Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs) Launched in Uganda at a Women Leadership Conference

Kampala, Uganda – The Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE) held its fourth Annual Women’s Leadership conference (AWL) in October, 2015 bringing together women from various institutions and different management levels to deliberate on issues pertaining to women in corporate leadership.

The conference witnessed the official launch of the Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs) developed by UN Women and the UN Global Compact. Gracing the event was Her Excellency the Norwegian Ambassador Susan Eckey and the UN Resident Coordinator Mrs. Ahunna Eziakonwa Onochie as guests of honor. The event was attended by over 350 women from top leadership positions, board members, renowned Chief Executive Officers from the corporate world, Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development, representatives from Civil Society, FUE’s counterparts from Tanzania and Kenya, as well as UN Women, International Labour Organization (ILO) and UN Global Compact.

The Federation of Uganda Employers has also developed the Female Future Program under its Women Executive Chapter, an idea adopted from an initiative by the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO), seeking to increase the number of Women Leaders in Uganda and Women Board Members in all sectors. Recognized by ILO as a best practice, Uganda is proud to be the first country in Africa to run the Female Future Program with more than 50 female graduates to date.

UN Women Country Representative
Mrs. Hodan Addou challenged the corporate and private sector of Uganda to pledge its support, by emulating the financial allocations for the Women Empowerment principles by the Alibaba Group, Coca-Cola, MasterCard, Citibank, H&M, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Nexus Foundation in New York earlier this year. In her remarks she stated, “The Women Empowerment Principles launched here today provide the private sector with a unique gender lens through which businesses can analyze current initiatives, benchmarks and reporting practices. Enhancing openness and inclusion throughout corporate policies and operations requires techniques, tools and practices that bring results. The Principles help companies tailor existing policies and practices – or establish needed new ones – to realize women’s empowerment”.

The conference focused on challenges and opportunities for women leaders as well as knowledge and experience sharing on business cases for the inclusion of women in leadership positions. It also recognized that advancing gender equality and empowering women inclusion of private partners is key. WEPs and The Female Future Program offer practical guidance to business and private sector on how to empower women in the workplace, market place and community and thus increase their productivity.

The unveiling of the WEPs in Kampala identified the first committed CEOs and business men and women to the advancement of women’s rights in social, economic and environmental spheres in Uganda.

The WEPs launch had a successful turn out and a strong thrust to implement the practical advances. The CEOs who attended the launch include: Eng Martin Kasekende Chair & representative of GC Network Uganda, Mr. Kasekende Herman MD of Standard Chartered Bank, Mr. Trevor Ariho CEO of AAR Health Uganda, Mr. Louis Kasekende Dep Governor of Bank of Uganda, Mr. Nicholas Okwir Chairperson of Federation of Uganda Employers, Dr. Sseguya Andrew ED of Uganda Wildlife Authority, Ms Joy Mukisa ED of Center for Women in Governance, Ms Scholastica Nasinyama ED of Inter Aid Uganda, Dr Jolly Nyeko CEO of Action for Children, Ms Ruth Ziraba CEO of Nyenga Children’s home and Ms Juliet Musoke CEO of Uganda Flower Exporters Association.
Kenyatta University Leads in Becoming the First HeForShe Academia Champion

Nairobi, Kenya – Kenyatta University (KU) became the first academia champions in Kenya to launch the HeForShe campaign on 5th October 2015 in Nairobi. The launch kicked off by a HeForShe branded caravan that set off from the university’s Bishop Square headed to Amphitheatre Hall where the main event was held. On board were university students wearing HeForShe branded t-shirts, holding HeForShe stickers and bookmarks.

In attendance was UN Women Country Representative Ms. Zebib Kavuma, a Representative of UNFPA Country Director and 20 Kenyatta University members of management and staff as well as 150 students from the University.

The vibrant and colorful event saw Kenyatta University be the first University in Kenya to commit to the HeForShe Campaign through its Vice Chancellor Professor Olive Mugenda and University’s male Deputy Vice Chancellors publicly signing up to be HeForShe Champions. The campaign, which was officially launched in Kenya by H.E President Uhuru Kenyatta on 26th November 2014 is a UN Women solidarity movement for gender equality that looks into mobilizing both men and boys as advocates and change agents to bring about gender equality.

Speaking at the launch, Kenyatta University Vice Chancellor Prof. Olive Mugenda stated: “I have never experienced any disrespect from the gentlemen I work with being a woman Vice Chancellor and these men are a good example of how men should support women leaders.”

“The way we treat our children whether they are boys or girls affects how they grow, how they treat their wives and how they are going to treat their children,” noted Professor Mugenda after reading out an example of a friend who had not received the best treatment from her father since childhood.

“Getting men and boys to join in this noble cause is very important as they are key to gender equality,” stated Prof. Olive Mugenda. She added that men can increasingly see that their lives are hurt by gender inequalities that have negative impacts on women and girls, with whom they interact with.
In her remarks, Ms. Kavuma drew attention to a fact that “HeForShe has become the subject of more than two billion conversations on social media with offline activities reaching all corners of the globe”. She encouraged other universities to also embrace the campaign so as to include academia and research institutions to the list of Heads of county governments and private sector. She further reiterated that gender equality is not only about women and girls but also about men and boys. “We cannot be speaking of equality and neglect the other side of the equation, it is important that we make sure the voices of both men and women are heard and their concerns captured in policies and programmes,” she added.

Mr. David Okoro, who was speaking on behalf of the UNFPA Kenya Representative, gave an example of himself stating that the lack of delivery services for women in the rural areas made him have a drive to practice medicine in order to offer them accessible delivery services. In this context he viewed himself as a supporter for women and gender equality and hence a HeForShe champion.

Kenyatta University Students Association Organizing Secretary, Mr. Washington Shamere spoke to his fellow men stating that men and boys show their manhood by how they treat women, mothers and sisters and hence urged all of them to sign up to the HeForShe Campaign. He also appreciated the campaign being launched in KU citing that it will work in the best interest of seeing that the women who study in the institution are treated with dignity both during their studies and upon leaving the university.

Finally, before signing up Prof. Mugenda made a commitment on behalf of Kenyatta University to do the level best to realize gender equality and urged students and staff to embrace values that are empowering, inspiring and which help further dreams, aspirations and potentials. She pointed out her support to the students to form a HeForShe Students Association through the Gender Directorate stating that it would be essential in making a difference in the university.

Kenyatta University HeForShe launch is the 4th launch in Kenya. The previous launches took place in Nairobi where H.E President Uhuru Kenyatta signed up to be a champion, at Safaricom Limited which saw Safaricom C.E.O and most of the male staff signing in as champions and at United Nations Office in Nairobi where most UN Agencies led by their representatives signed in. There are more planned launches for this year in Turkana, Garissa, Migori and Kirinyaga Counties.

To sign up go to www.heforshe.org. For more information, contact UN Women Kenya Country Office HeForShe Campaign Manager at kebedech.nigussie@unwomen.org.
Lilongwe, Malawi – In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly declared 24 October, the anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations, as such United Nations Day is devoted to making known to peoples of the world the aims and achievements of the United Nations. This year, UN Malawi commemorated the day on the 30th October at Tsabango Secondary School in Lilongwe where together, UN Agencies painted the 6 classrooms at the school and had interactive discussions with the students. UN Women participated in all the events. The day was spiced up by activities by the students which involved dances, singing and poems.

UN Women, UNFPA, WFP and UNICEF lead the interactive discussions. The UN Women interactive discussions focused on Youth Leadership, Assertiveness and Skills Development while incorporating the aspects of gender equality. The session recognized the importance of the youth as tomorrow’s leaders and the need for the students to be assertive, recognize and build on their skills in their path of leadership. The discussions also acknowledged the significance of gender equality in today’s world and that the youth have a powerful role to play in shaping Malawi’s future. The youth were empowered to assert their presence, do their part and not to be afraid to stand up for what they believe in.

The session also involved a brief of the HeForShe Campaign where the boys were enlightened on their role in the fight against gender inequality and that they should not left behind but be part of the battle.

Following this, a total of 62 young men committed as HeForShe Champions and agents of change.
A child miner’s story—Guinea Bissau

Nairobi, Kenya - At just 10-years old, Kamissa Berete started working at a gold mining site in Siguiri Village in North-Eastern of Guinea Bissau. Having been born in Siguiri, which is known for its goldsmiths, Kamissa began helping her family in the gold mines. Fortunately for her, unlike other child miners, this did not prevent her from going to school. After completing her secondary education, Ms. Kamissa joined the Higher Institute of Mining and Geology of Boke, Guinea (EIMG). This is the only Institute of technology in Niger dedicated to the formation of engineers and technicians and their educational disciplines expend into fields such as mining, geology, mechanical and civil engineering. “It is until I joined University that I learnt that gold mining destroys environment,” notes Kamissa.

After her University education, Kamissa went back to the mining sector to help raise various concerns in the sector especially those affecting women and children. This was done through engagements with various stakeholders in the extractive industries to emphasize on challenges women in the mining sector are facing.

“Women in the mining sector need to be helped. We also need to talk about the children born by mothers in the mining sector, they need to go to school,” Kamissa notes.

Kamissa’s biggest plea is that many women miners do not have tools to mine gold and they require experts to wash the minerals and also build their competence in this sector. “It is so hard to find the gold stones, you have to use your hands even after using the available machines to wash the minerals, and you need experts. I therefore call unto the Kenyan people, and Africa as a whole to support women working in the mining sector,” she reiterated.

Ms. Kamissa Berete spoke at an interactive Africa Rising dialogue Session during the Regional Sharefair on Gender Equality in the Extractive Industries that was held from 13 to 15 October at the United Nations Office in Nairobi, Kenya.

The Sharefair, hosted by UN Women in collaboration with key partners, brought together governments, private sector, civil society organisations and approximately 400 women and men in different strategic roles and functions from within the extractive industries (EI) sector across Africa to discuss and share experiences on gender issues in management of natural resource development.

Africa Rising is UN Women’s innovative Dialogue series platform on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment whose objective is to raise the public discourse, positioning and visibility of results in the area of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment through the engagement of new audiences and partnerships across the African continent.
The Launch of Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Blantyre, Malawi

Blantyre, Malawi UN Women, in partnership with the National Association of Business Women in Malawi (NABW), launched the Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in October 2015, in Blantyre, gathering 35 companies.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Alice Shackelford, the country representative for UN Women in Malawi linked the WEPs to the implementation and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, indicating the crucial role of the private sector. The country cannot develop if 52% of its population is not involved in meaningful economic enterprises, and 40% of women and girls are victims of gender-based violence. In conclusion, she challenged the business captains to break the barriers and find practical ways of translating the WEPs into real and meaningful change for men and women in Malawi.

During the plenary discussions, CEOs from different companies shared their views on the WEPs and on their implementation.

On her part, Edith Jiya, acting Chief Executive Officer for Old Mutual, pointed out the importance of affirmative action as a necessary action for handholding women and directing them to where opportunities are.

Natasha Nsamala, CEO for Malawi blood transfusion service, mentioned the need to build women’s skills to develop marketable CVs as a way of accessing jobs in the private sector.

Ms. Doreen Chanje, Managing Director for Foodsec Consulting, and board member for WTO, called for gender balanced interview panels, to improve women’s confidence.

According to Vizenge Kumwenda, deputy managing director for NICO holdings, the catchment area to get women for leadership and management positions is small, as many girls drop out of school early and very few continue with education. Therefore, the private sector should start investing in girl’s education.

Mr. Newton Kambala, guest of honor, Chairperson of Malawi Confederation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MCCCI) and CEO of Mkaka Construction Company, said that women are major assets to the construction industry. They contribute to save companies funds as they are involved in fewer accidents than men. Moreover, a bid where safety is a main criteria is more likely to be awarded with women employees.

This is consistent with ESCOM’s testimony (Electricity Supplies Commission of Malawi from the Malawi) indicating that they have not been disappointed by women suppliers. Mr. Kambala congratulated FDH bank as the first WEPs signatory in Malawi and urged other companies to sign up. He indicated that companies cannot do business today as they used to transact some 100 years ago, and that the WEPs are a major tool not only for achieving equality, but also revolutionizing the business sector, and ensure equal opportunities and participation.
Lilongwe, Malawi – UN Women’s HeForShe campaign in the month of October partnered with the Think Pink campaign which is aimed at raising awareness to Malawians on the issue of Breast Cancer and how early detection increases the chances of survival. The Think Pink campaign, led by a breast cancer survivor Blandina Kondowe, strives to reduce the number of deaths from Breast Cancer by raising awareness on the importance of early detection of breast cancer in Malawi.

The partnership between Think Pink and HeForShe campaigns aimed at broadening the scope and reaching out to a larger community by bringing men on board to help encourage women on the importance of testing for breast cancer. It also provided an open forum where women can come forward with their challenges and erase all the myths surrounding Breast Cancer and look forward to earlier diagnoses and better chances of survival.

The Campaign visited Chiuzira area, in Area 23 Lilongwe. A total of 236 women were tested; a woman who was uncertain of her previous menstrual dates and had lumps was advised to go to Kamuzu central hospital after a week.

Following the community outreach event, Think Pink and HeForShe held a big walk in the city center of Lilongwe from the parliament building to the Lilongwe wildlife center, which attracted over 700 participants. The funds generated from the walk and events will be used to purchase needs for the palliative care unit or furniture for the chemotherapy ward at Kamuzu Central Hospital.

A total of 136 men and boys pledged their commitment to the HeForShe campaign from both events committing to supporting women in the fight for breast cancer and empowerment of women.
UN Women Honored for its work on peace and security in Eastern Africa at the International Symposium 2015

Nairobi, Kenya – UN Women was recognized and honored for its work on peace and security in Eastern Africa at the International Symposium 2015 this October in Bonn Germany.

The recognition focused on UN Women’s commitment on “women, peace and security” and their active involvement in prevention of conflict, conflict resolution and post conflict peace building efforts of the UN. UN Women offers training for women and men as peacekeepers who participate in the UN peacekeeping missions with a focus on the special needs of women and girls during times of war and conflict.

The Symposium, dubbed 15 years of UNSC Resolution 1325 – “No Peace without Women” was organized by the Security Council of the United Nations and aimed at raising awareness of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and UN Women’s peacekeeping. It brought together participants from governments, civil societies and international organizations to discuss issues surrounding, politics, academia and the private sector as well as women in peace and security.

The Resolution 1325 which was adopted 15 years, calls for women’s participation in peacebuilding and reconstruction, peacekeeping missions, protection from human rights violations especially gender-based sexual violence, and access to justice and services to eliminate discrimination. It therefore has an important impact on international and national law, women’s empowerment, military and global security.

“UNSCR 1325 in itself is a result of much advocacy for the effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and CEDAW in the area of women’s peace and security. Each successive resolution after 1325 speaks to the challenges of moving the women’ peace and security agenda forward,” Stated UN Women’s Peace and Security Advisor Ms. Jebbeh Forster, who represented the Eastern and Southern Africa Region Office at the symposium.

Ms. Forster also asserted that in 2015, women have been visible in most peace processes in the ESAR and have to a large extent, influenced the integration of gender and women’s rights provisions in peace agreements. She also gave more highlights on the work of UN Women ESAR and the challenges faced in the field according to the global study.
The symposium had panel discussions that focused on current situation of involving women and girls in conflict prevention, resolution and peace building processes.

In her closing remarks, Ms. Forster commended all the women who have courageously fought for women's rights in difficult circumstances over the last 15 years, and the development partners for their support. “I want to thank those who drafted UN SCR Resolution 2242 and the unanimous support that it has received. I thank the governments that have supported the work of UN Women. We have come a long way but there is a longer way to go. Our target is that by 2030 there will be gender equality. This can only happen when women in decision making positions are resourced with knowledge and funds, and when commitments on gender equality are backed by the necessary political will and resources,” said Ms. Forster.
In celebrating UN@70, UN Women Sudan Country Office organized three main events: Concert, photo exhibition and interactive installations in the National Museum; Lecture on the UN charter at the Khartoum University coordinated by UNDP; and a Youth Art Exhibition at the Ahfad University for Women. The Exhibition was a successful event in which paintings, drawings and paper collages done by Sudanese youth in Khartoum were exhibited.
UP-COMING EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

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<td>10 - 14 November</td>
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UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa— about us

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and needs worldwide.

UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa covers 15 countries in the region:

- Burundi
- Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
- Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office
- Ethiopia
- Kenya
- Malawi
- Mozambique
- Rwanda
- South Africa Multi-Country Office (Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland)

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