



1. Why Solidarity with FAWE and the Conference on Girls' Education in Africa important for Plan International? By Samuel Musyoki Country Director Plan International Zambia

The FAWE campaign theme song, **“Send Your Girl Child to School”**, by Suzanne Gachukia **23 year ago (1994) has remained with me. The message remains as relevant today as it was in 1992 when FAWE was born.** The picture of, Wacheke, a young girl who is kept busy doing all sorts of domestic chores as the brothers go to school is so vivid in my mind. **The girl’s message to mama and Daddy is, “please let me go to school like my brothers. I can be a doctor, a teacher, a farmer anything I want to”.**

As some of you already know, in Plan International **WE STRIVE FOR A JUST WORLD THAT ADVANCES CHILDREN’S RIGHTS AND EQUALITY FOR GIRLS.** This conference on **GIRLS EDUCATION IN AFRICA resonates** very well very with Plan’s global strategy, **100 MILLION REASONS:** Together with FAWE and other partners represented here we see the opportunity to take action so that 100 million girls **Learn, Lead, Decide and Thrive.** In partnering with FAWE in the 24 countries where Plan International works in Africa we easily reach millions of Girls. In Zambia our target is reaching 2 million glrls.

The work of FAWE and the theme of this conference complements the first pillar of our strategic ambition, namely, **LEARN**. Together we want to see girls not only being enrolled into primary school, but also completing and transitioning into high school, university and other tertiary institutions to learn and acquire knowledge and skills that will enable them actualize their full potential. We aspire for a world that truly values girls and places opportunities at their disposal to improve and transform their lives and have greater influence in their society. Being in solidarity with FAWE we see a great opportunity to promote access to quality education for all children, as well as gender equality in education.

FAWE's advocacy work in Africa also complements Plan International's 'Because I Am a Girl (BIAAG)' Movement whose vision is to build a global social movement that transforms power relations so that girls everywhere **LEARN, LEAD, DECIDE and THRIVE**. Plan is pursuing this at the regional level through our 18+ program on Ending Child, Early, and Forced Marriage, Champions of Change work with Girls and Boys and Girls Economic Empowerment Program. In Zambia (Eastern, Central and Luapula) we are partnering with FAWEZA on three projects: the Good School Social Accountability, Keeping Girls in Schools and Building Economic Resilience. All three projects address the systemic causes of gender inequality in education.

2. Our Partnership with FAWE at Pan Africa Level

Plan International has been and will continue partnering with FAWE at Pan-African level to:

- Strengthen the capacity of girls and young women in Africa and their civil society organizations to understand and use regional monitoring and accountability mechanisms and influence regional policy-making and monitoring on GBV and economic exclusion of girls and young women;
- Enhance the voice of girls and young women in regional and sub-regional political and policy dialogue spaces, and ultimately lead and shape the agenda on issues that affect their lives.
- Undertake evidence-based advocacy with regional and sub- regional bodies to operationalize existing legal frameworks to address gender-based violence and related matters affecting girls and young women.

3. Our Solidarity call for action

Our work has made it clear to us that there is an urgent need for governments in Africa to boost investment in post-primary education, so as to allow more children, especially girls, to complete secondary schooling.

- If the world is to reach the Global Goal on ensuring inclusive and quality education for all by 2030, funding for education in 136 low and middle income countries must rise from \$1.2 trillion today to \$3 trillion in 2030.

- At the domestic level, governments of low and middle-income countries must boost spending on education to reach up to 6% of their GDP allocated to education, and 20% of total government expenditure to education, in line with the Education 2030 Incheon Declaration.
- Provide access to safe, quality, inclusive education for children especially girls, in conflict and emergency settings
- Ensure gender-responsive education sector planning and budgeting that allows for gender disaggregated data
- Investment in education should aim to achieve equality in access and quality of education, in line with human rights standards which require governments to adopt and resource specific strategies and specialized interventions to ensure that the hardest to reach especially girls have the same access and opportunities.