

# PRESS RELEASE



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## State of African Women: Right by Her Report

**KENYA, Mombasa, March-11, 2018** - Whilst there are already comprehensive mechanisms in place that document the current status of ratification and domestication of the Maputo Protocol and the Maputo Plan of Action, few explore the pathways through which rights are operationalized in practice through laws, policies, administration, budgets and programs. Apart from a few well known cases, little is known about how Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), including Faith-based organizations (FBOs), influence these pathways and the challenges they face in mediating between duty bearers and rights holders.

The Right By Her Report gives insight into what CSOs/FBOs need to do to accelerate implementation, monitoring and reporting on key rights instruments and political commitments regarding women's rights in Africa. It is a critical resource for the strengthening of FBO/CSO advocacy efforts. The Report is also valuable to states and regional and continental organizations and bodies in contributing to the realization of women's rights. The analysis of gaps and opportunities across the regions and in-depth understanding of the challenges that CSOs/FBOs currently face at implementation level will directly inform the prioritization of priority rights areas and key advocacy strategies for the campaign tailored to each region.

The report is intended to reach a broad audience of African multipliers and opinion formers on continental legal and policy commitments on women's rights in African countries. These audiences include parliamentarians, first ladies, journalists, religious leaders and youth leaders, and the report seeks to offer the knowledge and perspective needed to promote women's rights. Other audiences are representatives of the African Union and Regional Economic Communities (including high level decision makers, technocrats and thematic experts), as well as national and sub-national government decision makers. These audiences might have varying levels of knowledge of continental commitments (Maputo Protocol, Plan of Action) and is partly non-specialized in gender and rights analysis.

The report presents an overview of the current status of continental norms protecting women's rights and their ratification and domestication in countries in four African sub-regions. It takes into account multiple levels of governance, and different African sub-regions. It will also look at the role of regional economic communities in this.

The four rights areas central to these report are gender-based violence against women, harmful practices (in particular child marriage and female genital mutilation FGM), reproductive rights (in particular contraceptives, sexuality education), and HIV and AIDS. In addition, four cross-cutting issues are taken into account when speaking on the four rights areas; these cross-cutting issues are peace and security; education and training; participant of women in political and decision-making processes, and marginalized groups of women (in particular elderly women, women with disabilities and women in distress).

The report complements existing reports and reviews with (1) its specific focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights issues, (2) bringing in a gender and rights perspective, (3) bringing in the role and trends in regional economic communities (RECs), and (4) incorporating and highlighting the role of CSOs/FBOs as mediators between duty bearers and holders.

This report is published in the context of the Right By Her Campaign. The Right By Her campaign focuses on increasing civil society's contributions to promote the implementation of the AU Protocol on the Rights of Women (Maputo Protocol) and the Maputo Plan of Action at four decision making levels across sub-Saharan Africa – at continental, regional, national and sub-national level. This campaign is at the heart of the 'State of African Woman' project, which has as its overall objective: to contribute to securing, realizing and extending women's rights enshrined in African Union policies in Sub-Saharan African countries. The project is carried out by a consortium of six organizations, wherein Faith to Action Network is part of, and is funded by the European Union.

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