

# **THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT (NAWEE)**

## **Concept Note**

### **Background and Context**

Women's empowerment movements and feminist mobilization are central to fostering women's Economic empowerment. Women's economic empowerment is increasingly gaining traction as an important instrument in the promotion of their capacity to achieve their rights and welfare while reducing poverty at household level and increasing overall economic growth (Golla et al, 2011).

Women's movements play a critical role in advancing women focused policies for meaningful gender justice. Their ideas serve central benchmarks for evaluating the net effect of government initiatives aimed at increased inclusion of women, promotion of their women's rights, while challenging gender inequalities (Mazur, Hoard, & McBride, 2012). Women's movements provide platforms for raising public consciousness about issues of gender bias, and pushing for policy changes. Evidence from different parts of the world suggests a positive correlation between women's economic empowerment, women's rights and societal well-being. For example, women's access to and control of resources significantly impacts the health and Education of children with better economic prospects for the future generations (World Bank Poverty and Gender Group Report, 2012).

The global women's movement has made tremendous effort towards ensuring gender equality and women's economic empowerment. The recent years have seen notable progress in women's representation in leadership and management ; investment decisions, equal pay for work of equal value, with increased support for women-owned and women led business enterprises .This is keeping with the sustainable Development Goal 5 which calls for achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, while targeting to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls, and eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls.

While Kenya has made notable progress in the policy and legislative frameworks for women's economic empowerment, implementation and enforcement remains slow with women on the shorter end of the stick in social, economic and political spheres. The 2020 Global Gender Gap analysis at the World Economic Forum ranked Kenya at 109 out of 153 countries, while the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Gender Inequality Index (GII) ranked Kenya at 137 out of 189 countries. The World Economic Forum (2021) identifies global gender disparities in four key dimensions: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment with Economic Participation and Opportunity index ranking second-largest of the four key gaps. According to this year's index results 58% of this gap has been closed so far. There has been marginal improvement towards closing the gap and it is estimated that it will take another 267.6 years for women to achieve equal economic participation and opportunity with their male counterparts.

The comprehensive poverty report by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics<sup>1</sup> (2020) indicate that women continue to experience higher proportion ( 65%) of multidimensional poverty and

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.genderinkenya.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/CPR-Report-10\\_08\\_2020.pdf](https://www.genderinkenya.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/CPR-Report-10_08_2020.pdf)

compared to men (56), and are averagely more (4.5) deprived than men (4.3). In another joint report on financial access by the Central bank of Kenya and the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics<sup>2</sup>(2021), women lag behind in formal access at about 82% compared to men at 86%, with more women (7%) than men (4%) informally accessing finance. Such statistical findings represent an array of challenges while presenting opportunities for collectively harnessing women's economic empowerment.

Kenya has put in place affirmative action strategies and programmes targeting women and youth in order to enhance efforts towards their economic empowerment. The WEE HUB is currently conducting research on the National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF) Uwezo Fund, Women Enterprise Fund (WEF), Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF), Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) and other programmes aimed at empowering women. The Credit Guarantee Scheme is one such programme that promises 30% to women entrepreneurs. However, women are still disproportionately represented in all key sectors of the economy and women entrepreneurs are unable to tap into the existing opportunities due to various challenges attributed to their historical marginalization, traditional roles, lack of skills and inability to meet the set conditions. The 2019 survey of the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) indicates gross underrepresentation of women in wage employment (37%), information and communication (36%), financial and insurance activities (39%), real estate (23%), manufacturing (20%), administration and support services (10%), and professional scientific and technical activities (29%). However, in the same report women are the majority in vulnerable employment (68% compared to 39% of men) and in sectors of traditional gendered roles such as health and social work activities (58%), and activities of households as employers or domestic work services (61%). This calls for investing in women's economic empowerment as a pathway towards gender equality, eradicating poverty and inclusivity in economic growth. Besides, there is increasing need for self-mobilization and collective effort for learning and sharing of strategies that work for women's economic empowerment.

The WEE-HUB is currently conducting research on strategies that work for women's self-mobilization for WEE.

The National Alliance for Women's Economic Empowerment Platform (NAWEEP) is a platform that seeks to galvanize the creation of networks of women entrepreneurs, women's organizations and women's advocate leaders working in the WEE sector to support the implementation of policy reforms to improve women's access to economic opportunities across various sectors in Kenya.

### **Objective**

The Alliance will contribute to promoting mutual support and accountability towards ensuring that women entrepreneurs tap into the available opportunities within the local and international markets.

### **Specifically, the objectives are:**

The objectives of the platform include:

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<sup>2</sup> <https://finaccess.knbs.or.ke/access>

- i. To promote a shared understanding of issues affecting women's economic empowerment while leveraging on the strategies that work for the full realization of women's economic rights.
- ii. To strengthen synergies among policies and programmes that promote women's economic empowerment.
- iii. To enhance women's entrepreneurs' access to available opportunities within the affirmative action funds and programmes (WEF, YEDF, UWEZO, NGAAF , AGPO& CGS) , local and international markets.
- iv. To galvanize the creation of networks of women's organizations, women entrepreneurs, state departments, private sector in order to promote women's economic empowerment.
- v. To enhance the growth of Women's enterprises

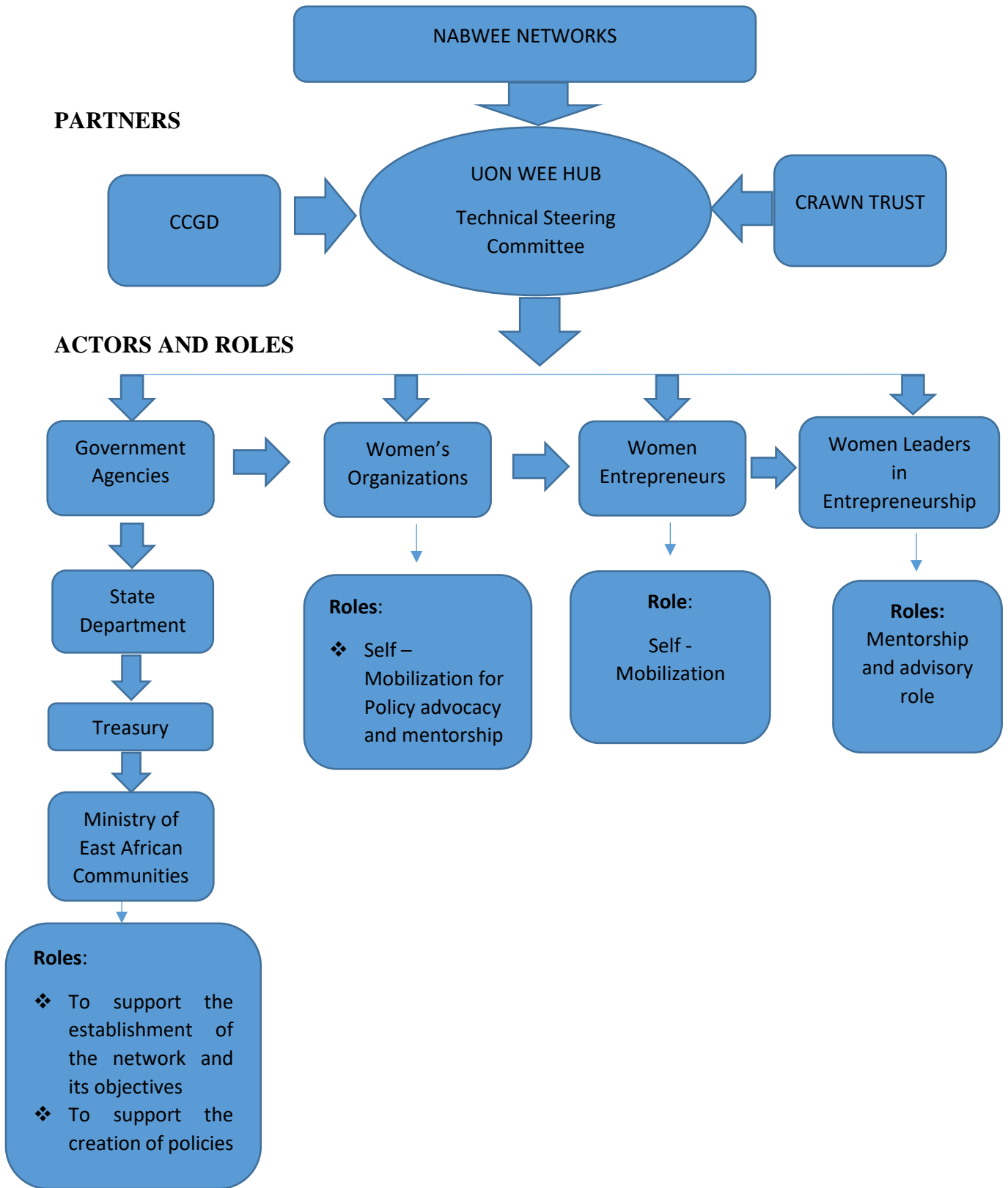
### **The strategy**

The platform is expected to bring together women from the various Counties and national level in order to share lessons and strategies that work, reflect on persistent challenges and inform future policy and practice in Women's Economic empowerment.

### **The specific strategies include:**

- i. Raise awareness among public and private financial institutions on persisting barriers to women's economic empowerment based on research findings of the Hub and other research.
- ii. Sharing best practices in policies, programs and legislation that promote WEE and enhanced uptake of the legal and policy instruments that can address existing barriers to women's economic empowerment.
- iii. Provide platforms for sharing experiences and strategies that work for women's economic empowerment.
- iv. Influence identified policies and programs (AGPO, AAF, CGS ) for greater access to resources for women's economic empowerment( WEE).
- v. Policy advocacy on legal and policy instruments and enhanced national commitment towards women's economic empowerment.
- vi. Document the experiences of women and their capacity to mobilize access to their social rights.
- vii. Document the successes of women in influencing policies, programmes and legislation that promote WEE.
- viii. Mobilize women for public participation in Women Economic Empowerment policies and budget processes.
- ix. Provide opportunity for exchange and learning among government, civil society, and other stakeholders for innovative ways of harnessing Women's Economic Empowerment.
- x. Promote linkages and mentorship among women's enterprises.
- xi. Work with state actors and other partners to generate research evidence for WEE.
- xii. Support the growth of women's enterprises
- xiii. Use existing networks of influencers to promote WEE
- xiv. Working with women legislators at county and national levels to promote WEE policies and programmes
- xv. Recognize women leaders in WEE

## The Organization Structure



## Timing

The initial phase of the platform is expected to last three years beginning January,2022 and end in December, 2024.

### **Proposed Process**

- i.) Initial consultation with an interim technical committee that represent partnership among the UoN -WEE HUB, CRAWN TRUST and CCGD. To this end, there will be a meeting in the last week of January2022.
- ii.) a consultative meeting of relevant Networks of women entrepreneurs and other stakeholders in early February
- iii.) Development of a structure for implementation of the project and workplan
- iv.) Development of the broad work plan by 1<sup>st</sup> week of March
- v.) Launch of the Alliance by the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of March
- vi.) Implementation of the activities begin by 3<sup>rd</sup> week of March