

EASSI IS BEGINNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW STRATEGIC
PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 2009 -2013 WHOSE THEME IS:

WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

WHO WE ARE

INTRODUCTION

THE EASTERN AFRICAN SUB-REGIONAL SUPPORT INITIATIVE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (EASSI) IS A SUB-REGIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION MADE UP OF COMMITTED INDIVIDUALS, NGOs, COALITIONS AND NETWORKS DRIVEN TO TRANSFORM GENDER RELATIONS GLOBALLY AND ESPECIALLY IN THE EASTERN AFRICA SUB-REGION. THE MAIN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT THAT FRAMES THE WORK OF EASSI IS THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION (BPFA) RESULTING FROM THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN 1995. EASSI'S OBJECTIVES INCLUDE MONITORING PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PFAS IN THE EASTERN AFRICAN SUB-REGION AS A MEANS TO HOLDING GOVERNMENTS ACCOUNTABLE TO FULFILLING COMMITMENTS MADE IN BEIJING, PROMOTING NATIONAL AND REGIONAL INITIATIVES ADDRESSING WOMEN'S POVERTY, FOOD INSECURITY AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT, SUPPORTING AND PROMOTING MEASURES TO REALIZE A HIGHER LEVEL OF WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING WITHIN THE SUB-REGION AND PROMOTING WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO FOSTERING A CULTURE OF PEACE AND NON-VIOLENT MEANS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION.

MEASURING THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PFAS HAS BEEN A KEY PROGRAMME FOCUS OF EASSI SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 1996. OVER YEARS, EASSI HAS POSITIONED ITSELF TO PROVIDE CONCEPTUAL LEADERSHIP ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY ISSUES BY PROVIDING CASE STUDIES OF GOOD PRACTICE, IDENTIFYING AND FACILITATING ACTIONS AROUND CRITICAL ISSUES OF CONCERN TO WOMEN, ADVOCATING FOR POLICY REFORMS AND SHARING INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE TO EFFECT CHANGES IN WOMEN'S LIVES IN THE SUB-REGION. IN THE LAST TEN YEARS, EASSI HAS DEMONSTRATED GREATER ENGAGEMENT WITH GOVERNMENTS,

INTER-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, NGOs, AND THE WIDER CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE AREA OF POLICY ADVOCACY AMONG OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS.

CHALLENGES - PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PFAs HAVE BEEN VERY SLOW DUE TO A COMBINATION OF FACTORS, SUCH AS LACK OF SUFFICIENT FUNDS FOR GENDER SPECIFIC PROGRAMMES CHARACTERIZED BY LACK OF GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETS, INEFFECTIVE INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS, POOR PUBLIC SERVICE INFRASTRUCTURE, DISCRIMINATORY LAWS AND POLICY PRACTICES, ECONOMIC DECLINE, POLITICAL INSTABILITY, ARMED CONFLICTS, AND THE DEVASTATING IMPACT OF THE HIV/AIDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE SUB-REGION. IN ADDITION, VARIOUS REVIEWS OF THE EASSI STRATEGY IDENTIFIED THE PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AREAS THAT NEEDED STRENGTHENING. IDENTIFIED AREAS OF WEAKNESSES INCLUDED IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURES, MONITORING APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGY BESIDES CHALLENGES RELATED TO INSTITUTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND CAPACITY OF PARTNERS TO UTILIZE EASSI MONITORING TOOLS. IN THIS REGARD, A NUMBER OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS HAVE BEEN GIVEN.

MOVING TO A NEW STRATEGIC PLAN 2009 -2013

IN TERMS OF PROGRAMME DIRECTION, EASSI WILL REMAIN COMMITTED TO ITS PURPOSE AND WILL CREATE LINKAGES WITH OTHER FRAMEWORKS TO STRENGTHEN ITS FACILITATIVE ROLE IN PROMOTING NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PROCESS ON CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN TO FACILITATE MEANINGFUL CHANGES FOR WOMEN DURING THE PERIOD 2009–2013. THIS WILL BE PURSUED THROUGH THREE THEMATIC AREAS, NAMELY WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY, WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND SEXUAL RIGHTS AND WOMEN IN THE PEACE PROCESS. THE APPROACH EMPLOYED TO ACHIEVE THIS WOULD BE BASED ON POLICY RESEARCH, ANALYSIS AND DOCUMENTATION, POLICY ADVOCACY TO INFLUENCE IMPACTS, M&E, CAPACITY-BUILDING, COMMUNICATION, INFORMATION SHARING AND NETWORKING, STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND STRENGTHENED LINKAGES WITH NATIONAL AND REGIONAL BODIES SUCH AS THE EAC AND AU.

THIS *STRATEGY* WOULD REQUIRE STRONG ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES. TO ENTRENCH EASSI ENGAGEMENT WITH POLICY MAKERS AND SUB-REGIONAL INITIATIVES, THE ORGANIZATION WILL MAINTAIN ITS CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF 16 ORGANIZATIONS.¹ TOGETHER THESE PARTNERS:

1. SPEARHEAD ACTIVITIES AT NATIONAL AND GRASSROOTS LEVEL.
2. LINK EASSI AND OTHER PARTNERS AT NATIONAL AND GRASSROOTS LEVEL.
3. PROVIDE THE NECESSARY INFORMATION TO EASSI SECRETARIAT ON NATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES.

INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY, EASSI WILL STRENGTHEN ITS ORGANIZATION IN SEVERAL WAYS INCLUDING IMPROVING GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY, STRENGTHENING STAFF CAPACITY, STRENGTHENING MONITORING STRUCTURES AND METHODOLOGY TO OPTIMIZE IMPACT, STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATION AND NETWORKING FOR CHANGE, ENFORCING HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES AND IMPROVE RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND FUNDING. TO ADDRESS STAFF CAPACITY GAPS, EASSI WILL PROVIDE ESSENTIAL TRAININGS.

ALTHOUGH THE INADEQUACY OF RESOURCES AND INSUFFICIENT FUNDS TO SUPPORT PROGRAMMES, ALONG WITH THE CONTINUED RISE IN PRICES AND THEIR IMPACT ON OVERHEADS THREATENS EASSI OPERATIONS, THE SUCCESS OF EASSI MONITORING PROGRAMMES AND TACKLING SUB-REGIONAL ISSUES MAY LEAD TO INCREASED BILATERAL AND MULTI-LATERAL SUPPORT. AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL, EASSI WILL NEED TO BE STRONGER AND VISIBLE IN ITS GRASSROOTS WORK. DURING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN, EASSI WILL RECONSIDER ITS GOVERNANCE BOARD TO INCLUDE MEMBERS FROM DIFFERENT PROFESSIONS AND BACKGROUNDS. THE ORGANIZATION'S BOARD MANAGEMENT POLICY MANUAL WILL BE DEVELOPED TO STRENGTHEN THE

¹ These are networking women's organization s in EASSI's member countries in Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda

BOARD OPERATIONS. EASSI WILL RECONSIDER STAFFING STRUCTURE SO AS TO UTILIZE ALL ITS HUMAN RESOURCES OPTIMALLY.

OUR VISION WE ENVISION A SOCIETY WHERE ALL ENJOY GENDER EQUALITY, SOCIAL JUSTICE, PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

OUR MISSION OUR MISSION IS TO FACILITATE FOLLOW-UP OF THE BEIJING AND AFRICAN PLATFORMS FOR ACTION IN ORDER TO ENHANCE THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.

OUR OBJECTIVES

1. TO ADVOCATE FOR EFFECTIVE SUB-REGIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY
2. TO PROMOTE TRANSPARENCY IN THE BUDGETARY PROCESS WITH REGARDS TO RESOURCE MOBILIZATION, ALLOCATION AND UTILIZATION FOR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND SEXUAL RIGHTS SERVICES
3. TO INCREASE THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN CHALLENGING SYSTEMIC CAUSES OF CONFLICT AND PROVIDING ALTERNATIVE PARADIGMS TO PEACE BUILDING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION
4. **OUR GOALS** IN OUR WORK WE AIM FOR A SOCIETY WHERE;
5. WOMEN ENJOY EQUAL POLITICAL, CIVIL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL RIGHT INCLUDING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS WITH MEN;

6. WOMEN HAVE ACCESS TO POWER AND THERE IS EQUAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND MEN IN DECISION-MAKING;

7. GOVERNMENTS ARE ACCOUNTABLE AND PROMOTE, PROTECT AND RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL.

OUR UNIQUE IDENTITY LIES IN:

- OUR SUB-REGIONAL MEMBERSHIP AND NETWORKING NGO;
- MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN AND BEIJING PLATFORMS FOR ACTION WITHIN EASTERN AFRICA SUB-REGION;
- OUR AFRICAN FEMINIST ORIENTATION AND PERSPECTIVES
- BEING BETTER POSITIONED TO SPEAK ON THE PROGRESS BEING MADE IN PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY WITHIN EASTERN AFRICA USING THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PLATFORMS FOR ACTION;
- OUR DIVERSE MEMBERSHIP OF INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS WITH VARYING EXPERIENCES AND COMPETENCIES

OUR VALUES

- FAIRNESS, EQUITY AND JUSTICE – ENSURING THAT EVERYONE, REGARDLESS OF SEX, SEXUALITY, AGE, RACE, COLOR, CLASS AND RELIGION, HAS EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR EXPRESSION AND FOR UTILIZING THEIR POTENTIAL

- INTEGRITY; HONESTY, TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY – WE BELIEVE IN BEING ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR ACTIONS AND OPEN IN OUR JUDGMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS WITH OTHERS
- RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN: WE BELIEVE IN DELIBERATELY STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF NATIONAL AND REGIONAL INITIATIVES IN ORDER TO ENHANCE THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN TO MEET THEIR BASIC RIGHTS AND TO IMPROVE THEIR POSITION IN SOCIETY
- COLLECTIVE ACTION: WE BELIEVE IN WORKING TOGETHER AS A MOVEMENT AND WITHOUT FEAR OF FAILURE, IN PURSUIT OF THE POSSIBLE IMPACT ON THE CAUSES OF GENDER INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL INJUSTICES

OUR ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

OUR MEMBERSHIP IS DRAWN FROM THOSE WHO SUBSCRIBE TO OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES BASED ON FUNCTION, ACTION, TRACK, RECORD AND COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THIS IS OUR HIGHEST GOVERNING BODY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RATIFICATION OF MAJOR POLICY DECISIONS, PLANS AND BUDGETS. IT IS COMPRISED OF 26 MEMBERS MADE UP OF 16 ORGANIZATIONS AND 10 INDIVIDUALS. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETS EVERY TWO YEARS TO DELIBERATE ON PROGRESS AND CONDUCT ELECTIONS OF THE BOARD. EASSI'S ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS ARE NETWORKING ORGANIZATIONS IN THE MEMBER COUNTRIES.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OUR BOARD IS COMPRISED OF 12 MEMBERS ELECTED FROM THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WHO IS AN EX-OFFICIO MEMBER. THE BOARD ALSO HAS THREE SPECIALIZED COMMITTEES TO SUPPORT THE SECRETARIAT: FINANCE AND INVESTMENTS COMMITTEE, HUMAN RESOURCE COMMITTEE AND PROGRAMME COMMITTEE. THE COMMITTEES MEET AS WE AND WHEN THE NEED ARISES IT MEETS ONCE A YEAR TO RECEIVE, DISCUSS AND APPROVE THE ANNUAL PLAN, AUDITED ACCOUNTS AND ANNUAL REPORT

THE SECRETARIAT

OUR SECRETARIAT IS ESTABLISHED IN KAMPALA, UGANDA. THIS IS OUR COORDINATING UNIT, HEADED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WITH THE SUPPORT OF 8 STAFF. IT PROMOTES OUR MISSION AND VISION, OVERSEES THE DAILY OPERATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR PROGRAMMES. THE SECRETARIAT INTERPRETS AND SPEARHEADS IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN, PROVIDING THE LINK BETWEEN NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL PROCESSES. IN ADDITION THE SECRETARIAT SPEARHEADS AND COORDINATES RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING AND PROMOTES NETWORKING WITHIN THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN THE SUB-REGION.

SPECIFICALLY THE SECRETARIAT WILL:-

- INTERPRET AND SPEARHEAD IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN.
- PROVIDE A LINK BETWEEN NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL PROCESSES.

- SPEARHEAD AND COORDINATE RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING.
- PROMOTE NETWORKING WITHIN THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN THE REGION.