



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya to the United Nations

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STATEMENT

BY

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TO

THE

61ST SESSION
OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW)

WEDNESDAY, 15TH MARCH, 2017
UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK

**Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

Chair, I wish to congratulate you on your leadership in steering this sixty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Kenya aligns itself to the statement delivered by Ecuador on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, as well as the statement read by Nigeria on behalf of the Africa Group.

Chairperson,

We reaffirm our commitment to; the realization of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, global human rights frameworks, and international policy frameworks such as Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals as foundations for gender equality and women empowerment.

The priority theme of this session: **"Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of Work"** comes at a time of increasing awareness of the unique strength of women, who play multiple and varied roles in their daily lives; from championing the care economy through raising their families, to contributing to economic activities in the Society.

Eliminating persistent gender gaps and ensuring equal economic outcomes for all is essential.

Chairperson,

In this context, allow me to give highlights on the strides Kenya has made:

- **On legislation**-Kenya has ratified and domesticated relevant international policy and legal instruments including, Beijing Platform for Action, Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and ILO Conventions. Kenya has a progressive Constitution with a strong Bill of Rights.
- **To address a dominant informal sector**, which account for 80% of labour force, of whom over 52% are women and 66% are women engaged as unpaid family workers, the Government has provided social protection instruments including; Minimum wage, legal protection for maternity leave, provision of Early Childhood Education, social pension (NSSF), and scale up of cash transfers to vulnerable adults.
- **On technology**, Kenya hosts the largest ICT sector in Africa. Mobile phone subscription has increased to **37.8Million**, a coverage of 82.1% of the total population.
- Revolutionary mobile payment systems have; eased cost of money transfer, increased access to banking services, and created employment. Currently 30% of women have access to banking services.
- **On financial inclusion**: programmes on affirmative action enable women access; credit, immovable assets and productive resources. Affirmative action funds have reached an estimated **3 Million beneficiaries**.

- Additionally, **USD \$ 40 Million** has been accessed by women and other special groups through '*Access to Government Procurement Opportunities*' Policy.
- **On leadership and decision making:** Kenya has a Constitution which among other provisions guarantees a one third (1/3) representation of either gender in all elective and appointed positions.
- **On Education;** Compulsory and free primary education, subsidized secondary education, and affirmative action to increase girls' enrolment in tertiary education. Two (2) out of three (3) women aged between 25 and 35 years have completed at least secondary education.
- **On health:** Increased public financing to an annual direct investment of **USD \$60 Million** to address financial barriers to women's access to health care. Further, **USD \$43 Million** is dedicated to free maternity and other reproductive health services.

Chairperson,

However, gender gaps still exist.

In tertiary education: dropout rates remain high due to; higher cost of education, early family formation and regressive social and cultural practices. Government has revamped the technical and vocational training policy and instituted education curriculum review.

Gender Based-Violence and other harmful social and cultural practices still persist. One out of every three women has experienced violence before attaining the age of eighteen.

The Government of Kenya has in place a National policy for Prevention and Response to Gender Based Violence focusing on; Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, Programming and Partnerships.

Chairperson,

Kenya is committed to join hands with the global community to accelerate progress on gender equality and women empowerment.

We look forward to a productive Sixty-first CSW Session.

Thank You!