

**SPEECH BY HON. SAFINA KWEKWE TSUNGU, PRINCIPAL SECRETARY FOR GENDER AFFAIRS DURING THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE GBV HOTLINE 1195 IN MANDERA COUNTY ON THURSDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2018**

**Governor Mandera County, Capt. Ali Ibrahim Roba**

**Women County Representative, Amina G. Hassan**

**Area MP**

**Mandera County Commissioner**

**All protocols observed**

**Ladies and gentlemen:**

It gives me great pleasure to be with you here to officially launch the national GBV hotline 1195 in Mandera County. This is a county that is among the leading counties in under reporting cases of Gender Based Violence (GBV) due to lack of knowledge of the existence of this hotline.

The 1195 GBV hotline is Kenya's National Gender Violence Toll Free Hotline that is hosted by the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs through the State Department of Gender Affairs and is manned on a 24 hour basis by the Healthcare Assistance Kenya (HAK).

I am very happy that Mandera County will be one of the Counties in which survivors of GBV will have an avenue of reporting the incidences as and when they occur so that through the helpline they can be assisted to get the help they need within the shortest time possible notwithstanding the distance. It is unfortunate that in the last five years (2013-2017) only 46 cases of GBV have been reported to HAK from this county.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

Gender based violence remains one of the most pervasive forms of human rights violations. It occurs across all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and in many societies across the world. Some of you may have already experienced it or will in future. Gender Based has serious and far reaching negative effects including physical injuries sometimes resulting into death or disfigurement, psychological trauma, infection with sexually transmitted infections, unwanted

pregnancies, social stigmatization and exclusion, and economic deprivation amongst others.

Kenya has witnessed an increase in gender related violence especially against women and girls with the most common forms of violence being brutal rape or defilement of minors, early marriages, physically assault and Female Genital Mutilation. Most of the violence is meted to the survivors by people known to them and it is unfortunate that in many of the cases, they are actually family members who mete out the violence; it could be a father, mother, sibling, an uncle or a cousin.

National data reveals high GBV prevalence in Kenya with variations cutting across typologies and geographical locations. Results from Kenya Demographic and Health survey (KDHS 2008/2009) reveal that about 39% of married, divorced or separated women aged between 15-49 are reported to have suffered some form of violence during their lifetime. Many of the factors contributing to GBV include poverty, illiteracy, breakdown of the family unit and support systems, insecurity, alcohol and substance abuse, uncensored media content. Political instability, conflict as well poor enforcement of laws and policies have also contributed to GBV.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

The Government is committed to the elimination of all forms of Gender Based Violence (GBV) and to the effective provision of quality and accessible services to all survivors. The government has therefore launched a four year joint GOK-UN programme to fight GBV in all its forms. This is a campaign hinged on the five pillars of Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, Programming and Partnerships.

The government intends to put in place measures to prevent GBV with the objective of its total elimination. In this regard the government intends to fast track the implementation of laws and policies through meaningful programmes aimed at addressing the root cause in GBV.

The Ministry of Public Service, youth and gender Affairs, through the State Department of Gender Affairs, intends to rehabilitate and equip GBV recovery centers in area considered to be hot spots across the country. So far we have operationalized the Kilifi GBV Recovery Center at Kilifi County Referral Hospital. Work on other similar centers is in progress and we will notify the public when they are completed.

In a bid to improve the reporting of GBV cases across the country, the ministry has partnered with Healthcare Assistance Kenya (HAK) , a national humanitarian NGO that supports survivors of Sexual and GBV to operate the only sexual and GBV rapid response system and hotline 1195 in the country and help GBV survivors to access rapid assistance. HAK partners with Nairobi Women Hospital and other GBV recovery centers, Communication Authority of Kenya, Legal Aid and Mobile service provider Safaricom to run the 24 hour toll free helpline. I wish to urge you to share the hotline widely as it is manned around the clock.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I wish to call for closer collaboration between the County of Mandera, the office of the Women Representative and the State Department for Gender Affairs to establish Gender recovery Centers and Safe Houses for the survivors of GBV.

I also call for a coordinated approach with all stakeholders involved in the campaigns against GBV to be networked so that the fight to eliminate Gender based violence in the County may be realized. My office is open for discussions on how best we can achieve this.

With these few remarks, I now wish to officially launch the HAK 1195 toll free hotline in Mandera County.

**THANK YOU**