

# 7 WOMEN DELIVER 2023 CONFERENCE

Spaces, Solidarity, and Solutions

KIGALI, RWANDA 17- 20 JULY 2023

ILITHA LABANTU PARALLEL SIDE EVENT

# REPORT





## BACKGROUND

2023 Women Deliver Conference (WD2023) took place in-person in Kigali, Rwanda, as well as virtually, from 17-20 July 2023. As one of the largest multi-sectoral convenings to advance gender equality, according to WD2023 was attended by more than 6,300+ feminists representing 170 countries, 240+ journalists and content creators, 600 scholarship recipients and 87+ sponsors and funders, and over 10,000 people who joined the conference online. According to the conference organisers, WD2023 created a vibrant environment for solidarity and collective action. It also enabled inclusive spaces that fostered solidarity for sustainable solutions on gender equality.

They further quoted, "The Conference reminded us of our common goals, reinforced our collective power, and ultimately strengthened our movement going forward to create a healthier and equitable world for all"

## PURPOSE OF THE CONFERENCE

Women Deliver convenings catalyse conversations with stakeholders from around the world, break barriers, address challenges, and identify opportunities to advance gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and improve the wellbeing of girls and women, in all their intersecting identities.

## WD2023'S OBJECTIVES:

- Catalyse Collective Action to Advance Gender Equality
- Hold Leaders Accountable
- Empower the Feminist Movement
- Reframe Who Leads
- Create Space



## PROGRAMME

The organisers reported that the program was designed in partnership with hundreds of organizations spanning diverse sectors and areas of expertise with input from thousands of individuals during the Global Community Consultation. These expertise included stakeholders from various sectors including grassroots advocates, civil society, governments, the private sector, multilateral organizations, philanthropies, and youth.

The Conference was officially opened by the President of the Republic of Rwanda, HE Paul Kagame. The Kigali Convention Centre was packed to capacity as delegates, speakers and everyone who was involved celebrated this turn point event. It was the first time the Women Deliver was held in Africa. Our own, HE Dr Pumzile Ngcuka, former UN Women Executive Director also delivered a robust and thought provoking address.

**The in person programme was three pronged:**

### 1. PLENARY

The Women Deliver Plenary Stage brought together the most powerful voices of the feminist community in all its diversity. They share a stage to inspire, drive dialogue, and mobilize the collective into action to achieve true equality, rights and dignity, for girls and women everywhere. Plenary speakers included prominent, fiercest and influential individuals of the feminist community. It also attracted activists active on the ground. Delegates engaged in inspiring speeches, thought-provoking dialogues, and an unwavering commitment to girls' and women's health and rights.

### 2. CONCURRENT SESSIONS AND WORKSHOPS

These sessions were moderated discussions and interactive workshops that provided a space for participants to delve into key issues, gain knowledge from expert speakers, and learn and enhance their advocacy skills.

Ilitha Labantu in partnership with African Women Independent Forum (AWIF), hosted the session, "Women and ICT to end violence against women and girls" With a panel comprising:

**Moderator: Inimfon Efuk: Founder of Her Forum, Africa.**

**Speakers:**

- Jacqueline Utamuriza- Nzisabira: African Regional Advisor on HIV and Gender: UN Women
- Gracious Lekgoathi: Social Impact Digital Content Creator
- Tumie Komanyane: Lead Programmes, Frontline AIDS
- Nontsikelelo Sigeege: Clinical Manager, Ilitha Labantu



Figure 1: Panel on "Women and ICT to end violence against women and girls"

The session addressed access to the internet and the pros and cons of this. It was highlighted that as much as the internet has become an integral part of our lives, and provided opportunities for communication, education and connection. It also opened a whole dark world of cyberbullying, revenge porn, online grooming and other forms harassment and exploitation.

**It was noted that key strategies to curb this violence was through:**

- Tightening on Education and Digital Literacy.
- Building Digital Resilience.
- Multilingual Resources.
- Encouraging Reporting.
- Collaborations and partnerships.
- Strengthening online safety Policies.
- Engaging communities



Figure 2: Call for Digital Literacy & Education

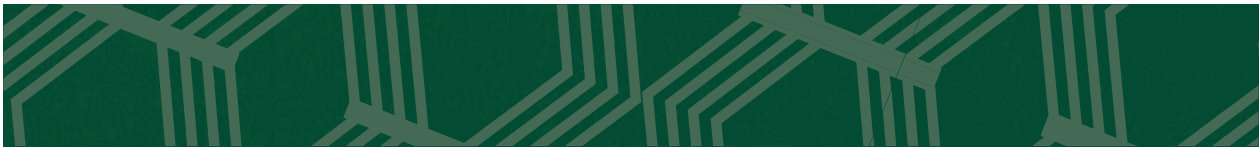
### 3. PRE- CONFERENCES

The Pre-Conferences provided delegates with opportunities to exchange best practices and coordinate on shared priorities. The focus was on a wide range of topics, including climate action, maternal health, bodily autonomy, adolescents, youth, and more.

Other events included:

- Culture night
- Youth Zone
- Well-being space
- Arts and film festival
- Solidarity space
- Partner side events





**Figure 3:** Meet Up on Prevent Online GBV, the Hut Restaurant & Boutique Hotel, Kigali



**Figure 4:** Concurrent session: African Feminist Perspectives on Wellbeing: Cultural Meanings, Identities & Innovations

The Ilitha Labantu delegate also attended Meet Up event on “Prevent Online GBV” AND “African Feminist Perspectives on Well-being: Cultural meanings, Identities and Innovations”

## HIGHLIGHTS AND OUTCOMES (WD23)

According to the Women Deliver report the conference achieved the following:

- A new commitment to working with others to more effectively counter the anti-rights movement with a focus on the most neglected sexual and reproductive health areas.
- A campaign launched by over 40 organizations to close the gender nutrition gap, alongside a co-created Action Agenda, that calls for transformative actions from governments to improve women’s and girls’ nutrition.
- The RESPECT Women website, an online platform that aims to drive concrete actions to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls, launched by The World Health Organization (WHO), together with UN Women, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- Canada announced more than \$200 million in funding as part of Canada’s SheSOARS initiative, funded as part of the 10-Year Commitment to Global Health and Rights. Some of the money will be allocated towards the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage and the Girls Not Brides project.
- The Kigali Call to Action: United for Women and Girls’ Bodily Autonomy announced by UNFPA to accelerate investments and actions, with women-led organizations and the feminist movement at the center.
- A new Women Deliver Emerging Leaders Program that will put more trust-based funding into the hands of young people and ensure that they have the knowledge, resources, supportive ecosystem, and leadership opportunities to achieve their gender equality and sexual health and reproductive advocacy goals.

The highlight for Ilitha Labantu was being part of a global initiative solely focussed on address gender equality, participating in an event where Rwanda, Africa was selected amongst many deserving countries and meeting and engaging people and many activists from different countries with one common goal of advancing gender equality, gender parity and sexual and reproductive health and rights, and improve the wellbeing of girls and women, in all their intersecting identities.



# ILITHA LABANTU

PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT PEOPLE

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