



**AWDF's 6th CEO Forum
on Leadership and Governance
for Women Leaders of Women's
Rights Organisations in Africa**

Nairobi, Kenya
November 15 - 17, 2016

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Welcome Message

Jessica Horn, AWDF Director of Programmes

The welcome address was given by AWDF's Director of Programmes, Jessica Horn, who stressed that AWDF believes women's leadership is crucial, and as a donor, AWDF has a responsibility to ensure that organisations advocating for change are also managed efficiently, creatively, professionally and ethically. She added that AWDF is an ethical funder and demonstrates by example that leadership is not a position or status symbol. Leaders are individuals and collectives who show integrity in everything they do.

Jessica expressed that her expectations were met by the great diversity of women at the convening, who have a clear and complex understanding of women's rights, and included Francophone participants and women living with disabilities. She noted that each of the coaches at the forum possess specific expertise and skill-sets in Africa that are unmatched. Jessica closed by sharing, "We allowed you. Allow yourself. You don't have to conform. Your responsibility is to innovate, so this is your space. Give yourself the space to dream, and in dreaming you are shaping the future. Feel free. This space is yours".

The three-day convening has brought together 20 energetic women leaders from 10 organisations across Africa; Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda, Malawi, Zambia, Liberia, and Benin.

Programme Overview

Nafi Chinery, AWDF Capacity Building Specialist

AWDF's leadership development and coaching programme is aimed at building a cadre of African women leaders with feminist consciousness to promote women and girls' rights in Africa. This programme targets young African women leaders because they represent our future, and deserve our investment in their human capacity development to enable them engage effectively as our leaders on women's rights issues.

This 6th CEO forum, like previous years, is the first event of the intensive nine-month leadership coaching project. The forum is a unique space to inspire and encourage leaders to focus their minds on the coaching process and activities and embrace the new changes that will come from this experience for the benefit of their organisations and communities. The forum is also a space where leaders for the first time meet and interact with coaches assigned to them, engage and network with stakeholders on the project, question and agree on strategies on the way forward. As leaders embark on this important journey, we encourage them to be bold, courageous, conscious, and to take care of self and community and stand in solidarity with fellow women and girls.

The program was led by three main facilitators: Yene Assegid (Belgium/Ethiopia), Hope Chigudu (Zimbabwe), and Paula Fray (South Africa), who brought their particular expertise to bear in the areas of Pan-Africanism, coaching, media, organisational development and feminist experiences. The facilitators will also serve as coaches for the leaders in the 9 months following the forum.



“My Feminist Journey”: Lessons from Past Leaders

Executive leaders who have taken part in last year's CEO forum and coaching programme shared their journey's lessons towards feminist leadership with participants. Below are a few excerpts from this exchange.

Cynthia Coredo, Program Manager
BoxGirls Kenya

How did you balance your work and the training?

What I learnt is that you shouldn't separate your work from the coaching. They are the same. Make it integral and not a separate entity so that it doesn't feel like a burden but something that is part and parcel of your leadership growth.

How did you stick with it when you wanted to give up?

I was pregnant at the time, but my coach encouraged me. She said, “You might fail and make a mistake but don't stay there. Motivate yourself. Think of yourself as a fruit, an orange going through a fruit processor. The process might not be pleasant but the juice is. Therefore, think of the coaching as this process that will make you an effective leader.”



How do you form linkages with men in a meaningful way?

As an organisation that uses boxing as a tool for activating the leadership of young women, we analyse the different forces used to discriminate against them. We use soft power when working with men and that is how we bring them on board to work together in promoting girls' leadership.



**Ivy Nyawira, Program Coordinator
Resource Center for Women and Girls (RCWG)**

From your experience in the leadership training, what is the one thing that will keep us on track for the next six months?

First, start creating a relationship with the coach. Don't make it very formal because this is a new friend you now have. Another thing is to build your networks with fellow sisters across the continent. In whatever you do in the coming months, stay honest, stay focused and stay true to yourself. Don't be afraid of accepting mistakes. Learn from those things and move on.

How did your Executive Director (ED) take on board your experiences at the CEO Forum?

Our ED is open to suggestions. She says she is phasing herself from the organisation and leaving the leadership to young people. Therefore, she accepts the ideas we have and she is ready to help us fine tune them along the way.

**Grace Waruguru, Executive Director
Kiambu People Living with HIV/AIDS (KIPEWA)**

How do you form linkages with men in a meaningful way?

I am a mother of two boys. The boys are always in my world, and I know there is need to create a balance. We need to think about the boys. Tag them along.

How did your organisation accept the changes following the CEO Forum?

As an ED, I brought on board all the lessons I learnt from the coaching and I shared this with my colleagues and allowed for suggestions to improve our organisation.

How did you stick with it when you wanted to give up?

Whenever I thought of asking to postpone, I would ask myself, why did I start this in the first place? It was because I wanted to improve the lives of the women in my community living with HIV/AIDS. This answer encouraged me to keep at it, and the coaching flew by so fast. Be open to the process, learn every day, embrace it, and enjoy it!





Feminism 101 with Jessica Horn.

What is African Feminism?

It was born for us

It is not a creation of academics

It was formed with people not feeling satisfied with the
way of life

It is about our lives

It is an analysis and a movement to dismantle systems of
patriarchal power

Patriarchy is the control of men over women

It is about doing something about the inequality

Patriarchy is constantly inventing and reinventing itself all
the time

Feminism is a verb

It is about power

Power to, Power in, Power within

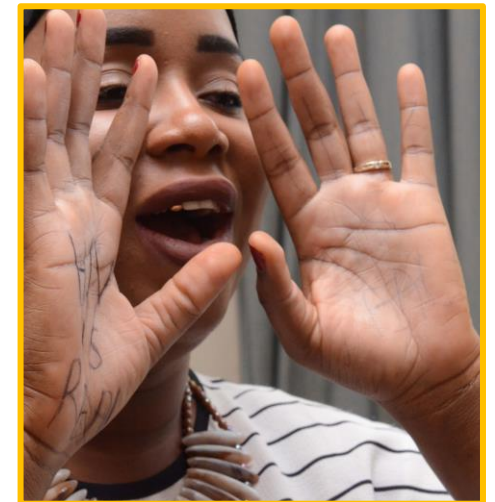
Feminism is about Power, Sisterhood and Solidarity

Build power within (**Politicise the Personal**) because feminism begins with **YOU**. Also, question and start to let go of how invisible patriarchal power has made you feel less, unworthy and not equal. Self-love and self-care are paramount.

Build power with (**Sisterhood & Solidarity**): Find others, join or create a movement. There is strength in numbers and you can always be in solidarity with other women. Build power (**Agency**) to develop and nurture the skills, tools, resources, safe spaces to create, speak up, engage, and transform.

FEMINIST.

No 'ifs'. Not 'buts'.
No 'however's'





Governance as a Form of Leadership: Theo Sowa, AWDF CEO

What is leadership? Leadership, Theo Sowa explained, is a shared journey of different people in the organisation who work towards the same vision, like a system, for efficiency in the organisation. Therefore, there is no competition but only a system of synergies. She emphasised that *"It is about inspiring change, which involves the capacity to manage a group in order to achieve results that you expect. It is simply, the ability to move people to your cause."*

Theo believes governance is about accountability and ethics with implications—some even financial—to each organisation. According to Theo organizational boards have key leadership responsibilities to steer the organisation. "I urge you to think critically about your boards of governance. What are their terms of reference? What roles do they play? This is crucial because board members have a legal responsibility. If the organisation collapses, these members have the responsibility to repay any funds owed, for instance".

Courageously, Theo, went on to give an intimate view of her journey of becoming a board member in her early 20s. Through the process, she understood it was vital to “know your strengths, be clear about your role and those of the others in the organisation”. The key here, she added, is knowing whom is responsible for what duties.

Theo underscored the central role of proper communication, respect, integrity and accountability in everyday organisational

activities so that all runs seamlessly. True leadership, Theo says, is being able to reach an overwhelming point when you can’t hold everything together but you still rise up and take on the new day.

Theo's Talking Points

Ingredients of effective governance:

Recruiting new board members

Quality control

Managing your board (the role of the CEO)

Developing a relationship between the governance board Chair and CEO (function of CEO)

“You don’t need a bigger chair, or a sign with your name. True leadership does not need positions to be given.”





Communication Session with Paula Fray

This session offered a platform for the leaders to talk about their organisations and programme activities. Paula Fray, asked participants whether the impact of their work is known in the communities they operate and whether they have ever used media to attract funding to their organisations.

Paula encouraged and taught the women leaders how to be active newsmakers and users of news. First, they were tasked to write an opinion piece indicating the successes and challenges of their organisational work, and then to write about their work with their own voice. The participants should, therefore, “learn to hook the reader” within the first intro (introduction paragraph). The same exercise could be applied to social media platforms such as Twitter.

To be better newsmakers, Paula further asked participants to become an “authority in the specific issues affecting women such that you are the ‘speed dial’ in case journalists want information.” Therefore, use of credible and recent statistics was lauded as great evidence to point to resources of further information. Besides being print and digital media savvy, the participants should know and understand mediums such as radio and television as they carry audio and visual effects, respectively.

Leaders were also taken through mock interviewing session. During this interactive session most of the leaders learnt how to speak in front of the camera with poise and confidence through simulated interviews staged by Paula. These interviews were filmed, after which the participants, alongside their trainers, reviewed the videos to analyse what worked and how the media pitches could be improved. This exercise was effective in helping the women leaders learn, from one another and developing the most effective messaging strategies. Paula emphasised the need to know how to use bridging as a communications technique to get away from difficult questions. Flagging key areas can be done by using phrases such as *“most importantly, the key issue is...”*



In their communication, however, participants were cautioned against creating noise. Figuratively speaking, noise refers to distraction by giving unnecessary or unintended information to listeners or readers, and literally, noise refers to having too much body movement or big/loud jewelry. Lastly, Paula asked the leaders to incorporate a clear feminist ideology for their organization that could be highlighted in their media activities, at all times.

Women leaders from each of the ten (10) organisations went through brief interviews where they each expounded on their organisation's vision, objectives and activities. These were led by Paula Fray and filmed by a crew.

Such interactive communications exercises focused on how the leaders would express themselves effectively to the media and public.





Insights on Coaching with Hope Chigudu & Yene Assegid

According to lead facilitator Hope Chigudu, coaching “puts a commitment to equality and justice and recognises how power operates in everyday life at the center. Coaching is all about commitment.” It is not a single event but a series of meetings that eventually become a resource for women leaders. To furtherance to Hope’s explanation, Yene, one of the facilitators and coach added that “A coach is someone who helps us to open the curtains in our lives..as they see the windows underneath the curtains, and this opens up to a view and to other opportunities.” Therefore, a coach probes for clarity so that the mentee is stronger in the movement.

In past times, coaching was for remedial purposes or seen as a form of punishment. But now, coaching has evolved to help reach breakthroughs, innovations, and results. Coaching is about linking the visible with the invisible as there is no barometer to see how much a person has processed and progressed over time. Therefore, it requires full commitment from the mentor and mentee. Like pregnancy, you cannot say that you are “a little pregnant”. Both parties have to be committed to the leadership journey. It doesn’t require one to be aggressive in order to be powerful. We must remember that lions do not bark.

Meet the Coaches

The three coaches brought their Pan-African, Media, organisational development and feminist experiences to bear during the forum. They each will mentor and coach the women participants in the next 9 months following this forum. Each coach will have at least six women leaders to mentor and coach during this timeframe.



Yene Assegid:

"Coaching is a process, it's about you, it's an investment in all of you.

You are important in the movement".



Paula Fray:

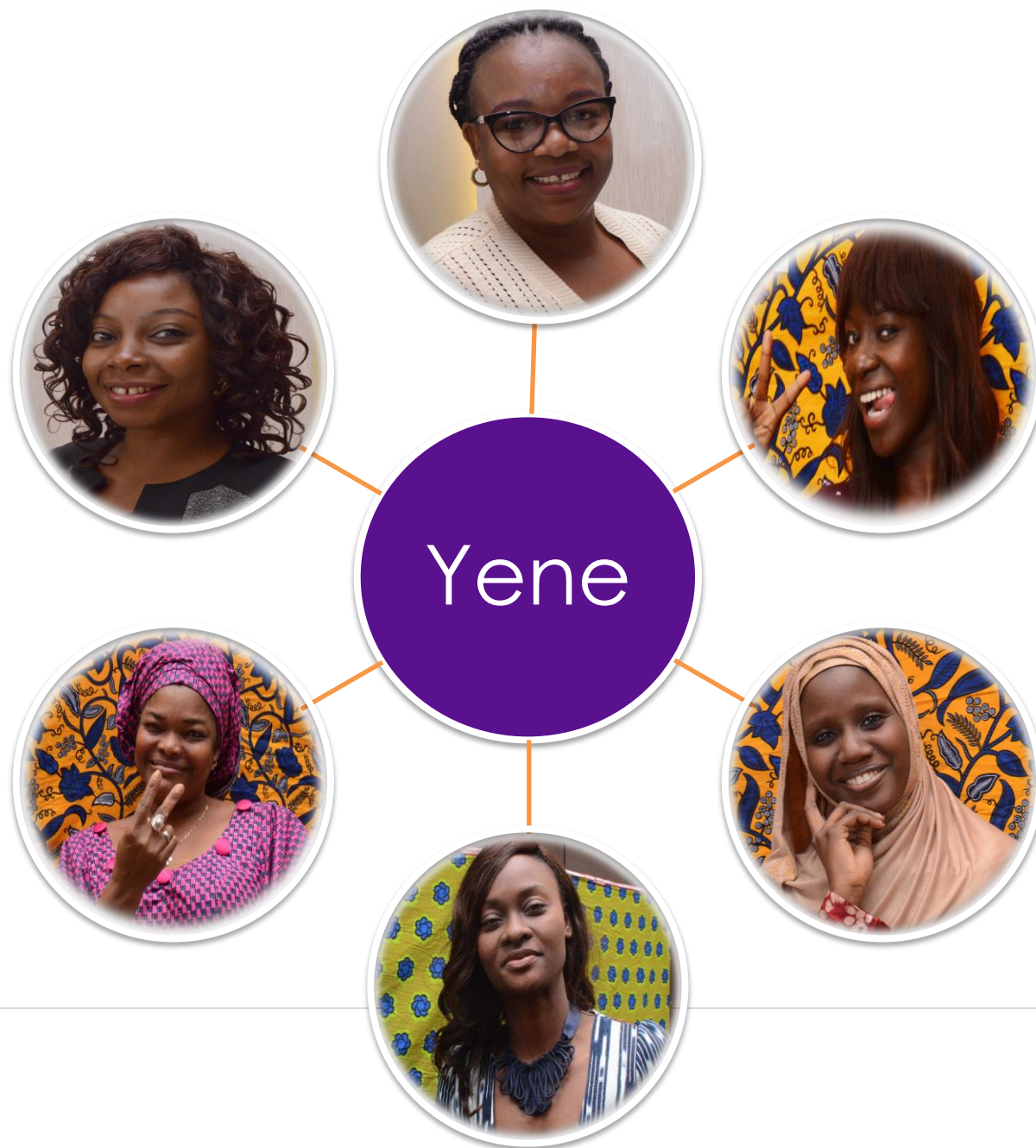
"We are in a crowded market, we have to stand out.

Hook your reader with something unexpected and unusual".



Hope Chigudu:

"Coaching puts a commitment to equality and justice and recognises how power operates in everyday life at the center."



Coach: Yene Assegid

LEADERS

Marlene Seidou Babio

Christelle Josquinie Olivia Alinde

Rashida Mahmood

Margaret Laval

Juliana Agema

Evelyn Ugbe

Coach: Paula Fray

LEADERS

Edah Gondwe Chimya

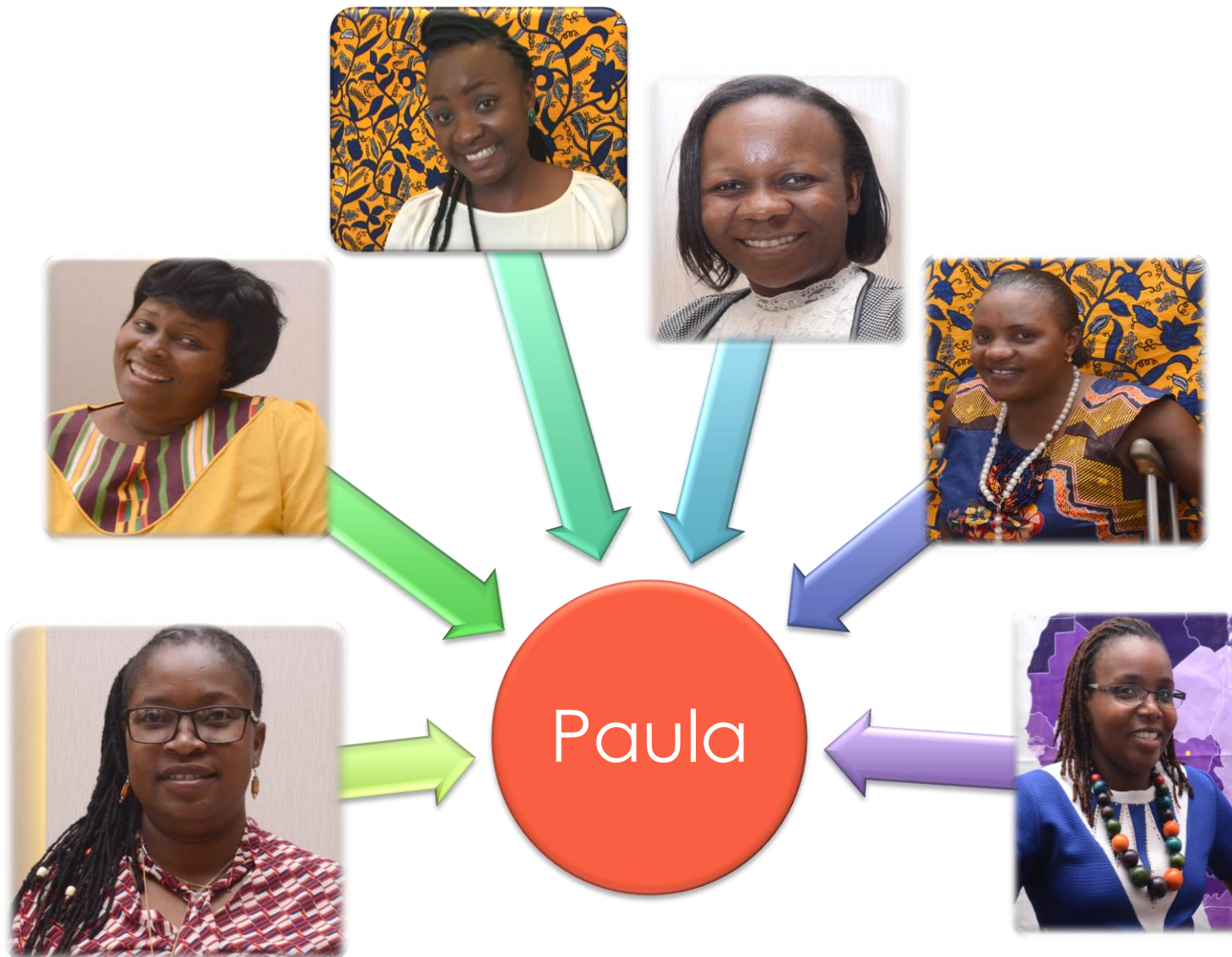
Maggie Muke

Stella Nkhonya

Lyness Manduwa

Nelly Mngwaluko

Mphatso Kapalamula





Coach: Hope Chigudu

LEADERS

Nji Immaculate Neng
Slyvie Kiki
Maame Afon Yelbert-Sai
Saajida Shiraz
Grace Yeane
Deonte McGee
Immaculate N. Mukasa
Sarah Nakame
Frinwie Awantoh Shaml
Lillian Nalwoga

My experience at the 6th AWDF CEO Forum

Marlene Seidou Babio

When I came into the room, I realised we were only two Francophone women there and I wondered how it would work. Were we going to be at ease and integrated?

But I was happy that AWDF had organised everything to make us at ease. We had interpreters and we also teased the Anglophone sisters to try to speak in French.



We learnt about the importance of being African feminists, of being strong for one another, and the need to be better communicators in our work. The media session was very informative for me. We thank you very much for the consideration to make us comfortable and we look forward to fruitful mentorship sessions ahead.

Yene Assegid, Facilitator and Coach

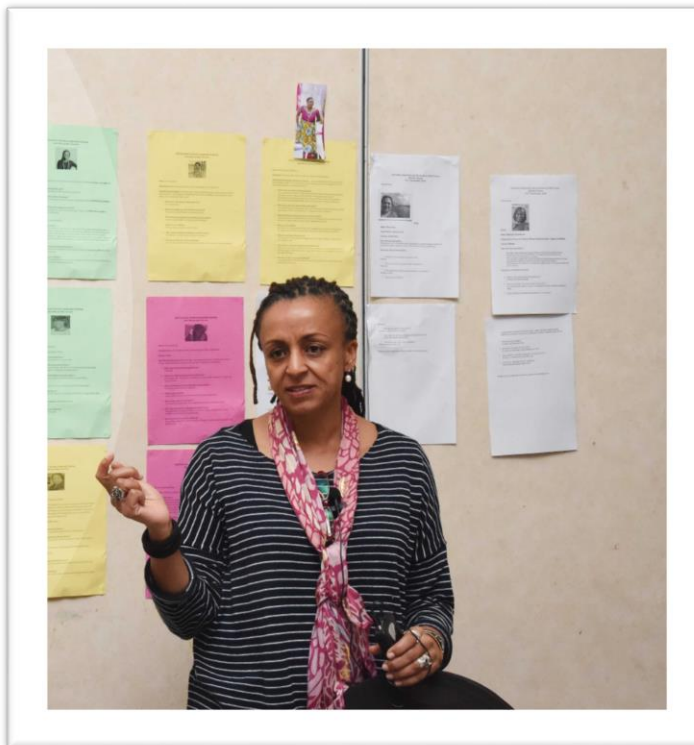
What were some of your expectations for the forum?

I expected it would be a forum that discussed and presented tools and processes to support civil society leaders. I was looking forward to the discussion and also to meeting the participants.

Were your expectations met?

Yes, my expectations were not only met, but they were totally exceeded. I certainly learnt tools and processes to support civil society leaders. And the highlight was making a distinction on Feminist Leadership. It's a complete other dimension. I had known of it, but for some reason this forum transformed me totally. Something happened that I am still processing so I can't

say more right now. I just know something huge has changed in me.



What is the one thing that stood out to you about the three-day forum?

What stood out was the potential we have as women, as feminists and as leaders. We have so much. All we have to do now is coordinate with each other to support each other in bringing forth the feminist leadership agenda.

What will be your biggest challenge after the convening?

My biggest challenge will be about not losing the momentum. What is it that we each need to keep going?

And how can we support each other to continue on the path of the energy we have raised? These are the questions I am

reflecting on. I will do what I can on my side to keep the momentum. I am committed to that.

Do you have any tips and advice for the women leaders as they embark on this leadership journey?

Don't hold back on the vision and dreams you have. If those dreams are in your heart, there is a reason for it....Go

forward...Keep going and even when things seem tough, just keep going. You will reach your goals before you know it. Be kind to yourself along the way, and be kind to others. Forgive yourself as much as you forgive others. Simply do your best. That's all one can ever do.



The 6th CEO Forum in Action

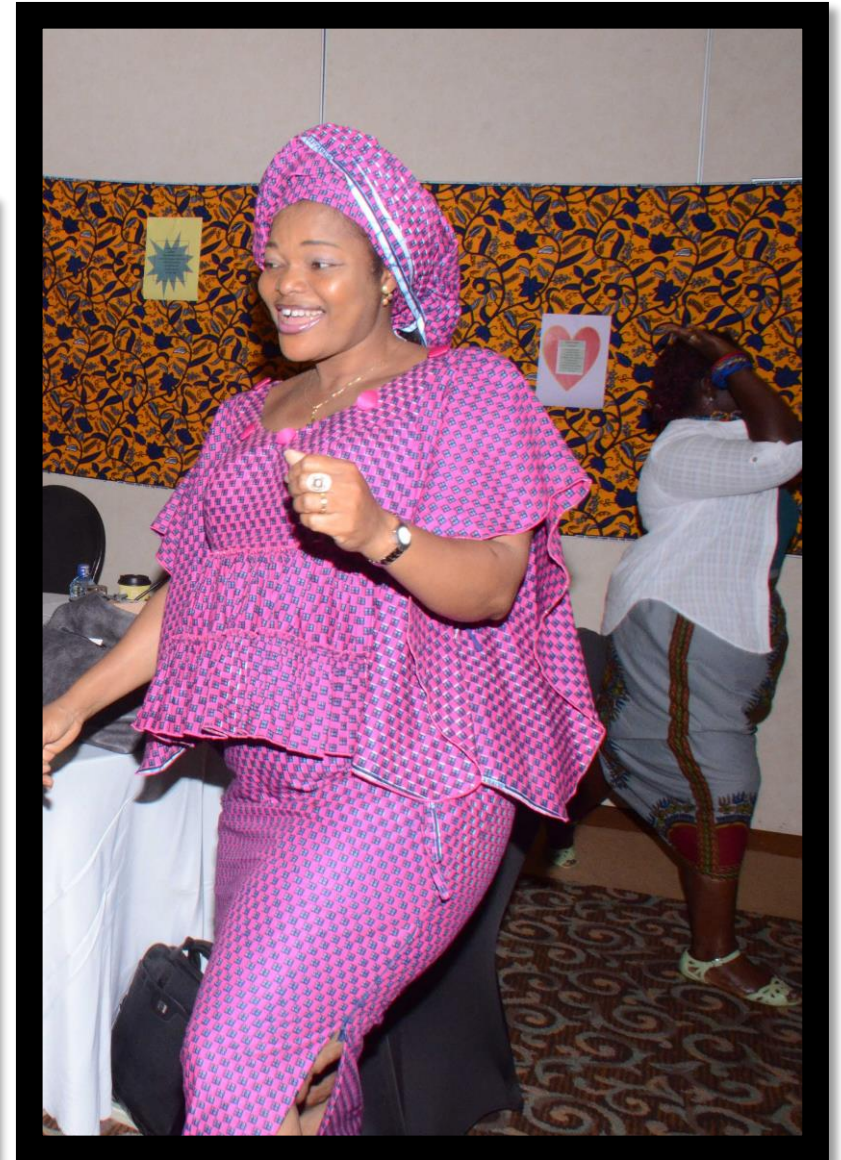
Image Gallery



The women leaders and their facilitator coaches took leadership and governance to the next level by also focusing on the importance of self-care and pleasure.

Here are some exciting photos of the CEO Forum in action. Check out our well-being fun - between information sessions - where we stretched, danced, and laughed together.









We asked participants, what **One Word** describes how you feel following the conference?

Below is a collection of their responses.

Fierce, **fearless**, **happiness**, **confidence**, **ecstasy**, **sorority**

Recognition, **marvelous**, **inspired**, **rejuvenated**, **energised**, **anticipation**

Excitement, **elated**, **impressed**, **enlightened**, **hope**, **brilliance**

Motivated, **fulfilled**, **invigorated**, **challenged**, **cleansed**,

Greatness

On Fire!



AWDF CEO FORUM Participant List

15 - 17 November 2016 in Nairobi, Kenya

	Participant Name	Organisation	Country
1	Yene Assegid	Trainer & Coach	Belgium
2	Marlene Seidou Babio Coordinator	FAWE BENIN	Benin
3	Christelle Josquinie Olivia Alinde Program Manager	FAWE BENIN	Benin
4	Nji Immaculate Neng Programme Coordinator	Community Agriculture and Environmental Protection Association Cameroon (CAEPA Cameroon)	Cameroon
5	Frinwie Awantoh Shamla, Programme Administrator	Community Agriculture and Environmental Protection Association Cameroon (CAEPA Cameroon)	Cameroon

6	Maame Afon Yelbert-Sai Director, Global Programs and Partnerships	Moremi Initiative for Women's Leadership in Africa (Moremi Initiative)	Ghana
7	Saajida Shiraz, Program Office	Moremi Initiative for Women's Leadership in Africa (Moremi Initiative)	Ghana
8	Zeytuna Abdella Feyissa Azasoo	AWDF	Ghana
9	Jessica Horn	Director of Programmes, AWDF	Ghana
10	Theo Sowa	CEO, AWDF	Ghana
11	Nafi Chinery	Capacity Building Specialist, AWDF	Ghana
12	Eunice Kilonzo	Rapporteur	Kenya
16	Rebecca Ndugu	Photographer	Kenya
17	Cathy Gathoni	Journalist	Kenya
20	Grace Yeane, Executive Director	Women Movement for Sustainable Development - (WOMSUD - Liberia)	Liberia

21	Deonte McGee, Assistant Executive Director	Women Movement for Sustainable Development - (WOMSUD - Liberia)	Liberia
22	Stella Nkhonya, National coordinator	Malawi Human rights for women and girls with disabilities	Malawi
23	Lyness Manduwa, Programmes Coordinator	Malawi Human rights for women and girls with disabilities	Malawi
24	Nelly Mngwaluko, Project Manager	Forum for African Women Educationalists in Malawi (FAWEMA)	Malawi
25	Mphatso Kapalamula, Liaison Officer	Forum for African Women Educationalists in Malawi (FAWEMA)	Malawi
26	Rashida Mahmood, Coordinator	Hadis Foundation	Nigeria
27	Margaret Lawal, Project Officer	Hadis Foundation	Nigeria
28	Juliana Agema, Head Admin & Account Unit	Women Environmental Programme (WEP)	Nigeria

29	Evelyn Ugbe, Senior Programme Officer	Women Environmental Programme (WEP)	Nigeria
30	Paula Fray	Communications Expert & Coach	South Africa
31	Lillian Nalwoga, Programme Manager	Mentoring and Empowerment Programme for Young Women (MEMPROW)	Uganda
32	Sarah Nakame, Programme manager	Mentoring and Empowerment Programme for Young Women (MEMPROW)	Uganda
33	Edah Gondwe Chimya Executive Director	Zambia Alliance of Women (ZAW)	Zambia
34	Maggie Muke, Communications Officer	Zambia Alliance of Women (ZAW)	Zambia
35	Hope Chigudu	Facilitator & Coach HopeAfrica	Zimbabwe

Report written and designed by **Eunice Kilonzo**