



MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE
AND GENDER

STATE DEPARTMENT FOR
GENDER

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

REMARKS BY PROF. MARGARET KOBIA, PHD, MGH, CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND GENDER, DURING THE VIRTUAL LAUNCH OF THE NATIONAL POLICY ON GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT, THE NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE ERADICATION OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION, GENDER MAINSTREAMING POLICY IN TOURISM, THE WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT STRATEGY AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE MOBILE APPLICATION, TO BE HELD ON 23RD MARCH 2021

My Fellow Cabinet Secretaries present,

Chief Administrative Secretaries present,

Principal Secretaries present,

Ms. Anna Mutavati, Country Representative, UN Women,

Dr. Olajide Ademola, UNFPA Country Representative,

Ms. Faiza Jama Mohamed, Director, Equality Now

Ms. Teresa Mugadza, Country Manager, IDLO

Ms. Jaki Mbogo, Chief of Party, Tetrattech International

Florence Syevuo, Country Coordinator, SDG-Kenya Forum,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today marks an extraordinary day for this great country, as we celebrate a major milestone, the launch of Sessional Paper No. 02 of 2019 on the National Policy on Gender and Development,

Sessional Paper No. 03 of 2019 on the National Policy on Eradication of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), the Gender Mainstreaming Policy in Tourism and the Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) Strategy. Let me take this earliest opportunity to welcome you all to this exemplary launch and thank you all, our dear stakeholders and partners for your unrelenting and unwavering support, as exemplified in your participation today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. As we join the rest of the world in commemorating the Sixty-fifth session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW65), we celebrate these ground-breaking achievements, as part of the localised national activities. We all appreciate that, CSW65 event is happening in the context of these unprecedented times, where COVID-19 is threatening to claw back the gains made in the gender equality and women empowerment arena.
2. We all know that, Kenya has made commendable progress towards achieving gender equality and women empowerment. The enabling subsidiary legislation and institutional architecture for the realisation of the promotion of women's rights and the affirmative action measures, are firmly anchored on the various international and regional commitments and treaties, that Kenya is signatory to. These

obligations are instrumental in tracking and monitoring changes in women's empowerment at both the national and county levels. One key requirement is the development of national policies, that provide guidance, consistency, accountability, efficiency and clarity on achieving gender equality and women empowerment.

3. The conducive environment provided by the Constitution, has enabled the development and implementation of policies and legislative frameworks, and other programmatic interventions. The national set of values and principles are geared towards enhancing equality and inclusivity, while outlawing discriminatory practices and actions. The development of these very important documents GBV Mobile Application therefore, presents major milestones in the country's progress towards inclusivity and sustainable development, for achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women, men, boys and girls.
4. Notably though, despite the innumerable interventions geared towards achieving gender equality and empowerment of women, Kenya still lags behind many countries, even within the Sub-Saharan Africa region. The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report (GGGR), 2020, ranks Kenya at position 109 out of the 153 countries, scoring an index of 0.671. The formulation and development of these

comprehensive national policies, therefore, forms the basis for operationalizing effective implementation of the international commitments and the stipulated provisions of the Constitution.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. Sessional Paper No. 02 on the National Policy on Gender and Development (NPGAD) provides the overarching national principles. The Policy aims to ***"achieve gender equality and women's empowerment in national development so as to enhance participation of women and men, boys and girls, vulnerable and marginalized groups for the attainment of sustainable development"***.
6. The Policy will therefore ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment is integrated into sectoral policies, planning and programmes. Key thematic areas identified for implementation include: labour and employment; education; health; land; housing; agriculture; environment and natural resources; peace and security; governance; power and decision making; information and communications technologies; respect for the human rights; Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV); the girl child and the boy child; intersectional discrimination; media; and, access to justice.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. In order to accelerate the realization of the Presidential directive, to eradicate the retrogressive practice of FGM by 2022, we are also launching Sessional Paper No. 03 on the National Policy for the Eradication of FGM. The Policy aims at creating a society that is free from harmful cultural practices by identifying key issues and proposes high impact strategies to address FGM in key sectors such as: health; education; security; access to justice; and, public information, while emphasizing participation as a human rights approach to empowering girls and women.
8. Hence, extensive consultative approaches, involving a wide range of stakeholders, including: Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs); Parliament (both National Assembly and Senate); Faith Based Organizations; Civil Society Organizations; the private sector; academia; among other stakeholders, most of whom are here today, were involved in developing the policy documents. The policies also set legislative and administrative measures to address the existing gaps in the realization of gender equality and women's empowerment.
9. Alongside the two Sessional Papers, we are also launching the Gender Mainstreaming Policy in Tourism which provides a comprehensive framework of the principles and strategies to be pursued in-order to achieve gender equality and equity

in the workplace in this very important development sector. The policy also identifies specific measures that the Department will be undertaking to redress identified gender inequities and inequalities. Equality of employment opportunities in this sector will contribute significantly to: improved livelihoods, good governance and effective leadership.

10. Notably too, throughout the Sustainable Development Goals, the international community has a broad shared understanding that secure, sustainable and inclusive economic growth, cannot happen without the full participation of women and men. This necessitated the development of the Women Economic Empowerment Strategy (WEE). The strategy provides guidance and strategic direction for transforming women economically while eliminating the limiting gender barriers. Full economic participation in the economy will allow women's equal access to key resources and services including; capital, credit, land, production inputs and knowledge on financial management and formal banking.

11. We all know that, women's economic empowerment is central to realizing women's rights and gender equality. This includes: women's ability to participate equally in existing markets; access to and control over productive resources;

access to decent work; control over own time, lives and bodies; and, increased voice, agency and meaningful participation in economic decision-making at all levels from the household to international institutions. Empowering women in the economy closes gender gaps in the world of work. When more women work, there is: increased productivity, economic diversification and income equality; and, economies grow, in addition to other positive development outcomes.

12. The Ministry will host the Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) digital mobile application platform, dubbed, ***'Komesha Dhuluma'***. The App will bring together key elements associated with SGBV, to improve access to service delivery. The mobile application, with a speed dial to the nearest police station and health facility to the user's location, has an intermittent internet connectivity (an offline capability) to ensure that users navigate it without active internet connection. The main objective of the app is to provide an emergency toolkit that gives users first-hand information on procedures to take when they are faced by such situations including referral pathways.

13. The Policy and Strategy documents and the Mobile App we are launching today, are well aligned to the national development agenda, the long-term development plan

outlined in the Vision 2030 and its third Medium Term Plan (MTP III) and the county's "Big Four" agenda priorities.

Ladies and gentlemen,

14. In the spirit of the global call of *'leaving no one behind'*, we have embarked on extensive processes of widely disseminating the Policy and Strategy documents to all the sectors and counties, developing action plans for effective implementation and monitoring and evaluation frameworks for tracking progress of implementation. For women and girls, this means monitoring their health and educational outcomes; their representation in positions of power; their economic positions; their vulnerability to violence, discrimination and social exclusion, among other key parameters.
15. I strongly believe that it is possible to make significant advances towards achieving gender equality and women empowerment within a relatively short period of time. However, this requires concerted efforts, a paradigm shift towards a transformation from the deeply rooted systems, including economic and political systems, governance structures, decision making systems, and business models that tend to disempower some population groups.
16. As the National Women's Machinery, mandated with the coordination of gender, we pledge our total commitment

towards implementation of these key guidelines. We call upon all the stakeholders and actors in the gender sector, and at all levels, not to tire. I urge all of us to work towards cementing our commitments by enhancing our synergies to ensure that our goal of achieving gender equality and women empowerment, is realized to the highest levels.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

17. I am fully aware of the major challenges that you had to weather along the way, but, allow me at this point, to greatly commend our faithful and always very supportive partners, for your relentless efforts into the development, and now, the much awaited launch of these products. Special thanks go to the UN Women, United Nation Population Fund (UNFPA), Tetrattech International and the International Law and Development Organization (IDLO), for providing technical and financial support.

18. My special appreciation also goes to the MDAs at both national and county levels, Parliament, Constitutional Commissions and Independent Offices, Faith Based Organisations (FBOs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), the private sector, academia and all the other partners, for their invaluable input.

19. I cannot end this session without expressing my sincere gratitude to the various technical committees and staff of

the Ministry and Department, for their individual and collective dedicated efforts in ensuring that, these products were prepared and finalized.

I CONGRATULATE YOU ALL!!!

IT IS NOW MY HUMBLE PLEASURE TO OFFICIALLY LAUNCH THE FOLLOWING:

- 1. Sessional Paper No.02 on the National Policy on Gender and Development;**
- 2. Sessional Paper N0. 03 on the National Policy on the Eradication of Female Genital Mutilation;**
- 3. Gender Mainstreaming Policy in Tourism;**
- 4. The Women Economic Empowerment Strategy;
and,**
- 5. Gender Based Violence Mobile Application.**

THANK YOU ALL!!!