



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE
AND GENDER

STATE DEPARTMENT FOR
GENDER

TALKING NOTES FOR PROF. COLLETTE A. SUDA, PhD, FKNAS, CBS, PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, STATE DEPARTMENT FOR GENDER, DURING THE VIRTUAL NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS MEETING ON CSW 65 HELD ON THURSDAY, 18TH MARCH, 2021

1.0 Introduction:

- I wish to take this opportunity to welcome you to this virtual forum today on Kenya's participation in the 65th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women.
- To the representatives from parliament, Council of Governors, Constitutional Commissions, County First Ladies, County Assembly Forum, Civil Society Organizations, private sector, UN agencies and other development partners thank you for joining us.
- As you are aware, every year, we convene this meeting in preparation for Kenya's participation in the annual session of the Commission on the Status of Women that takes place in New York.
- This time we are holding this meeting slightly late given that the CSW began on 15th of March, and for the second year running, Kenya like other countries across the globe did not travel to New York, due to travel restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID 19.
- That notwithstanding, as a country we need to ensure that in fulfillment of the Government obligations on Gender, Kenya has to engage in the process as required even under challenging circumstances.

2.0 What is the CSW?

- I am aware that there are some amongst us who are interacting with this subject of the CSW for the first time and it also does no harm to reflect on the subject.
- Allow me therefore to touch briefly on the background of the Commission on the Status of Women.

- The CSW is a functional Commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It has been in existence since 1947 as the global policy making body dedicated exclusively to gender equality and advancement of women.
- Since inception, the Commission has been instrumental in setting global standards and formulating conventions, change discriminatory legislation and create greater global awareness on gender issues.
- Examples of major conventions drafted by the Commission include:
 - **1953 Convention on the Political Rights of Women**
 - **1957 Convention on the Nationality of Married Women**, and
 - **1962 Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages.**
 - The Commission also contributed to the work of UN offices, such as the International Labour Organization's 1951 Convention on Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value, which enshrined the **principle of equal pay for equal work.**
 - The commission is also credited for drafting the legally binding **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)** that consolidates standards on women's rights.
 - The Commission has also convened World Conferences on Women which brought forth land mark documents that have largely contributed to the advancement of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls.
- During the Commission's annual two-week session, representatives of UN Member States, civil society organizations and UN entities gather at UN headquarters in New York;
- Delegates discuss progress and gaps in the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action which is the key global policy document on gender equality, as well as emerging issues that affect gender equality and the empowerment of women.

3.0 The 65th Session of the CSW

- The 65th Session takes place from 15th – 26th March, 2021. Due to the COVID 19, we are localizing the event under the banner "**Bringing CSW Home**" and information pertaining to our engagement will be shared at this meeting.
- The priority theme of the 65th Session is: **Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.** The review theme is : **Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development** (agreed conclusions of the sixtieth session).

4.0 Kenya's Participation

The State Department for Gender is coordinating Kenya's participation through a multi-sectorial Committee and technical support by UN Women and a number of tasks accomplished in this regard:

- The Country Position Paper on the priority and review themes
- Country Statement for the Head of Government Delegation that was delivered yesterday in pre-recorded format
- Drafting of statements/points of intervention for roundtable meetings and interactive dialogues
- Developing a calendar of activities on localization of the CSW 65 for the 10 days of the Session.
- Contributing to the Draft Agreed Conclusions of the 65th CSW (The outcome document)
- Taking part in the Africa Regional Consultations on the Pre-65 CSW and contributing to the outcome document (African position).

It is worth noting that all these items will be discussed in our meeting today and your feedback will be important.

You will therefore have the opportunity to interact with the country position paper and give your input for ownership and also get to understand how you will engage in the various events lined up this year.

5.0 Conclusion

- Participating as a country is important because we get to share our achievements, experiences, best practices and learn lessons in the process.
- Active participation includes influencing the outcome document of the 65th Session and I want to thank the Kenya Mission – New York for ensuring that some of our priorities have been considered in the document.

Once again Ladies and gentlemen, let me thank you for creating time to engage in today's discussions on the 65th Session of the CSW.

We look forward to fruitful and informative discussion that will greatly benefit our country as we continue to undertake measures to advance gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in all their diversity.