



# Gender Forum

Perspectives on Gender Equality

The Green Political Foundation

## GENDER FORUM BRIEF

**TITLE: Dismantling Patriarchy: Feminist Perspective on Democracy in Eastern Africa**

**Date: Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

**Venue: Kenya National Theatre.**

**Time: 4.30 pm to 7.00 pm**

**ENTRY FREE**

### Synopsis:

Despite all the attention paid to integrating women in development and politics, and the formal laws and international agreements promoting the equality of the sexes, patriarchal biases have continued to permeate the different systems of governance.

The positive impacts from the increased number of women in leadership, developed policies and penal laws against harmful cultural practices and violence against women are weakened in enforcement by societies that subvert women's rights actively day to day.

Policies to mainstream gender in all spheres of governance are met with unwilling or uninformed agents resulting in mere shelf-worthy documentation and weak attempts at implementation that raise contempt towards the subject. Feminist activism has largely taken a feminine face in the region, in effect creating an unhealthy division between the sexes. Along with similar reforms for greater inclusion, affirmative action instruments are increasingly criticized and called into question.

Deeply entrenched and strongly defended patriarchal institutions and practices are rarely challenged; instead, women must work within the constraints. Patriarchy is also seen as a driver for the entrenchment of the status quo – those who hold power will never be benevolent enough to cede power to another, hence relegating women to roles that are tokenistic and quickly moulding the women members into a machine to be used by the political elite for their benefit. If left unchecked, the tokenistic inclusion of women in decision-making will only further entrench gender power games which shape into power politics within women's leadership.

It is because of patriarchy that women are left out of peace negotiations in volatile societies, excluded in

boardrooms in businesses, companies and Parastatals and ignored in politics and at the household level. The band-aid of affirmative action in favour of women further entrenches patriarchal thinking, if the holders of such positions are not vocal against discriminatory interpretations of norms, and if they get co-opted into masculinised spaces.

Feminists have been at the forefront of challenging the roll-back of democracy and questioning the male-dominated power structures including using online platforms and citizen protests to challenge norms and push for debates on critical issues. The forum will focus on the sharing of feminist perspective on democracy in the region.

### Key discussion points:

- **How does patriarchy manifest?**
- **What are the effects of patriarchy on gender equality?**
- **What challenges do feminists face while challenging patriarchal states?**
- **What feminist approaches will help shape democracy going forward?**

### Discussion Panel:

The discussion panel comprises of:

- **Dr. Stella Nyanzi (Uganda)**
- **Marilyn Muthoni Kamuru (Kenya)**
- **Salma Maoulidi (Tanzania/Zanzibar)**
- **Hawa Y. Mire (Somalia/Diaspora)**

### Moderated by: Billene Seyoum (Ethiopia)

**About the Gender Forum:** The Gender Forum is a monthly public dialogue convened by the Heinrich Böll Stiftung since 2001, encouraging dialogue on pertinent national issues with a gendered lens. It brings together scholars, lawmakers and implementers, civil activists, government institutions, students and the general public, aiming at sharing knowledge and inspiring gendered analysis of policy and programmes.

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## PROGRAMME: 19<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2018

### Dismantling Patriarchy: Feminist Perspective on Democracy in Eastern Africa

Time	Session
4.30 – 5.00pm	Arrival and Registration
5.00 – 5.10pm	Opening Remarks: <b>Ulf Terlinden</b> , Director, Heinrich Boll Stiftung
5.10 – 6.30 pm	<b>Panel Dialogue</b> : Moderated by <b>Ms. Billene Seyoum, Curator African Feminisms</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Dr. Stella Nyanzi</b></li><li>• <b>Marilyn Muthoni Kamuru</b></li><li>• <b>Salma Maoulidi</b></li><li>• <b>Hawa Y. Mire</b></li></ul>
6.30-7.00 pm	<b>Plenary and Panel responses – Ms. Billene Seyoum</b>
7.00 pm	Closing Remarks : <b>Caroline Kioko</b> , Gender Democracy Programme Coordinator, Heinrich Böll Stiftung

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