



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya to the United Nations

866 U.N. Plaza, Rm 304 New York NY 10117

STATEMENT

BY

HON. ESTHER MURGEI MATHEMBO, FORMER
MINISTER FOR WOMEN, CHILDREN AND
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
AND HEAD OF KENYA DELEGATION

TO

THE

54TH SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW)

TUESDAY, MARCH 2, 2010
UN HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK

Please check against delivery



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MINISTER FOR GENDER, CHILDREN AND
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
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Chairperson,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to take this opportunity to personally thank you for electing me as Chairperson of the 54th Session of the Commission and Statute of Women. My delegation wishes to convey your appreciation in your able leadership during this Session.

My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of G 77 and China and the African Group.

Chairperson,

Since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) and the Millennium Development Goals, Kenya has remained steadfast in its pursuit of these commitments. The key policy document that has been instrumental in this process is Kenya's 2008 development blueprint for the country. In addition, Kenya has developed a new 2010 Constitution whose provisions have been hailed as gender-equal and fair.

Chairperson,

Since the last review in 2005, the Government of Kenya has made significant efforts in accelerating the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

1. Women, the Economy and Poverty

In Kenya, absolute poverty has declined over the years, but gender inequalities remain high at 47.3%. The Government has addressed these through the establishment of the Women's Enterprise Fund in 2007, the Social Protection Fund was set up in 2009 targeting women and women in ultra poor households and the Youth Enterprise Fund which targets youth between 18 – 35 years.

Chairperson,

2. Education, Training and the Child

In 2007, the Government of Kenya developed a Gender Equality Education Plan to ensure the implementation of gender equality measures within the

education sector. Free primary education has significantly boosted the enrollment of girls at the primary school level where gender parity has been achieved. Additionally, removal of tuition fees at secondary school level has made education affordable. As a result, the transition rate from primary to secondary school enrollment rose from 21.7% in 2005 to 50% in 2008/09. The proportion of female students in private accredited universities rose from 51.0% in 2006/07 to 53.7% compared to 43.7% in 2006/7.

3. Women and Health

Due to interventions in the health sector, life expectancy increased from 50.4% in 2005 to 57.6% in 2008. This is attributed by skilled personnel slightly improved from 40% in 2003 to 43% in 2008.

Through the National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan II and III, of 2005 -2013, the government aims to scale up maternal and child health services in the country and ensure that 50% of the beneficiaries are women.

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Chairperson,

4. Violence Against Women and Human Rights

The government has rerafted and refined gender responsive laws, namely: Family Protection Bill of 2009, Marriage Bill of 2009, and the Maternity Protection Bill of 2009.

The Government of Kenya has also developed a National Framework Towards Response and Prevention of Gender-Based Violence. This and other measures have contributed to the reduction of Gender-Based Violence cases by 11.1% between 2005 and 2009. The national prevalence of Genital Mutilation prevalence has declined from 32.5% in 2003 to 27.1% in 2008/9. A Gender Violence Recovery Centre has been established and a Gender-Based Violence Information System put in place.

The Employment and Labour Relations Act, 2007 has ensured that sexual harassment is prohibited with no tolerance with the law.

Additionally, all labour laws have been reviewed and brought into

conformity with International Labour Organizations Conventions and Recommendations. The Employment Act, 2007, has guaranteed women three months maternity leave with full pay. A new Parental Leave for two weeks.

Chairperson,

5. Armed Forces

In conformity with resolution 1325/2000, the Government has ensured the involvement of women in various peace committees and forums. It has also ensured that women form an integral part of peacekeeping Missions. Currently, the United Nations Mission in Liberia has three women appointed in leadership positions.

6. Women in Power and Decision Making

Women ministers increased from 3 in 2003 to 6 and a further increase in 2009. In addition, 6 women MPs headed parliamentary committees. Further, the Kenya National Assembly has a woman MP as a member of the speaker's honoree committee. The speaker's honoree committee is entitled to exercise full powers conferred on the chairperson of committees including powers to depose, speak.

The number of Kenyan women ambassadors and high commissioners increased from 3% in 2005 to 21% in 2009.

In October 2006, a Presidential Directive was issued on the implementation of 30% affirmative action for women in appointments, recruitments and promotion throughout public service.

Chairperson,

7. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

The institutional mechanisms for advancing women have been enhanced through the appointment of Gender Officers at senior management in all government ministries and state corporations. Gender mainstreaming has also been introduced in the procurement contracts of all Chief Executive Officers of the government of Kenya.

The National Commission on Gender and Development has since been strengthened through increased budgetary allocations and recruitment of professionals.

Women and the Media

The media industry in Kenya has grown tremendously and currently there are 900 community radio stations employing a large number of women.

Women and Environment

The Government has introduced quotas for women in the water management boards and increased the budget for water and sanitation.

Chairperson,

Before I conclude, allow me to share my government views on some of the issues we would address during this session of the CSW. We wish to propose that the CSW dates be changed so that future sessions are held after International Women's Day. This will allow delegates to celebrate this day in their respective countries and give it the significance and visibility it deserves.

Chairperson, we further urge member states to swiftly conclude negotiations on the establishment of the new Gender Entity and ensure it is fully funded.

Chairperson...

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm my government's commitment to the goals of the Beijing Platform for Action. In this regard, we would like to appreciate the support and partnership of UNITEFM, UNIFRA, UNICEF and UN Women in providing their assistance to realize these goals.

Thank you.