



THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
OF EASTERN AFRICA (CUEA)
"Consecrate them in the Truth"

Uphold the Law and Actualize the Two-Thirds Gender Principle

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Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA); International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), Kenya Chapter; and Mzalendo Trust partnered to hold a national dialogue on the two-thirds gender representation requirement in Kenya. The dialogue that took place at CUEA, Lang'ata Campus brought together participants from academia, religious organizations, political parties and civil society organizations to reflect on the gains made and challenges facing the two-thirds journey and emerging issues from the just concluded party primaries.

Speakers at the meeting decried the lack of political good will in the realization of the two-thirds, noting that the recent party primaries and the subsequent court ruling suspending the requirement to ensure party lists comply with the principle was a setback to the constitutional ideal on equality. "Our Constitution in recognizing that we had a system of governance that did not serve a majority of people has put in place principles that ensure that everyone is brought on board. One of those principles is that you cannot have more than two-thirds of the same gender in any elective or appointive public body," said Daisy Amdany, the Executive Director of CRAWN Trust during a panel discussion moderated by Caroline Gaita, Executive Director of Mzalendo Trust.

It was further noted that despite attempts by institutions such as the Judiciary and Parliament through dissolution advisories and legislative motions, respectively, little progress has been made to meet the two-third gender requirement. Women remain disadvantaged in the political arena as it has been evidenced in the recent party primaries where a number of party tickets were issued through negotiated democracy at their expense.

"I think that we must not blame ourselves because it's not about us. This is an act of impunity, it's an act of lawlessness on the part of our leaders. The Constitution is the Supreme Law of the Land," Ms. Amdany added.

During the plenary session, Dr. Juliet Kimemia, a gubernatorial aspirant in Kiambu county, mentioned that despite having a KANU nomination certificate, she is being subjected to a second nomination with the coalition partner, the incumbent governor. She reiterated that the zoning approach to the party nominations was encouraging exclusionary politics that could lower the chances of women occupying more elective and nominative seats in the next government.

Cultural and traditional practices were also identified as factors that have led to the economic exclusion of women in Kenya. This coupled with the high cost of politics limit the participation and representation of women in the political sphere. The question on the role of political parties in financially supporting women arose owing to the expectation that 30 (per cent) of the funds political parties receive from the

exchequer ought to go towards activities that encourage the participation of special interest groups, including women.

Challenges notwithstanding, organizations such as Mzalendo Trust, FIDA, Crawn Trust and CREAM have been supporting women aspirants through trainings on fundraising, media engagement, campaigning and mobilizing to help amplify their voices. FIDA-Kenya's board member, Shiro Mogeni stated that the federation has created an academy that has trained 350 women aspirants so far, one of them being Dr. Kimemia.

At the tail-end of the dialogue, participants noted the need for continuous sensitization on the gender rule and onboarding men as champions for the equal representation and participation of women in politics. "There's also an agreement on the need for a multi-sectoral approach with religious institutions, academia, women rights organizations and media to advance the women-agenda." Ms. Gaita concluded.

Ms. Njeri Kang'ethe, Acting Dean at the CUEA School of Law emphasized on the need for continuous support for women even after successfully getting elected and holding them accountable during their tenure.

In her closing remarks, Ms. Mumbi Muthangani applauded the CUEA students for their participation and urged them to be more involved in the governance discourse and help shape the country's leadership agenda.

One of the resolutions from the meeting was the creation of a database of all women aspirants and attendant partners supporting them during and post election. Political parties and party leaders were also called upon to create an enabling environment for women aspirants during the electioneering period.

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About FIDA Kenya

FIDA-Kenya is a non-governmental, non-partisan, non-profit making and a membership organization with over 1,500 women lawyers and law students established in 1985 with a mission to promote women's individual and collective rights in all spheres of life and promote a society that upholds and respects the rights of women.

<https://www.fidakenya.org/>

About Mzalendo Trust

[Mzalendo](#) ('Patriot' in Swahili) Trust is a Kenyan non-partisan Parliamentary Monitoring Organization started in 2005 and whose mission is to promote '*open, inclusive, and accountable parliaments in Kenya and Africa.*' We do so by creating and managing civic tech tools, producing evidence-based research, and leading and facilitating advocacy and partnerships with Parliaments, citizens, and other relevant stakeholders. We believe that success in our work will build more effective and responsive legislation and political processes that ultimately support Kenya's national development goals.

<https://mzalendo.com/>

About CUEA

CUEA is a regional Christian institution of higher learning whose mission is to promote excellence in research, teaching and community service by preparing morally upright leaders in line with the intellectual tradition of the Catholic Church, as predicated upon the philosophy of Catholic Higher Education which stresses a free search for the whole truth about nature, humanity, and God. CUEA promotes exploration of every academic discipline, inspired by Him who is The Way, the Truth, and the Life (Jn 14:6), in the belief and conviction that the Spirit of the Lord enables human beings – through the development of their intelligence and talent – to find meaning in life. In this order of things social justice including but not limited to gender equity, equality and inclusion are core to the mission of CUEA.

<https://www.cuea.edu/>