

**WORKSHOP ON RULE OF LAW AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT
IN AFRICA: RHETORIC, CONTESTATIONS AND OPTIONS
FOR ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR WOMEN**



**WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA
20TH - 21ST JANUARY 2017**

Some of the leading advocates for women's rights in Africa drawn from South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Zambia and Malawi convened in Windhoek, Namibia to explore the relationship between the rule of law and developmental progress in Africa in the 21st century with specific focus on access to justice for the African woman.

The workshop sought

- to review African women's progress in attaining sustainable human, socio-political and economic development, as well as the challenges they face in this regard;
- to interrogate "Whether, how, and to what extent," limitations on women's access to justice impact on promoting inclusive developmental processes and outcomes in Africa;
- to propose how gender sensitive and inclusive law and justice can advance political, social, economic and cultural rights of women; strengthen their resilience in and after crisis; and drive growth that improves African women's quality of life.

During the two days forum participants had an opportunity to *inter alia*,

- Discuss evidence based research and policy development, as well as exchange knowledge, experience and best practices on women and access to justice in Africa;
- Discuss innovative policy implementation options, and point out areas of improvement;
- Lay a foundation for strong networks of stakeholders and women's rights advocates at national, regional and continental levels;

Discussions were structured along the following main thematic areas, Labour and migration; Land and property ownership; Economic activity; Conflict and Peace-building; Environment and climate change; Family and Health.

The workshop was graced by Rashida Manjoo, *Professor, Public Law Department, University of Cape Town and Former United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its Causes and Consequences*; Hon. Dr. Nancy Baraza, *Senior Lecturer and Head of Public Law Department, University of Nairobi and Former Deputy Chief Justice and Vice President of the Supreme Court of Kenya* and Kondwa Sakala-Chibiya, *Legal Practitioner and Vice Chair, Zambia Human Rights Commission* among others.

Key presenters and panelists included,

- Dr Adenike Aiyedun, Deputy Director, Access to Justice Nigeria - *Enforcing the Rule of Law for African Women: Challenges and Possible Solutions'*
- Yvonne Oyieke, Lecturer, University of Nairobi, Kenya - *Challenging dominant conceptions of justice and its access for the African woman*
- Elsy Sainna, Deputy Executive Director, Kenyan Section of the International Commission of Jurists - *Closing the Gap between Aspiration and Implementation in Policy and Advocacy for Women's Rights in Africa*
- Rumbidzai Dube, Human Rights and Governance Expert Zimbabwe
- Kimberly Marie Brown, Field Program Manager, Access to Justice and Gender Reforms, International Development Law Organization, Kenya - *Experiences and methodologies for engagement with state and non-state actors towards ensuring access to justice for women*
- Emilia Siwingwa, Independent Consultant, Former Law Society Executive, Tanzania/South Africa - *Women and Migration: Accessing Justice from the Horn to the Cape*
- Jane Serwanga, Gender Specialist UNDP/ UN Women Elections Project, Kenya
- Veronica Hollela, Policy Advocacy & Communication Officer, Asylum Access-Refugee Solutions Tanzania - *Urban refugee women and access to justice in Tanzania*
- Dr. Melba Kapesa, Executive Director, Extractives Baraza (EB), Strathmore University, Kenya - *The Kenya Justice Project: Promoting Women's Access to Justice and Opportunities for Economic Development*
- Dr. Elizabeth Lwanda-Rutsate, Senior Lecturer, University of Zimbabwe - *Different women, different lived realities in a pluralist legal terrain: Interrogating women's multiple economic and social realities in accessing justice in the farming and mining sectors*
- Dr. Patience Sone, Senior Lecturer, University of Buea, Cameroon - *Legal Pluralism in Cameroon: Impact on Access to Justice*

- Maureen Kondowe, Legal Practitioner and Senior Partner, Konsewa Law Consulting, Malawi - *Lawyers and Legal Institutions: Notable Occasional Stumbling Blocks to Women's Right to Access Justice in Malawi with Devastating Consequences*
- Abigail Matsvai, Executive Director, Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association

As a way forward, the workshop underscored the need for,

- Building strong networks and coalitions on the continent to promote and protect women's rights;
- Enhance public awareness at all levels on matters women's rights with special mentions of increased use of ICT and social media to ensure wide reach;
- Multi-faceted approach and building synergies among various disciplines and stakeholders to advance women's rights;
- Benchmarking and sharing best practices across the continent;
- Defining, identifying and strengthening legal and judicial systems that effectively and adequately address women rights' issues as may be applicable from situation to situation and society to society provided that basic minimum standards that guarantee fairness and justice are adhered to and upheld by all.