link: [Urgent Action Fund-Africa Grants](#)

6. Hauwa Ojeifo Scholarship (One Young World)

This scholarship supports young African leaders who are specifically working on urgent challenges affecting women and girls, with a focus on mental health and disability rights.

- Target: Young leaders (18-30) from Africa and other regions.
- Deadline: March 27, 2026
- Link: [One Young World Scholarships](#)

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HONORING THE LIFE AND CLIMATE JUSTICE LEGACY OF AILEEN AJIWA

We honour the life and contribution of our dear colleague, Aileen Ajiwa, who sadly passed away in a road accident on 19 March 2026. Aileen served as FEMNET's Climate Justice Assistant and was a valued member of our team.

Aileen was deeply committed to advancing climate and gender justice, consistently working to center the voices and experiences of African women and girls in both regional and global spaces, including through the Africa Women and Gender Constituency and UNFCCC processes.

She also played an important role in FEMNET's African Feminist Academy, supporting learning and mentorship for young feminists engaged in climate justice work.

Aileen is remembered for her dedication, generosity, and the warmth she brought into every space she was part of. Her work and commitment continue to inspire our collective efforts for a just and equitable future.

"Aileen, you fought the good fight with the strength of the baobab and the gentleness of the rain. Rest in Power, dear sister. Your light remains our guide."



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***Feminism is the radical notion that women are people.
African feminism is the even more radical notion that
African women are people who deserve to be heard,
respected, and supported."***

***_Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi, Nigerian Feminist Activist &
Writer***

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