This is the Highlight of the first day of 14th Gender Festival being held at TGNP Grounds, Mabibo Dar es salaam from 24th – 27th September 2019. The Festival was officiated by the Prominent Gender Activist Hon. Dr. Getrude Mongella. Present was also Hon. Dr Faustine Ndugulile Deputy Minister for Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly, and Children, former Tanzania Prime Minster Judge Joseph Sinde Warioba, Former Speaker of the National Assembly Hon. Anne Makinda, Swedish Ambassador to Tanzania HE. Anders Sjöberg among other dignitaries. The event brought together more than 1000 participants including grassroot, national and international gender activists from Tanzania and beyond, CSOs, government officials, development partners among others.
The government is planning to review Women and Gender policy, to empower more women in advancing their progress and growth.

Speaking at the 14th Gender Festival organized by TGNP Mtandao in Dar es Salaam yesterday, Deputy Minister for Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly, and Children Dr Faustine Ndugulile said that in 2017, over 41,000 incidents of gender-based violence were reported countrywide.

He insisted that equal chances to women can also reduce such kind of gender violence in society.

"Women and girls should not undergo gender-based violence. They deserve greater access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making power, in order to sustainably reduce extreme poverty, build healthy communities, and promote inclusive growth" he said.

He added that the establishment of gender desks, One Stop Centre which handles Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Violence Against Children (VAC) has attracted praises as effective strategies to check aggression in the society.

We need to put more efforts which focus on strengthening women- and youth-friendly policies at the national level, he said, to increase women’s equality and youth inclusion, and also ensure that Tanzanian women and youth are healthier and more productive.

According to Dr. Ndugulile, Tanzania has made notable progress on gender equality and women’s empowerment. The Vision 2025 for Tanzania Mainland stipulates equality between men and women as laid down in the Constitution and recognizes gender equality and the empowerment of women in all socio-economic and political relations.

According to Dr Ndugulile, Tanzania’s Five-Year Development Plan emphasizes women’s economic empowerment as a means of bringing about equality in economic empowerment.

"Our Ministry is charged with coordinating and providing guidance for mainstreaming gender in all development processes. This is supported by the Women and Gender Development Policy and Strategy and an Implementation Plan on Gender” said Dr Ndugulile.
Gender activist groups have been advised to translate into Kiswahili the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, to enable more people understand it.

The Kiswahili version can also serve the neighbouring countries which have started the initiative to adopt that language after the recent SADC meeting held in Dar es Salaam recently.

Speaking at the 14th Gender Festival organized by TGNP Mtandao in Dar es Salaam yesterday, Tanzanian educator, politician, diplomat, and activist who headed the 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing said that declaration is resourceful for gender equality.

"The Beijing Declaration and Platform is the most progressive blueprint ever for advancing women’s rights. Let it be accessible in Kiswahili for our people who understand this language" she said.

As Tanzania struggles to embrace industrial economy, said Ambassador Mongella, more youths should understand the theme of this year’s gender festival "Gender activists on the way to change the world" and put it into practice.

She urged women to prepare their election manifesto in advance for the coming local elections slated for November this year, so that they can be implemented after the polls.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform which is an agenda for women’s empowerment is aimed at removing all the obstacles to women’s active participation in all spheres of public and private life.

This is done through ensuring women a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making.

The principle of shared power and responsibility should be established between women and men at home, in the workplace, and in the wider national and international communities.

The Declaration and Platform for Action affirm that equality between women and men is a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice.

Speaking at the same event, former Prime Minister Judge Joseph Warioba said the power of women should be manifested in their unity and solidarity.

He urged gender activists to work together as a team and avoid issues that set them apart like tribal, religious or political affiliations.
During the 14th Gender Festival, as TGNP celebrates 25th Anniversary, more than 30 individual activists and institutions were recognized for their efforts towards attainment of gender equality and women rights.

On the list include prominent politicians including former President of Tanzania HE. Benjamin Mkapa, Former Prime Minister and Retired Judge Hon. Joseph Sinde Warioba among others. Others included renowned gender activists who “demonstrated exceptional and consistent commitment and efforts towards attainment of women rights and gender equality” in Tanzania.

Other category included the donors that supported TGNP in the early years as well as donors who have walked with TGNP for a long time in the transformative feminist movement. Another was category of district and municipal councils that allocated resources in their 2019/20 annual budgets to cater for concerns of women, girls and other marginalized groups following capacity building on gender responsive budgeting by TGNP.

“Their contributions have played a catalyst role in the transformative feminist movement”, Says Lilian Liundi, TGNP Executive Director.
The Voices

“We must come up with a mandate of key women agenda and drive that forward ahead of the 2020 election and leaders must understand that they will be held accountable for them.”

Hon. Ambassador Dr. Getrude Mongella, Prominent Gender Activist

“...as a nation, we must reach a point where we must look at how we can attain 50/50 representation through main systems particularly election”

Hon. Jacob Joseph Mkapa Mwalimu, former Prime Minister of United Republic of Tanzania and Chair of Ombudsman Constitutional Review Commission

“We women know the community better so we must be bold enough to vie for different positions”

Hon. Ame Matimela, Former Speaker of the National Assembly, United Republic of Tanzania

“We have achieved a lot in our feminist movement in the 25 years but as we move forward one thing that we need more than ever is solidarity”.

Ameena Hashim, Award Winner - TNP Women

“To be truly transformative, we must all ensure that our investment in gender policy prioritize the most excluded marginalized and unheard”

Ameen Corrigan, A Representative of Embassy of Ireland, Tanzania

“At the end of the Gender Festival we will come up with joint gender strategies on how to collectively move forward”

Lillian Llundi, Executive Director TNP Manjia
Some of the participants of Gender Festival celebrating during the 1st day of the fourdays event.