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Leader of Delegation  
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THE PARLIAMENT OF KENYA

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

THE 12<sup>TH</sup> PARLIAMENT- SECOND SESSION

# Report on the 62nd Session of the Commission on Status of Women (CSW62)

Held in

New York

12 -23 March, 2018



May 2018

The Clerk's Chambers  
The National Assembly

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS.....	2
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<u>FOREWARD</u> .....	3
Objectives of the CSW62 .....	3
The Country Position on CSW62 .....	4
Specific CSW62 Side Events .....	4
Participation in the CSW62 .....	4
The Outcome of CSW62 .....	5
The National Assembly delegation to CSW62.....	5

<u>CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND</u> .....	6
1.0 Establishment .....	7
1.1 Annual Sessions .....	7
1.2 Methods of Work.....	8

<u>CHAPTER 3: THE 62<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW62) PROCEEDINGS</u> .....	9
3.0 Introduction .....	9
3.1 Opening session.....	9
3.2 Daily Briefing.....	14
3.3 Kenya's position paper and Country's Statement	14
3.4 General Assembly/High level Sessions.....	15
3.5 Specific Side events.....	15
3.6 Other side events .....	15
3.6.1 Women, migration and refugee crisis.....	15
3.6.2 Civil Society Legislative Advocacy (CISLAC)	16
3.6.3 Women and Media .....	18
3.6.4 Under the spotlight: ending violence against all women and girls	19
3.6.5 Harnessing efforts in addressing gender based violence in the changing world of work.....	20
3.6.6 Rural women and girls economic empowerment- best practices from Liberia .....	22
3.6.7 Lessons for implementing gender statistics in the Philippines and Uganda...	22
3.6.8 A climate justice dialogue: enabling grassroots and indigenous women's participation in gender responsive climate action.....	24
3.6.9 Climate change adaptation strategies to build the capacity of and economically empower women farmers .....	24
3.6.10 Confronting barriers to rural women's economic, social and cultural rights..	25
3.6.11 Widowhood: Economic Empowerment, poverty eradication and achieving the SDGs.....	26

<u>CHAPTER 4: THE OUTCOME OF THE 62<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON STATUS OF WOMEN(CSW62)</u> .....	29
4.1 The agreed Conclusions by Member States.....	29

4.2	Joint Communique by Kenya delegation.....	29
	ANNEX I: THE AGREED RESOLUTIONS.....	45
	ANNEX II: JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF THE CSW 62 <sup>ND</sup> SESSION.....	46

## ACRONYMS

CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
CPP	Country Position Paper
CS	Cabinet Secretary
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
ECM	Early child marriage
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EPZ	Economic Processing Zones
GBV	Gender Based Violence
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture Development
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
ILO	International Labor organization
MPSYGA	Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
SGBV	Sexual Gender based violence
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VAWG	Violence against women and girls
WAMM	Women Affairs Ministerial Meeting
WEF	Women Enterprise Fund
YEDF	Youth Enterprise Development Fund

## FOREWARD

Between 12<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2018, it was my pleasure to attend together with five other Senators the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women(CSW62) which took place in the United Nations Headquarters, New York City, United States of America.

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The CSW is instrumental in promoting women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The Commission holds annual two-week session, where representatives of UN Member States, civil society organizations and United Nation(UN) entities gather at UN headquarters in New York to discuss progress and gaps in the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the key global policy document on gender equality, and the 23rd special session of the General Assembly held in 2000 (Beijing+5), as well as emerging issues that affect gender equality and the empowerment of women. Member States agree on further actions to accelerate progress and promote women's enjoyment of their rights in political, economic and social fields. The outcomes and recommendations of each session are forwarded to ECOSOC for follow-up.

UN Women supports all aspects of the Commission's work. The entity also facilitates the participation of civil society representatives.

### **Objectives of the CSW62**

This Session was the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission (CSW62) and took place between 12 and 23 March 2018 with a **priority theme** which was "*Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls,*" and a **review theme**" which was "*Participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communications technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women (agreed conclusions of the forty-seventh session(CSW47))*". Specifically CSW also provides a platform to share experiences and learn good practices in areas relating to the priority and review themes. Parliamentarians were also expected to discuss the policy and legislative gaps related to the themes and fast-track identified legislative proposals in these sectors.

## **The Country Position on CSW62**

Kenya prepared a country position paper to articulate the country's position in the priority theme. The position paper was peer-reviewed and adopted during a half-day National Stakeholder Pre-CSW meeting for the Kenya Government Delegation organized by the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs held on 6 March 2018 at Hilton Hotel, Nairobi. In addition to adopting the position paper the delegates also agreed on a shared plan for participating in the CSW62. The delegates were further apprised of important specific side events which the delegation participated as follows-

### **Specific CSW62 Side Events**

Kenya planned and hosted a side event on 'Women *as Governance actors*', where the Cabinet Secretary for Public Service Youth and Gender Affairs, Prof. Margaret Kobia, gave a key note address. Other speakers in the side event included Governors, Ann Waiguru, Joyce Laboso and Paul Chepkwony. Kenya also co-hosted a joint side event together with Guinea, Togo, FAO Africa and UN Women on '*Reducing the burden of women in agriculture and food processing*'. In addition the Kenya members of parliament attended and participated among other sessions a full day Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU) meeting organized for all members of parliament who were attending the CSW62. This meeting took place on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2018. The meeting's main focus was the role parliaments could play to deliver for rural women and girls. IPU further organized two other side events.

### **Participation in the CSW62**

During the Meeting the Kenyan delegation held daily briefing sessions at the Kenyan Mission to the United Nations offices to share lessons learnt and plan for the day's activities and events. These sessions provided an important platform to coordinate and guide the delegation for optimal participation in the CSW62 sessions. The Kenyan delegates actively participated in the proceedings of the main sessions (Priority and Review theme sessions) and the numerous side events where they contributed both at the plenary discussions and at the question and answer discussions. It was a fulfilling experience for the members of the delegation to participate in the sixty-second session of the CSW.

## **The Outcome of CSW62**

The 62nd Session of the CSW adopted Agreed Resolutions on the priority theme “Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls’. The complete agreed resolution of the session with recommendations for action is incorporated in this report. The Kenya delegation also agreed on a multi-agency joint communique spelling out the plan of action and specific targets. This communique is also part of the report. In addition, the National Assembly delegation has agreed on important recommendation that emerged from the various activities related to the CSW62 that the delegation attended and participated. We therefore invite the National Assembly to consider our recommendation/ lessons learnt.

## **The National Assembly delegation to CSW62**

The National Assembly delegation to the CSW62 consisted of the following-

1. Hon Purity Wangui Ngirici- **Leader of Delegation**
2. Hon. Naomi Shaban
3. Hon. Faith Wairimu Gitau
4. Hon. Gladys Boss Shollei
5. Hon. Naisula Lesuuda
6. Hon. Maison Leshoomo
7. Hon. Alice Muthoni Wahome
8. Hon. Cecily Mutitu Mbarire
9. Hon. Joyce Chepkoech Korir
10. Hon. Mishi Juma Hamisi
11. Hon. Jeremiah Kioni
12. Hon. Gladys Atieno Nyasuna
13. Hon. Janet Teiyaa
14. Hon. Rozaah Buyu
15. Ms. Florence Abonyo, Director, Committee Services
16. Ms. Dorothy Ann Wanjiru- Parliamentary officer
17. Ms. Marlene Ayiro Legal Counsel- Legal Counsel and Secretary to the Delegation

## **Mr. Speaker sir,**

The delegation is most grateful to the Office of the Speaker and the Clerk of the National Assembly for the necessary support and arrangements made to facilitate the delegation to travel and participate in the CSW62. I can confirm to you that the National Assembly was adequately represented.

Finally, I thank my fellow delegates for their active participation and their dedication to our program throughout the proceedings of the Session despite the not so favourable weather conditions.

I now present with great honour and pleasure this Report and request the House to consider and adopt it.

**Thank you.**

**Hon. Purity Wangui Ngirici, Leader of Delegation**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_



## CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND

### 1.0 Establishment

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. A functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) it was established by Council resolution 11(II) of 21 June 1946. The ECOSOC has 45 members elected for four years, on the basis of equitable geographical distribution and four members of the Bureau who are elected for two years. The Bureau facilitates the planning and preparation, and is tasked to ensure the successful outcome of the annual sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women.

The CSW is instrumental in promoting women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

In 1996, ECOSOC in resolution 1996/6 expanded the Commission's mandate and decided that it should take a leading role in monitoring and reviewing progress and problems in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and in mainstreaming a gender perspective in UN activities. Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, the Commission now also contributes to the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development so as to accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women (ECOSOC resolution 2015/6).

### 1.1 Annual Sessions

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. They discuss progress and gaps in the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the key global policy document on gender equality, and the 23rd special session of the General Assembly held in 2000 (Beijing+5), as well as emerging issues that affect gender equality and the empowerment of women. Member States agree on further actions to accelerate progress and promote women's enjoyment of their rights in political, economic and social fields. The outcomes and recommendations of each session are forwarded to ECOSOC for follow-up.

UN Women supports all aspects of the Commission's work. The Entity also facilitates the participation of civil society representatives.

## **1.2 Methods of Work**

The Commission adopts multi-year work programmes to appraise progress and make further recommendations to accelerate the implementation of the Platform for Action. These recommendations take the form of negotiated agreed conclusions on a priority theme. Under its current methods of work, established by ECOSOC resolution 2015/6, at each session the Commission-

- (1) Holds a ministerial segment to reaffirm and strengthen political commitment to the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as well as their human rights and to ensure high-level engagement and the visibility of the deliberations of the Commission;
- (2) Engages in general discussion on the status of gender equality, identifying goals attained, achievements made and efforts under way to close gaps and meet challenges in relation to the priority theme and the review theme;
- (3) Considers one priority theme, based on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly and possible linkages to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- (4) Evaluates progress in implementing agreed conclusions from previous sessions as a review theme;
- (5) Addresses emerging issues, trends, focus areas and new approaches to questions affecting the situation of women, that require timely consideration;
- (6) Plays a catalytic role for gender mainstreaming in the United Nations system and contributes gender perspectives to the work of other intergovernmental processes and functional commissions;
- (7) Considers in closed meeting the report of its Working Group on Communications;
- (8) Agrees on further actions for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women by adopting agreed conclusions and resolutions.

## CHAPTER 3: THE 62<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW62) PROCEEDINGS

### 3.0 Introduction

The sixty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 62) took place in New York during the period of 12-23 March 2018. According to UN Women, over 4,300 women and men from 170 countries participated in the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of CSW. A mix of events and broad range of topics were discussed during the two weeks session. As the norm in these CSW Sessions, there were two themes. The priority theme of the 62<sup>nd</sup> session was '*Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls*'. The delegates discussed various topical issues under the priority theme. The review theme was '*Participation in, and access of women to, the media, and information and communications technologies, and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women*'. This review theme was from the 47th session of the CSW. The method of work of the commission allows every session to explore a new theme, but also keep track of and assess the progress being made in one of the priority themes in the previous sessions.

### 3.1 Opening session

#### **Remarks by Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres**

The Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres delivered the opening remarks of the session. He welcomed all participants to CSW and called it the most dynamic intergovernmental bodies, at such a pivotal moment for the rights of women and girls. He said across the world, women are telling their stories and provoking important and necessary conversations – in villages and cities; in boardrooms and bedrooms; in the streets and in the corridors of power. He cited the examples of Latin America, France, India, the Middle East, China and here in the United States where the voices of from “MeToo to “Time’s Up” to “The Time is now”. He pointed out that women and girls were calling out abusive behavior and discriminatory attitudes and identified the central question the movement faced being the question of power, alluding to the fact that Power is normally never given and that it normally needs to be taken. He decried of male-dominated world and the empowerment of women and girls being the common central objective of organizations like CSW.

He reminded the delegates that Centuries of patriarchy and discrimination have left a

damaging legacy. Sexist attitudes and stereotypes are widespread in governments, the private sector, academia, the arts, science and technology, and even in civil society and international organizations like the United Nations. He took cognizance of the fact that women were pioneering scientists and mathematicians – but they occupied less than 30 per cent of research and development jobs worldwide. They are accomplished artists, writers, musicians and film-makers. Despite this, in 2018 33 men took home Academy Awards, and only 6 women. Women are gifted negotiators and communicators – but at the United Nations, the proportion of women hovered around 20 percent. He challenged the leaders to reverse such statistics to truly usher in a new era for women and girls. A girl born into poverty has a far higher chance of dropping out of school, marrying early, suffering complications during childbirth, experiencing violence, and passing this legacy on to her children.

The theme of your gathering this year highlights rural women: a group that is particularly marginalized and may lack access to health care, education and technology. But rural women are often the backbone of their families and communities, managing land and resources. They may be experts on climate resilience and on Sustainable Development. The Commission on the Status of Women is leading the way. Preventing and ending violence against women and girls, and lifting up marginalized women, indigenous women, women in rural communities, and women refugees and migrants, will lift everyone and ensure that no one is left behind. And this is essential to fulfilling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – our global pledge to eradicate poverty and to create a safer, more sustainable world on a healthy planet.

The United Nations has a responsibility to lead from the front and to set an example for the world. He stated that since his appointment as Secretary General he has made concerted effort to set change in motion. The United Nations has reached gender parity in the Senior Management Group for the first time. As of March 2018, 23 women and 21 men were the top leadership of the United Nations organization. The roadmap envisages gender parity at senior levels of the UN leadership by 2021 in all categories, and ultimately in 2028 across the board. Women now fill one-third of positions as heads and deputy heads of peace-keeping mission the highest proportions.

The UN was completely committed to zero tolerance of sexual harassment and has set out plans to improve reporting and accountability as well as work with governments and civil society to prevent and address these crimes and to support survivors, but change must go beyond strategies and statistics. He affirmed his commitment to transforming the culture of the United Nations, to create an enabling environment for all. He added that discrimination

against women damages communities, organizations, companies, economies and societies. This he said was the greatest human rights challenge of our time and the very reasons why all men should support women's rights and gender equality.

He affirmed that the work of this Commission was vital to end the stereotypes and discrimination that limit women's and girls' opportunities. From schools to offices, lecture halls and laboratories, in movies, advertising and the media, we need to make it clear: Women's abilities are limitless. Women's ambitions are infinite. He urged everyone to continue to raise their voices for women's equality, dignity and human rights.

### **Remarks by UN Under- Secretary General and Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcukas**

The Executive Director welcomed everyone to the sixty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

She started her remarks by stating that the 62<sup>nd</sup> session focus on the women and girls who live in rural area has to be one of the most important areas the delegates have ever focused on because of its importance to the ambition of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The session speaks to our commitment to fight some of the biggest challenges of our time: poverty, inequality, intersectionality and an end to violence and discrimination against women and girls, no matter *where* they live, or *how* they live, so that we '*leave no one behind*'.

The Executive Director informed the delegates that worldwide, almost one-third of employed women work in agriculture. There are 400 million women who are farm workers. They mainly work as smallholder farmers and agricultural and informal workers with little or no social protection, and almost no visibility. She noted that the world eats every day because they toil. Across the world, millions of women and girls in rural areas provide unpaid care in their homes, nurturing their families, but losing opportunities for their own growth. She affirmed that the Commission hopes to change this state of affairs.

She further stated that their recent, flagship research on SDG implementation, and the report prepared for the session, both showed how women in rural areas were lagging behind on every gender and development indicator for which data was available. While women in many regions constitute up to 60 per cent of the agricultural workforce globally, only 13 per cent of women own the land they worked, with power imbalances that deprive them of control over

their income, over their lives and over their bodies and in nearly two-thirds of countries, even as food growers, women are more likely than men to report food insecurity and hunger. Only 20 per cent of women in rural areas have access to clean drinking water, against 68 per cent of their urban counterparts. Half of all rural poor women in developing countries have no basic literacy, and 15 million girls of primary-school age will never, never get the chance to learn to read or write in primary school.

She continued to state that a rural girl is twice as likely to be married as a child compared to her urban counterpart. Without adequate education and knowledge, her authority and ability to control her life and escape from violence are critically diminished. Above all, it is the women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination who bear the brunt of prejudice and exclusion.

The monitoring report on the implementation of the SDGs has underlined the visible danger that progress is slowing and even reversing some of the gains that was made. It follows the World Economic Forum's 'Global Gender Gap Report' for 2017, which reported that the parity gap across health, education, politics and the workplace has widened for the first time since records began in 2006. It predicts that it would take 17 years before we achieve gender parity.

The executive Director expressed the urgency to hold each other and leaders accountable for the promises to accelerate progress and the delegates should use this year's session of the Commission, as a forum as the most timely opportunity to secure and accelerate much-needed progress, build consensus and share the best practices that allow the Commission to serve the poorest of the poor, with urgency and maximum accountability to those who need it most.

Calling this moment as the tipping point, she reiterated that it was time to take action that responds to the size of the problems faced by women who live in rural areas. Women are fighting to take steps that change their lives, and they are refusing to accept the practices that have normalized gender inequality, sexual misconduct, exclusion, and discrimination across all walks of life.

All over the world, we are witnessing an unprecedented hunger for change in women's lives, and a growing recognition that when women band together they can bring about far reaching changes.

They believe ‘the Time is Now’ for change, and accountability to end impunity. Women also have been able to demonstrate that the actions they take together are able to impact the actions that others will take. She called on the delegates to find the nexus between rights and development. Women in rural areas need innovative technology and connectivity; infrastructure that brings sanitation, clean drinking water, energy and transport, and that supports productivity and mobility. They need access to credit, climate justice, markets and high value agrifood chains. They need an end to discriminatory laws and norms that sustain harmful cultural practices like female genital mutilation and early and forced marriages. They need respect for sexual and reproductive health and rights. And they need an end to violence in all its forms.

That is true in all communities and institutions including the United Nations, where the Secretary-General has made it clear that there is no room for gender-based violence and harassment of any sort.

All over the world, millions are displaced from their homes, and exposed to sexual violence in conflict, even from the security forces intended to protect them. This is also a critical issue and again an area where women are expecting action from our side. They experience sex trafficking, and femicide.

We welcome therefore a major new boost to tackling the leading forms of violence, the recently launched Spotlight initiative of the EU and the UN, under the guidance of the Secretary-General and Deputy-Secretary-General.

It provides significant investment to fight violence against women and girls in Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. And this will be done in collaboration with UN Agencies including UN Women, UNFPA, UNDP and ILO. Together with our key allies in civil society we should be able to turn the tide around. This is a welcome development.

This CSW offers us a historic platform for a new dynamic of change. It has the most grassroots representation ever, thanks to those delegations who responded positively to the request to include women and girls from rural areas in their delegations and in the Youth Summit.

She concluded by calling for the participants to make the session a moment of real acceleration, change and accountability.

### **3.2 Daily Briefing**

The daily briefing sessions were held every morning of the CSW period at the Kenyan mission offices and they provided an opportunity for the members of the delegation and other Kenyans attending and participating in the CSW62 to share lessons learnt concerns and invite discussion amongst the participants. The daily briefing also provided a forum to convey messages and reaffirm Kenya's position in the deliberations. These briefing sessions were also used by the negotiators to inform the participants of the progress being made towards the agreed resolutions of CSW 62 and outstanding issues in the process.

### **3.3 Kenya's position paper and Country's Statement**

Kenya prepared and adopted in a Pre- CSW event her position paper. This paper guided the statement that was delivered during the proceedings of the CSW 62. The paper articulated the priority theme. The paper comprehensively articulated the status of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls living in the rural areas with a focus on thematic areas on governance, health, education, land and agriculture, ICT, energy, water and sanitation.

Kenya's County Statement was delivered on 13th March 2018 by the Cabinet Secretary for Public Service, Youth and Gender Affair, Prof. Margaret Kobia. The statement articulated the content of the position paper. The CS highlighted the progress the country had made towards achieving gender equality and empowerment of women and girls living in rural areas in line with objective of the priority theme of the CSW62.

The CS made specific reference to universal health coverage, manufacturing, low-cost housing and manufacturing which are part of the BIG 4 agenda of the government. She further articulated the intervention the government was undertaking to implement the agenda including policy, legal and legislative actions as well programmatic interventions such as Free and compulsory Primary Education and Free Education in Public Schools, Sanitary Towels initiative, Huduma centers for seamless delivery of proximate services, Free Maternal Health Services, the 30% allocation of Public Procurement reserved for women, youth and Persons with Disabilities and Affirmative Action Funds such as UWEZO, Women Enterprise Fund, Youth Enterprise Fund, the Last Mile Project of rural electrification and Biashara Salama on Food Security.

### 3.4 General Assembly/High level Sessions

In the first week of the CSW High-level interactive sessions among Ministers on the priority theme and round table meetings took place. The ministers or their representatives in these sessions issued country statements. These statements addressed not only the priority theme but also on the progress being made on the review theme. It provided an important platform to share knowledge and experiences and useful sources of pertinent data for learning and benchmarking purposes. The Cabinet Secretary for Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs issued the Country statement in the General Assembly in line with the priority of the CSW62.

### 3.5 Specific Side events

- (1) Kenya planned and hosted a side event on 'Women as Governance actors' on 12th March 2018, where the Cabinet Secretary for Public Service Youth and Gender Affairs, Prof. Margaret Kobia gave a key note address. Other speakers in the side event included Governors, Ann Waiguru, Joyce Laboso and Paul Chepkwony. Kenya also co-hosted a joint side event together with Guinea, Togo, FAO Africa and UN Women on 'Reducing the burden of women in agriculture and food processing' on 15th March 2018.

### 3.6 Other side events

- (2) In addition the Kenya members of parliament attended and participated among other sessions a full day Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU) meeting organized for all members of parliament who were attending the CSW62. This meeting took place on 13th March 2018. The meeting's main focus was the role parliaments could play to deliver for rural women and girls.

Some of the other side events and salient issues that were discussed in those other side events are summarized as follows-

#### 3.6.1 Women, migration and refugee crisis

The salient issues discussed in this session were as follows-

- (3) Every year, at least 12 million girls are married before they reach the age of 18. That is about 23 girls every minute. The issue of early marriage is not an isolated from the other humanitarian problems facing refugees. There was need to look at this practice and connect it to the other challenges facing this population in order to understand why these numbers increased. The main reason for these increase in numbers we identified as -

- (a) Poverty and economic insecurity: With limited ability to work in host countries, most refugees live in extreme poverty and most of them lack basic human rights like food, shelter and access to health care. These horrific conditions have lead families to force their daughters to get married in an early age as they view her as an economic burden.

(b) Protection and social reasons: Mostly related to traditions and preserving the honor of the family as sexual harassment and rape have increased substantially during the last few years in refugee camps. As a result, more and more refugee parents are forcing their girls into early marriage in an effort to ensure their protection and to avoid harassment.

(4) To arrest the situation the following interventions have been identified-

- (1) Basic humanitarian assistance like shelter, food and healthcare should be provided to the refugees. Interventions must also focus on providing economic opportunities for refugees and empowering girls through education.
- (2) The girls themselves should be involved in not only implementing the existing laws but should be involved in making the laws themselves. Men should stop making laws that affect women in isolation. Women should also be given the opportunities to head the law enforcement and implementing agencies.
- (3) Create a broad partnership and work with multi-stakeholders like Governments, Corporations, NGOs
- (4) Outlaw retrogressive practices such as Female genital mutilation.
- (5) Invest in rural infrastructure including reliable and safe public transport to ensure that girls and young women can access technology, services, quality healthcare and education.
- (6) National plans for achieving SDG 5 should be anchored in inter-generational partnerships with young women at the local level, along with mobilizing young men and boys to foster enabling environments for gender equality
- (7) Recognize rape as a tool of war, a tool of silencing and marginalization.

### **3.6.2 Civil Society Legislative Advocacy (CISLAC) <sup>1</sup>**

The Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre issued recommendations in their communique at the end of the side event. Some of these included the following-

(5) They urged governments to -

- (1) At the national, state and local levels need to demonstrate greater political will in enacting new legislation and enforcing existing laws and policies that delay early and forced marriages and in punishing culprits.
- (2) Government at all levels should remove all barriers that make it difficult for young girls to go to school, including the costs associated with school attendance such as uniforms, extra-school-imposed levies, and transportation fares. Schools must also be girl-child friendly and sensitive to cultural norms with increased provision of WASH services;
- (3) Government at all levels should incentivize girl-child education through the provision of scholarships and social protection policies like cash transfer to enable

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<sup>1</sup> <http://cislacnigeria.net/index.php/2018/03/19/communique-issued-at-the-end-of-cislacs-side-event-during-United-Nations-Commission-for-the-Status-of-Women-62-csw-62/>

poor parents and even those that must prioritize sending only boys to school over scarce resources to the disadvantage and exclusion of the girl-child;

- (4) Government at all levels should develop or revise policies and enact legislation that protects young people's rights to the highest attainable standard of health. Sexual and reproductive health services should be aligned with the standards for youth-and-adolescent-friendly services outlined by the World Health Organization (WHO), including contraceptive services and HIV counseling and testing.
- (5) Policies and Strategies on girl-child empowerment should be costed and funded to support their implementation for the benefit of the girl-child;
- (6) Strengthen the technical, material and financial capacity of the African immigration service and other law enforcement agencies to manage external borders effectively and to detect and prevent irregular exit and entries of migrants;

(6) They called on the Civil Society Organizations to -

- (1) Organize itself better by sustaining the aggressive campaign against girl-child marriage, protection against forced labor and human trafficking through irregular migration;
- (2) Continue to mount pressure on government at all levels regarding the effective implementation of free and compulsory education policy from primary up to Junior Secondary school;
- (3) Monitor the progress and track the resources allocated to Girl-Child empowerment to ensure accountability;
- (4) Enhance the capacity of community leaders to ensure that the community structures continue to respond positively to all efforts to encourage girls to stay in school until at least the completion of Junior Secondary school;
- (5) Generate evidence using both primary and secondary data to demonstrate the benefits of delaying marriage and of keeping girls in schools
- (6) Partner with the Ministries of Women Affairs and Child Development at all levels to build regional and national capacity for research and knowledge sharing on child marriage to improve programming, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and strategies;
- (7) Institute intensive advocacy and awareness programs to inform the youth and adolescent girls across Africa about the true realities of the situation in Europe and to demystify the perception of youths about the opportunities and job prospects in Europe and that the roads of the European Union or other countries outside Africa, including the USA, are paved with gold;
- (8) Partner with regional, national and state ministries of health to promote the integration of gender-responsive HIV prevention programming for adolescent girls and young persons with other health services.

### 3.6.3 Women and Media

(7) Some of the salient issues that emerged from the session were as follows-

- (1) The images that broadcast the participation of women in the media were still wanting, there were few women in politics, stereotypes depicting women inappropriately were still being experienced and activities that discriminate against women in the media and gender inequality were still characteristic of the media to date.
- (2) The slow progress in realizing equality in issues of women and the Media despite there being very many campaigns on the issue.
- (3) The need to regulate social media and enhance laws and policies to eliminate violence against women through that platform was seen as an urgent necessity.
- (4) The need to insist that the media houses and organizations include educational content and inclusive messaging that would allow children to grow in a framework of equality.
- (5) The need for a national strategy on equality to tackle discrimination against women.
- (6) Express focus on inter-sectionalism and inclusivity of women in employment and other strategic position in society.
- (7) Investment in the digital literacy of women and girls.
- (8) Legislations to ensure at least forty (40) percent of women were employed in universities, civil service and other public sector institutions and boards as well a policy on equal pay for equal value on work done.
- (9) Employers be compelled through policies to have in place codes of conduct at the work place and disciplinary measures to combat the gender violence
- (10) There was a need to advance the importance of media and ICT. Governments and media and telecommunication companies and social media platforms were said to have failed to develop strategies that combat violence against women.
- (11) There was need to protect women and girls who are victims of online violence. The prevalence of pornography that was on websites in the world including child pornography where the propagators collected a lot of revenue from their sites at the expense of women and girls who were used to act in those films came to the fore.
- (12) The non-existence of gender media policy was seen as being due to the power of main media companies that have refused to be regulated. Further the need to mainstream gender equality in media and ICT every aspect of work. .

(13) Research conducted in 2015 showed that women made only fifteen percent of representatives in the media, news, newspapers and other mediums. Further that the overall portion of stories reported on women was a paltry five percent and only four percent of stories challenge gender inequalities yet more than half of the population in the worlds was made up of women.

(14) Gender equality policies are to ensure that everyone enjoys the same opportunities, rights and obligations in all areas of life. Media should be used as tool to enhance the status of women in the society and not as a tool to bring them down.

(15) The need for legal frameworks that combat the abuse of women in social media and all manner of cyber-crimes so as to safeguard the rights of citizens of the world and more so the women and girls who are most affected.

(8) Some recommendations that emerged on audio visual sector were as follows-

- (a) Policy and legislative gaps should be enhanced;
- (b) Gender mainstreaming in the media sector should be enhanced;
- (c) Address under representation of women in the industry and decision making positions;
- (d) Introduce incentives for producers to promote female sensitive program
- (e) Support research
- (f) Encourage development of media literacy and digitization programs;
- (g) Monitor media institutions to ensure that gender equality is enhanced by the industry

#### **3.6.4 Media advisory: under the spotlight: ending violence against all women and girls**

(9) Salient issues discussed in this session were as follows-

- (1) In 2017, the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) launched a new, global, multi-year initiative focused on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) - the Spotlight Initiative. The Spotlight Initiative will deploy targeted, large-scale investments in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Pacific and the Caribbean, aimed at achieving significant improvements in the lives of women and girls.
- (2) The Spotlight Initiative is required to provide a unique and unprecedented opportunity to demonstrate that a significant, concerted and comprehensive investment in gender equality can make a transformative difference in the lives of women and girls, as well as contribute to the achievement of all the SDGs.
- (3) The Initiative will respond to all forms of VAWG, with a particular focus on domestic and family violence, sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices, femicide, trafficking in human beings and sexual and economic

(labour) exploitation. In line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Initiative will fully integrate the principle of 'leaving no one behind'.

- (4) In the margins of the 62nd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed and European Union Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven Mimica discussed the Spotlight Initiative - a partnership between the UN and the EU which was established in September 2017 to eliminate violence against all women and girls that is said to be the ideal movement to end violence against women and girls all over the world.
- (5) It was pointed out that all stars were aligned and that the EU had put a substantial amount of resources to ensure the success of end the VAWG.
- (6) Emphasis was put on the need to ensure that Policy makers are put under pressure to ensure that they bring an end to violence against women and girls that is a global tragedy and therefore the responses must be as global as possible and the need to have a swift and properly coordinated response to end VAWG.
- (7) Violence against women and girls including rape, "honor" killings, acid attacks, domestic violence, and forced marriage—remained a serious problem. Pakistani activists estimate that there are about a 1,000 "honor" killings every year.
- (8) It was noted that the representation of women in all levels of government varies greatly across the globe.
- (9) Kenya was said to have made significant progress in increasing the voice of rural women in governance issues. This is largely as a result of the favourable legal and regulatory environment created by Kenya's Constitution (2010).
- (10) There was a need for a well-coordinated and ambitious move to continue to fight for the elimination of violence against women and girls was going to continue under the spotlight initiative by civil societies, government and UN country teams, by designing large scale high impact national programs

### **3.6.5 Harnessing efforts in addressing gender based violence in the changing world of work**

- (10) The following were discussion points ensued-
  - (1) Gender Based Violence (GBV) against women and girls happens in the wider context of patriarchy, gender based discrimination and poverty. Women and girls the world over have major challenges exercising their right to live a life free from violence and discrimination. This is more so because violence against women and girls begins at the very basic institution of the society, which is the family, and extends to the community and the wider society. Women and girls are the most at risk and in most cases are unlikely to get redress due to the socio-cultural issues surrounding GBV.

- (2) GBV inhibits women from participating in social, economic and political empowerment opportunities. It has a direct and detrimental impact on the victims' productivity and access to paid work which has broader economic ramifications. The effects of such violence are sustained and remain with victims even as they enter the workplace.
- (3) GBV at the work place is a harmful human and labour rights violation that is a manifestation of unequal power and perpetuates social and economic inequality. GBV exists in workplaces mainly because women are often overrepresented in temporary, lower paying and status jobs with little decision making or bargaining power over the terms and conditions of their labour. In addition, they are expected to provide unpaid care work and are often discriminated against by policies that ignore or penalize them.
- (4) Kenya for example has taken concrete measures to combat GBV. It has adopted laws and established national plans and strategies to address the vice.
- (5) It was observed that Kenya recognizes that GBV is not only a socio-economic issue but a matter that also impacts on occupational safety. As such the Country has embarked on a programme to comprehensively address it through a multi-pronged response. The success of this approach was anchored on engaging diverse actors and innovative methods in efforts to eradicate GBV and accelerate progress towards the realization of SDG 5. Kenya has enacted various laws related to violence against women. They include the Sexual Offences Act of 2007, the Female Genital Mutilations Act of 2011, the victims protections Act, the Marriage Act, the Counter – Trafficking in Persons Act, the treaty making and Ratification Act and there is in place a National Policy towards the Prevention of GBV.
- (6) It was stated that preventive measures were also being taken through civic education for girls and boys during school holidays in order to curtail gender based violence.
- (7) The need for safe houses countrywide that would deal with the surging cases of gender-based violence
- (8) The following recommendations emerged from the session-
  - (a) Funding women's full participation in civil society as women who are active in Civil Society can be highly effective in influencing global, regional and national treaties, agreements and laws in exerting pressure to ensure implementation.
  - (b) Need for normalization the issues of gender based violence in our society of the matters and scaling up prevention efforts that address gender- based violence as a root cause of unequal gender power relations.
  - (c) Men be involved in the fights against gender based violence across the globe if the men will be sensitized and brought on board then the violence may reduce considerably or end.
  - (d) Bringing down gender based violence clinical services to lower health facilities to enable victims of GBV to get medical treatments as soon as possible. The provision of GBV clinical services has focused on one stop shops at high level facilities such as hospitals and many women in our communities are far from this facilities and end up being at risk of exposure to HIV and fail to get emergency treatment,
  - (e) Developing guidance for building systems to eliminate gender based violence.it was observed that there was ample global guidance on how to address gender based violence through certain sectors, such as health, or through discrete actions such

providing standards for shelters or training for counselors but the practical guidance was missing.

### **3.6.6 Rural women and girls economic empowerment- best practices from Liberia**

- (9) The empowerment of women in the rural areas was critical to ensure that the welfare of the women and girls in the rural areas. GBV remains a major threat against women in Liberia and there 1785 cases of gender-based violence were reported in Liberia and efforts are being made to combat this challenge. Need to strive for gender equality and women empowerment
- (10) Women empowerment has a direct correlation with national transformation for example high earnings of women and increased bargaining power can translate in children education, health and wellbeing of the society
- (11) Women empowerment helps women to enjoy their rights and bring about equality in the society in Liberia.
- (12) Women have a wealth of influence in the economic and political sector yet they form great networks in the informal sector and an empowerment is not quick fix process. They need access to the market, access to financial products and independent decision making about their own lives and their own livelihoods.
- (13) The need to promote climate resilient agriculture to ensure that the pro-poor gender is enhanced was also highlighted..
- (14) The SGD goals will only be achieved if women were economically empowered and women remain the poorest and most marginalized human beings in the society.
- (15) Some specific good practices from Liberia included the following-
  - (a) Collaborating with civil society organizations;
  - (b) Engagement of Men in implementing the projects in eliminating all forms of violence against women;
  - (c) Economic empowerment of adolescent girls across Liberia;
  - (d) Work with the National Rural women structure where women are trained in collaboration with the ministry of agriculture;
  - (e) Market women project;
  - (f) Rights and rights foundation empowers the poor, disabled and vulnerable in society to ensure that there is a return on investment;
  - (g) Educare for women and girls and empowerment of these categories of women to be a key stakeholder in decision-making process.

### **3.6.7 Lessons for implementing gender statistics in the Philippines and Uganda**

Some of the salient issues discussed in this presentation made by Philippines, Ethiopia and Uganda were as follows-

- (16) That data revolution is a reality and harnessing citizen generated data and that brought by bureau of statistic is important for nations to gather and keep their data on women and girls.
- (17) The UN has a flagship program of making every woman and girl count and this can only be realized through proper collection of data.
- (18) Philippines shared that there are various policies and legislation in place that are instrumental in the generation of data. There is also an inter-agency community that facilitates the provision of gender statistics. The government of Philippines allows the government agencies to spend 5% of their budget on gender statistics. Philippine's statistics development plan requires that annual statistics should be released on children, the youth, gender, and women data.
- (19) Uganda on the other hand informed the plenary that the national bureau of statistics was relied upon to provide gender specific statistics in the country. Uganda was also in the process of formulating policies and legislations that will be instrumental in generating the required data. They urged that data generated by the bureau was more reliable than those civil society organizations- who are at times influenced by the donor..
- (20) Some of the common challenges identified to acquire and generate up to date and reliable data on challenges facing women and girls were as follows-
- (a) Some data have multiple sources, which makes its authenticity to be difficult
  - (b) Lag time and frequency of national data indices' which are carried out after 5 years and they may provide conflicting information with the ones provided.
  - (c) Data gaps on information that affects women and gender issues
  - (d) Need to have surveys that have gender relevant content and for gender-desegregated data that will allow for better economic relevance for the women.
  - (e) non state actors provide a lot of data but the same is not representative, and there is need for them to collaborate with national statistical officers and to improve the data . There is need to improve on the methodology of developing proper data that can be useful internationally.
- (21) Discussants identified some opportunities that can be leveraged upon to generate accurate and reliable data for policy and decision making as follows-
- (a) The need for national statistical officers to work together with CSO organs that are also collecting data on gender statistics.
  - (b) The need for capacity building on the concepts of statistics
  - (c) Harmonization and linking of data and statistics to policy reforms so as to address issues of women and girls in our countries;
  - (d) Need to have data collected verified to ascertain its authenticity
  - (e) Need for policy holders to ensure that advocacy facilitates on the use of data statistics and the agenda of gender statistics is not lost.
  - (f) Government collaborations to allow for gender responsiveness and economic empowerment of women in line with the programs of the national government.

### **3.6.8 A climate justice dialogue: enabling grassroots and indigenous women's participation in gender responsive climate action**

The salient issues discussed in this session were as follows-

- (1) While rural women remained the least responsible for climate change they experience it more and were more susceptible to the vulgarizes of climate change
- (2) Integration of women in works on climate change and women perspective in climate negotiation is important and funds have been availed for that purpose.
- (3) There was evidence on integrating rural women in planning and implementation of climate change resilience programmes. Inclusion of the needs of then rural women in the programming for response to climate adaptation by connecting experts and local knowledge.
- (4) Local communities, grassroots and indigenous people participation platform must be availed. Talanoa which is a platform created by the prime minister of Fiji to discuss climate change issues is a good case
- (5) Free prior and informed consent necessary to cover the needs of the rural women
- (6) For projects to succeed it has to be all inclusive and live no one behind at all the levels planning, implementing and monitoring of projects and programmes. Adoption of the gender action plan and mainstreaming in policies and strategies
- (7) Policies and guidelines are necessary to guide the participation of the rural women. Nuances of gender and communal ownership of resources is important in coming up with the policies and guidelines on climate action
- (8) Climate change affecting the local resources that rural women depend on- Adaptation mechanisms must start with their input
- (9) Gender equality and climate change actions are perquisite for the attainment of the SDGs 2030 and evidence from local level is necessary to guide the actions that are needed. This also calls for the resourcing of the Paris-agreement to get the desired results
- (10) The World Bank has approved a five year plan on gender and climate- which involves internal process, strategic development, policy dialogues, anti-poverty strategies, improved governance. Sectors focused include, energy transition, investment on renewable energy, skills development, Women climate leadership

### **3.6.9 Climate change adaptation strategies to build the capacity of and economically empower women farmers**

The salient issues discussed in this session were as follows-

- (1) Country actions and investment needed to adapt to climate change
- (2) Market share of women to be optimum by using appropriate technology

- (3) There was need to narrow the gap between men and women in all spheres of economic activities but importantly in agricultural productions
- (4) Agenda 2030 is very ambitious with 17 goals and 169 targets- one of the major challenges is to identify small implementable actions that contribute to the achievement of the targets
- (5) There needs to be concerted efforts to facilitate women access to technology, finance, information, data and training skills
- (6) Women farmers who can educate, feed her children will not be tempted to join other harmful activities
- (7) Investments- technology, access to farmers to information, markets, credits for women
- (8) Digital solutions-should be the focus applications such as agrified in Mali- market intelligent applications and devices to improve productivity and better income, reduce losses
- (9) Access to information- only 5% access (rural women)- virtual school(app), to identify climate resilient crops
- (10) Climate smart agriculture that can withstand the vulgaries of the climate change

### **3.6.10 Confronting barriers to rural women's economic, social and cultural rights**

Key issues discussed were as follows-

- (1) Economic empowerment is important for our society, economy, social stability
- (2) Rural areas lack behind that of the urban- restricted prospects
- (3) Male out migration is a big issue in many countries- Finland is the converse
- (4) Equal opportunity for all to quality education, basic social services, public service affordability for all
- (5) 67% rate of women in Finland same as those of women
- (6) Spaces for constructive dialogue for both sexes are important to deal this issues
- (7) Land, natural resources and access to central services are crucial
- (8) Rural women lack access to essential services neglected or allocated lower priority, recognition of their rights, discriminatory practices further aggravates the disproportionate and uniquely impact the women face displacement
- (9) Opportunities; advance human rights framework, lived experiences, centrality of women leadership to overcome the challenges
- (10) Rural women are not just homogeneous groups- challenges should be addressed overtime so that consultations can lead to shared policy direction
- (11) CEDAW: recommended that systematic and persistent barriers to full enjoyment of human rights, lived experiences and identities, not homogeneous groups, not just food producers, faced discriminations
- (12) Experts group meeting on the theme of CSW identified two structural barriers that uniquely impact rural women: prevailing neo liberal economic model which is a driver of displacement led to increased violation of women rights and not capable of supporting gender equitable sustainable development model

and climate change where those impacts and responses persistently undermine the rights of rural women

- (13) Expanded understanding of the full bundle of rights around land which include use, access, transfer, inheritance, control, exclusion and all decision making around land water and natural which crucial to the realization of the rural women economic social and cultural rights
- (14) Gender dimension when it comes to implementation of large project is being ignored and these projects have huge impact on rural women
- (15) Rural to education, housing and health for rural women is a conversation that should happen in all jurisdictions
- (16) The need to continuously fight multiple forms of discrimination the rural women face
- (17) Politically excluded and socially discriminated- situation of many rural indigenous women
- (18) Need for protection of women human right defenders
- (19) Importance of free prior consent when it comes to the rights of the indigenous women

### **3.6.11 Widowhood: Economic Empowerment, poverty eradication and achieving the SDGs**

Salient issues discussed were as follows

1. The epidemic of widowhood: Widowhood is an essential, yet neglected gender issues, which condemns over 300 million widows and more than 500 million of their children. They represent 16% of the world's population sentenced to a life entrapped in a vicious cycle of poverty. The vastness of the problem of widowhood was also echoed that all women are potential widows. Widowhood is an additional marginalization tag and very divisive tag. Those in the rural context, bear the greatest vulnerability to disinheritance, as discriminatory interpretations of customary, and traditional law invariably supercede any rights protection they formally retain under secular laws.
2. Women who are widows will continue to be marginalized until they are mainstreamed as a specific issue rather than just as a sub-sect, and intersectional identity of some women. Thus, while the development of the sustainable development goals has allowed for accountability in regards to the community of women and girls, in use and implementation, widowhood has remained without distinction.
3. The "Epidemic of Widowhood" commences with the loss of income, status, and access when widow's husband passes or becomes permanently missing, primarily due to disinheritance. This barrier to inheritance, is a critical violation of the widow's rights and leads to further economic and social subjugation within the community. The economic vulnerability is due to one or many of the following issues: asymmetrical inheritance laws, lack of access to justice, lack of knowledge about

governmental rights, as well as other socio-cultural barriers presented by the next of kin of her late husband.

4. When widows are also migrants, refugees, or internally displaced persons, their most basic human right of nationality is revoked or unrecognized. This is a key issue for many widows; as many young women become widows due to ethnic conflict in some of their regions. In this way, her ability to transfer nationality to her children is removed, and without a national identity, her ability to access entitlements under state or host country law is further impaired.
5. Widows face serious challenges, which subsequently impact their children. Apart from the immediate impact of food insecurity, a widow who is disinherited is unable to afford education for her children. A recent study by the United Nations Development Programme shows that widows' sons are greatly susceptible to indoctrination of radicalized beliefs, as one in three extremists come from widowed families. Furthermore, the daughters of widows are often forced into child marriage for their 'safety and security'. Widowhood perpetuates a cross-generational and cyclical phenomenon of poverty, propelled by cultural disempowerment and cultural stigmas. Widowhood is the root cause of poverty across generations, the panel concluded.
6. The economic empowerment of widows through legislation, education, and access to funds were paramount to stemming the effects of this epidemic of widowhood and the ensuing cycle of poverty. For instance, the Algerian state has utilized this framework to provide mechanisms of economic empowerment to widows, and women, through free and compulsory education. In this way, the widow and her children can be provided with knowledge and the means with which to access resources from the state in order to safeguard herself, her property, and her family and Malawi has recognized these problems in their nation, and has championed addressing and contesting these systemic issues that marginalize and subjugate widows, through legislation and implementation. Widows here have access to funds, their own land, and their rights. They have instituted a *Land Act*, which encourages and aids widows in controlling and accessing their own land. Further, they have worked to review the *Wills and Inheritance Act* in Malawi, to better dictate who should benefit from a deceased person. The *Wills and Inheritance Act* will identify the person who lived with the deceased primarily, in this case, the widow, as the independent recipient of the inheritance.
7. The issue of visibility of widows as a distinct group to be celebrated rather than stigmatized was highlighted. Kenya, for instance, has demonstrated the commitment of top leadership to celebrating and acknowledging widows. There were further initiatives by Kenyan leadership to protect widows' rights and access through legislation. Their Constitution and Bill of Rights dictate that women should be formally and legally free from widow cleansing, early marriage, forced evictions, widow inheritance and disposition of land. Further, they are working to revise the *Marriage Act* and *Matrimonial Property Act* to further delineate the rights of widows.
8. It was, however, agreed that there remain challenges in the divergence between customary and formal law, with the issue of implementation of legislation. Women's

economic and social status and access remain highly impacted by customary law. It was essential to couple policies with success stories from widows, which will have the dual effect of both empowering and inspiring widows and the public alike. It was important to highlight seminal legislation implemented by countries to protect widow's rights to land and even criminalizing acts of disinheritance.

9. The economic empowerment of widows was key to achieving the sustainable development goals, eradicating poverty, and keeping this cycle of poverty and degradation from continuing, for a large population of women and girls. Through research and economic programming, the Global Fund for Widows had established the efficacy of economic empowerment in pragmatically aiding widows, their livelihood and that of their families, on the ground. There needed to be continued campaigns to educate and raise awareness about widow's rights in the general public, by and for civil society. The government must ensure implementation of special targeted programs for widows, and speedy access to justice. Without the access to justice, the discrimination and subjugation, the panel highlighted previously, severely impacts the widow's livelihood and that of her family.
10. Sustainable development goals to remain relevant, they must work alongside widows. The plight of widows should be a concern for all, and we need to collaborate to ensure their lives are protected. Furthermore, it is the necessity of member states to ensure that at the national level comprehensive interventions are implemented in regards to widowhood as a mainstreamed issue. This includes development partners and donors increasing funding on the programs which support vulnerable widows in the rural context specifically. Moreover, there is a need for more action-oriented time to translate the dialogue into pragmatic action.
11. The convenors of the session made the following recommendations to the United Nations-
  - (1) Enable access to justice by all available ways and means.
  - (2) Recognize all actions that deprive widows of all ages of their rights, and perpetrate or condone violence against them, whether by State or Non-State actors including family and community members.
  - (3) Criminalise rites of stigmatization, including but not limited to life-threatening and degrading mourning and burial rites, witchcraft or cause of death accusations, widow-inheritance, and levirate practices.
  - (4) Reform all law to facilitate economic empowerment opportunities for widows including women's right to own land, inherit, and receive access to economic opportunity including education, skills training, credit, capital, and cooperative business models.
  - (5) Appoint a Special Rapporteur to address widowhood in context of conflict.
  - (6) Establish a Special Desk at UN Women to address the cross cutting intersectorial issues of widowhood across the globe.
  - (7) Support widows to establish their own organizations so their collective voice can be heard to articulate their needs and describe their roles
  - (8) Commission comprehensive statistical reviews of Widowhood in each

- country in order to fill the quantitative and qualitative information gap.
- (9) Ensure that widows are not "left behind" but their status directly addressed in strategies to achieve the post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals since Widowhood is a root cause of poverty across the generation

## **CHAPTER 4: THE OUTCOME OF THE 62<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON STATUS OF WOMEN(CSW62)**

### **4.1 The agreed Conclusions by Member States**

Following days of negotiations the Agreed Conclusions of CSW62 were adopted on 23 March, 2018(See **Annex I**). The agreed Conclusions are outcomes addressing the priority theme adopted at the General Assembly after going through long process of negotiation. Every session of CSW conclude with an outcome document agreed through consensus by the all state members of the Commission. Before the Session concludes it also agrees on the venue and the priority theme for the following CSW. The next CSW (CSW 63) will be held in Poland with a priority theme of '*Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls*'. The review theme will be '*Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development*'.

### **4.2 Joint Communique by Kenya delegation**

The Kenya Government delegation was drawn from National Government, County Government, State Agencies, Commissions, Parliament Office of First Ladies, Civil Society, Private Sector, Youth, Persons with Disabilities and Grassroots Individuals who participated in the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session. The participants from Kenya have identified priority areas of intervention to address challenges and accelerate efforts towards the empowerment of women and girls living in rural areas in line with the priority theme of CSW62. The delegation joint Communique is annexed to this report (**Annex II**).

## **ANNEXURES**

## ANNEXE I: AGREED CONCLUSIONS CSW 62<sup>ND</sup> SESSION

23 March 2018 ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION 1 Commission on the Status of Women Sixty-second session 12 – 23 March 2018 Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls Agreed conclusions 1. The Commission on the Status of Women reaffirms the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and the declarations adopted by the Commission on the occasion of the tenth, fifteenth and twentieth anniversaries of the Fourth World Conference on Women. 2. The Commission reiterates that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Optional Protocols thereto, as well as other relevant conventions and treaties, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, provide an international legal framework and a comprehensive set of measures for realizing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all women and girls, including those living in rural areas, throughout their life cycle. 3. The Commission reaffirms that the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of its reviews, and the outcomes of relevant major United Nations conferences and summits and the follow-up to those conferences and summits, have laid a solid foundation for sustainable development and that the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action will make a crucial contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those living in rural areas. 4. The Commission reaffirms the commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls made at relevant United Nations summits and conferences, including the International Conference on Population and Development and its Programme of Action and the outcome documents of its reviews. It recognizes that the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the New Urban Agenda contribute, inter alia, to the improvement of the situation of rural women and girls. The Commission also recalls the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. 5. The Commission also recalls the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. 6. The Commission recognizes the importance of relevant International Labour Organization standards related to the realization of women's right to work and rights at work that are critical for the economic empowerment of women, including those in rural areas, and recalls the decent work agenda of the International Labour Organization and the International Labour Organization Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and notes the importance of their effective implementation, including in rural areas. 23 March 2018 ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION 2 7. The Commission acknowledges the important role played by regional conventions, instruments and initiatives in their respective regions and countries, and their follow-up mechanisms, in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those in rural areas. 8. The Commission emphasizes the mutually reinforcing relationship among achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those in rural areas, and the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It acknowledges that gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls and women's full and equal participation and leadership in the economy are essential for achieving sustainable development, promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies, enhancing sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and productivity, ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions

everywhere and ensuring the well-being of all. 9. The Commission reaffirms that the promotion and protection of, and respect for, the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women and girls, including the right to development, which are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, are crucial for women's economic empowerment and should be mainstreamed into all policies and programmes aimed at the eradication of poverty and women's economic empowerment, and also reaffirms the need to take measures to ensure that every person is entitled to participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, and that equal attention and urgent consideration should be given to the promotion, protection and full realization of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. 10. The Commission recognizes that rural women's equal economic rights, economic empowerment and independence are essential to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. It underlines the importance of undertaking legislative and other reforms to realize the equal rights of women and men, as well as girls and boys where applicable, to access economic and productive resources, including land and natural resources, property and inheritance rights, appropriate new and existing technology, financial products and services, including but not limited to microfinance, and women's full and productive employment and decent work, and equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, in both agricultural and nonagricultural activities in rural areas. 11. The Commission reiterates that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development needs to be implemented in a comprehensive manner, reflecting its universal, integrated and indivisible nature, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting each country's policy space and leadership while remaining consistent with relevant international rules and commitments, including by developing cohesive sustainable development strategies to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The Commission affirms that Governments have the primary responsibility for the follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda at the national, regional and global levels with regard to progress made. 12. The Commission recognizes that progress in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, in particular in rural areas, and the realization of their human rights has been held back owing to the persistence of historical and structural unequal power relations between women and men, poverty, inequalities and disadvantages in access to, ownership and control over resources, growing gaps in equality of opportunity and limited access to universal healthcare services and secondary and postsecondary education, gender-based violence, discriminatory laws and policies, negative social norms and gender stereotypes, and unequal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work. It stresses the urgency of eliminating these structural barriers to realize gender equality and empower rural women and girls. 13. The Commission acknowledges that all rural women and girls often face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, and marginalization. It respects and values the diversity of rural women's situations and 23 March 2018 ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION 3 conditions and recognizes that some women face particular barriers to their empowerment. It also stresses that while all women and girls have the same human rights, rural women and girls in different contexts have particular needs and priorities, requiring appropriate responses. 14. The Commission expresses concern that 1.6 billion people still live in multidimensional poverty and that nearly 80 per cent of the extreme poor live in rural areas, and acknowledges that progress in the eradication of poverty has been uneven and that inequality has increased. It expresses concern that poverty is a serious impediment to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those living in rural areas, and that the feminization of poverty persists. It emphasizes that the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. It acknowledges the mutually reinforcing links between the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the eradication of poverty. It stresses the importance of support for countries in their efforts to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions. 15. The Commission expresses concern that many rural women continue to be

discriminated against, marginalized and economically and socially disadvantaged due to, inter alia, their limited or lack of access to economic resources and opportunities, decent work, social protection, quality education, public health, including health-care services, justice, sustainable and time- and labour-saving infrastructure and technology, land, water and sanitation and other resources, as well as to financial services, credit, extension services and agricultural inputs as well as their limited financial inclusion. 16. The Commission recognizes the important role and contribution of rural women as critical agents in poverty eradication, in enhancing sustainable agricultural and rural development as well as fisheries. It underlines that meaningful progress in these areas necessitates, inter alia, closing the gender gap, introducing appropriate gender-responsive policies, interventions and innovations, including in agriculture and fisheries, and women's equal access to agricultural and fisheries technologies, technical assistance, productive resources, land tenure security and access to, ownership of and control over land, forests, water and marine resources, and to participation in local, regional and international markets. 17. The Commission reaffirms the right to food and recognizes the crucial contributions of rural women to local and national economies and to food production and to achieve food security and improved nutrition, in particular in poor and vulnerable households as well as to the well-being of their families and communities, including through work on family farms and women-headed farm enterprises. It expresses deep concern that, while women contribute significantly to the food produced worldwide, women and girls are disproportionately affected by hunger and food insecurity, in part as a result of gender inequality and discrimination. It recognizes women's critical role in both short- and long-term responses to food insecurity, malnutrition, excessive price volatility and food crises in developing countries. 18. The Commission stresses the importance of investing in gender-responsive and quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including in rural areas, inter alia, safe drinking water and sanitation, energy, transport, water for irrigation, and technology, including information and communications technology, and other physical infrastructure for accessible public services. 19. The Commission reiterates the importance of safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport and roads in facilitating transport linkages on domestic routes and promoting urban-rural connectivity to empower women and girls and to boost economic growth at the local and regional levels, promote interconnections among cities and villages, peoples and resources and facilitate intraregional and interregional trade. 23 March 2018 ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION 4 20. The Commission reaffirms the right to education and stresses that equal access to high quality and inclusive education contributes to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls including those in rural areas. It notes with concern the lack of progress in closing gender gaps in access to, retention in and completion of secondary and tertiary education and emphasizes the importance of technical and vocational training and lifelong learning opportunities. It recognizes that new technologies are, inter alia, changing the structure of labour markets and provide new and different employment opportunities that require skills ranging from basic digital fluency to advanced technical skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and in information and communications technology, and in this regard, emphasizes the importance of all rural women and girls having the opportunity to acquire them. 21. The Commission recognizes that, despite gains in providing access to education, rural girls are still more likely than rural boys, and urban girls and boys, to remain excluded from education, and recognizes also that among gender-specific barriers to girls' equal enjoyment of their right to education are the feminization of poverty, child labour that girls undertake, child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, early and repeat pregnancies, all forms of gender-based violence in and outside of school, including sexual violence and harassment on the way to and from and at school, the lack of safe and adequate sanitation facilities, the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work, and gender stereotypes and negative social norms that lead families and communities to place less value on the education of girls than boys. 22. The Commission reaffirms the right of every human being to the

enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, without distinction of any kind, and recognizes that its full realization is vital for women's and girls' lives and well-being and for their ability to participate in public and private life, and is crucial for achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, including in rural areas. It recognizes that targeting and eliminating the root causes of gender inequality, discrimination, stigma and violence in health care services, including the unequal and limited access to public health services, is important for all women and girls, including in rural areas, especially those who are vulnerable or in vulnerable situations. 23. The Commission emphasizes the need to accelerate progress towards the goal of universal health coverage that comprises universal and equitable access to gender-responsive, quality health services and quality, essential, affordable and effective medicines for all, including for rural women and girls, and that it is critical to promote physical and mental health and well-being, especially through primary health care, health services and social protection mechanisms, including through community outreach and private sector engagement, and with the support of the international community. It stresses the importance of strengthening health systems in terms of availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality in order to better respond to the needs of all women and girls, including in rural areas, and enabling rural women's active participation in the design and implementation of health systems. 24. The Commission expresses deep concern that as a result of lack or limited access to essential healthcare services and information and limited agency over their own lives, rural women experience significant disparities in health, including reproductive health outcomes, such as higher rates of maternal and infant mortality and morbidity, obstetric fistula and limited options for family planning, than women in urban areas. It expresses further concern that these disparities are exacerbated by multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. 25. The Commission strongly condemns all forms of violence against all women and girls, which is rooted in historical and structural inequality and unequal power relations between men and women. It reiterates that violence against women and girls in all its forms and manifestations in public and private spheres, including sexual and gender-based violence, domestic violence and harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation, are pervasive, underrecognized and underreported, 23 March 2018 ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION 5 particularly at the community level. It expresses deep concern that women and girls in rural and remote areas may be particularly vulnerable to violence because of multidimensional poverty, limited or lack of access to justice, effective legal remedies and services, including protection, rehabilitation, reintegration, and health care services. It reemphasizes that violence against women and girls is a major impediment to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, including those living in rural areas, and violates and impairs or nullifies their full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. 26. The Commission recognizes that sexual harassment is a form of violence and a violation and abuse of human rights and impedes the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those living in rural areas. 27. The Commission recognizes the contribution of rural families to sustainable development and that the sharing of family responsibilities creates an enabling family environment for the empowerment of all women and girls, including those in rural areas and that women and men make a significant contribution to the welfare of their families and communities. 28. The Commission acknowledges the benefit of implementing family-oriented policies aimed at, inter alia, achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, the full participation of women in society, work-family balance and the self-sufficiency of the family unit and recognizes the need to ensure that all social and economic development policies are responsive to the changing needs of and expectations on rural families in fulfilling their numerous functions and that the rights, capabilities and responsibilities of all family members must be respected. 29. The Commission recognizes that rural women and girls undertake a disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work and that such uneven distribution of

responsibilities is a significant constraint on women's and girls' completion of or progress in education and training, on women's entry and re-entry and advancement in the paid labour market and on their economic opportunities and entrepreneurial activities, and can result in gaps in social protection, pay and pensions. It also recognizes that addressing attitudes and social norms by which women and girls are regarded as subordinate to men and boys at the household and community levels creates an enabling environment for the social and economic empowerment of all rural women and girls. The Commission stresses the need to recognize and adopt measures to reduce and redistribute the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work by promoting the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men within the household and by prioritizing, inter alia, infrastructure development, social protection policies and accessible, affordable and quality social services, including care services, child-care, maternity, paternity or parental leave. 30. The Commission expresses deep concern about the slow or stagnant economic growth and development, the rising inequalities within and among countries, volatile food and energy prices, continuing food and energy insecurity, remaining effects of the world financial and economic crises, water scarcity, epidemics, demographic changes, unplanned and rapid urbanization of populations, insufficient investment in development in rural areas, unsustainable fisheries practices and use of marine resources, natural hazards, natural disasters and environmental degradation, the increasing challenges caused by humanitarian emergencies, displacement, armed conflicts and the adverse impacts of climate change, all of which are exacerbating disadvantages, vulnerabilities and inequalities that rural women and men, girls and boys and their families face. 31. The Commission recognizes that globalization presents both challenges and opportunities for women's economic empowerment, including rural women. It also recognizes that there is a need to make broad and sustained efforts to ensure globalization is fully inclusive and equitable for all, including rural women and girls, and becomes an increasingly positive force for women's economic empowerment. 23 March 2018 ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION 6 32. The Commission notes with great concern that millions of people, including women and girls living in rural areas, are facing famine or the immediate risk of famine or are experiencing severe food insecurity in several regions of the world, and noting that armed conflicts, drought, poverty and the volatility of commodity prices are among the factors causing or exacerbating famine and severe food insecurity and that additional efforts, including international support, are urgently needed to address this, including in response to urgent United Nations humanitarian appeals with emergency aid and urgent funding. 33. The Commission is deeply concerned that climate change poses challenges to poverty eradication and the achievement of sustainable development, and that owing to gender inequalities, rural women and girls, especially in developing countries, including SIDS, are often disproportionately affected by the adverse impacts of climate change, extreme weather events and natural disasters and other environmental issues, including land degradation, desertification, deforestation, sand and dust storms, persistent drought, sea level rise, coastal erosion and ocean acidification. It recalls the Paris Agreement and that the Parties acknowledged that they should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider gender equality, the empowerment of women and intergenerational equity, and in this context, also recalls the adoption of the Gender Action Plan by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its 23rd session. It acknowledges the necessity for every person, including women and girls in rural areas, of present and future generations to have access to an environment adequate to their health, well-being and the critical importance of ensuring such an access for the empowerment of rural women and girls and the sustainable development and resilience of rural communities. 34. The Commission recognizes the impact of armed conflict on rural women and girls, and the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts and in peace-building and in this regard, stresses the importance of their full, effective and meaningful participation, including by increasing their role in peace processes as

well as in decision-making in efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and reiterates the important engagement by men and boys as partners in promoting this participation. 35. The Commission also stresses the importance of strengthening rural women's and girls' voice, agency, participation and leadership, and women's full, equal and effective participation at all levels of decision making. It recognizes the critical role played by rural women's civil society organizations, trade unions, enterprises and cooperatives in gathering and uniting rural women and supporting them in all spheres. 36. The Commission recognizes that indigenous women and girls living in rural and remote areas, regardless of age, often face violence and higher rates of poverty, limited access to health care services, information and communication technologies (ICT), infrastructure, financial services, education and employment, while also recognizing their cultural, social, economic, political and environmental contributions, including to climate change mitigation and adaptation. 37. The Commission expresses concern that women and girls with disabilities, particularly those living in rural and remote areas experience stigmatization and an increased risk of violence, exploitation and abuse, including sexual violence and abuse compared to those without disabilities, and that they face a lack of accessible and inclusive services in rural areas, limited access to justice and equal recognition before the law, as well as limited opportunities for productive employment and decent work, participation in political and public life, living independently and inclusion in their communities, and having the freedom to make their own choices. 38. The Commission recognizes the important contribution of rural women and girls of African descent to the development of societies and the promotion of mutual understanding and multiculturalism, bearing in mind the programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024). 39. The Commission recognizes that the positive contribution of rural women migrants has the potential to foster inclusive growth and sustainable development in countries of origin, transit and destination, underlines the value and dignity of their labour, in all sectors, including in care and domestic work, and encourages efforts to improve public perceptions of migrants and migration and recalls the need to address the special situation and vulnerability of rural migrant women and girls, particularly those who are employed in the informal economy and in less skilled work. 40. The Commission recognizes the contributions of older rural women, including widowed women, to households and communities, especially in cases where they are left behind by migrating adults or as a result of other socio-economic factors to assume childcare, household and agricultural responsibilities. 41. The Commission acknowledges the important role of national mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, the relevant contribution of national human rights institutions, where they exist, and the important role of civil society in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those living in rural areas, as well as in advancing the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. 42. The Commission welcomes the major contributions made by civil society, including women's and community-based organizations, feminist groups, women human rights defenders, girls' and youth-led organizations and trade unions in placing the interests, needs and visions of women and girls, including those living in rural areas, on local, national, regional and international agendas, including the 2030 Agenda. It also recognizes the importance of having an open, inclusive and transparent engagement with civil society in the implementation of measures to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. 43. The Commission reaffirms the importance of significantly increased investments to close resource gaps for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including rural women and girls, through, inter alia, the mobilization of financial resources from all sources, including domestic and international resource mobilization and allocation, the full implementation of official development assistance commitments and combating illicit financial flows, so as to build on progress achieved and strengthen international

cooperation, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, bearing in mind that South-South cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation.

44. The Commission recognizes the importance of a conducive external environment in support of national efforts towards the economic empowerment of women, through promoting the control, ownership, management and participation of rural women in all sectors and levels of the economy, which includes the mobilization of adequate financial resources, capacity-building and the transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms, which in turn would enhance the use of enabling technologies to promote women's entrepreneurship and economic empowerment.

45. The Commission recognizes the importance of fully engaging men and boys, as agents and beneficiaries of change, and as strategic partners and allies in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those in rural areas.

46. The Commission urges Governments at all levels and as appropriate, with the relevant entities of the United Nations system and international and regional organizations, within their respective mandates and bearing in mind national priorities, and invites civil society, inter alia, women's organizations, including 23 March 2018 ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION 8 rural women's organizations, producer, agricultural and fisheries organizations, youth-led organizations, feminist groups, faith-based organizations, the private sector, national human rights institutions where they exist, and other relevant stakeholders, as applicable, to take the following actions: Strengthen normative, legal and policy frameworks

- a. Take action to fully implement existing commitments and obligations with respect to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the full and equal enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms, so as to improve their lives, livelihoods and wellbeing;
- b. Consider ratifying or acceding to, as a matter of particular priority, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Optional Protocols thereto, limit the extent of any reservations, formulate any such reservations as precisely and as narrowly as possible to ensure that no reservations are incompatible with the object and purpose of the Conventions, review their reservations regularly with a view to withdrawing them, withdraw reservations that are contrary to the object and purpose of the relevant Convention and implement the Conventions fully by, inter alia, putting in place effective national legislation and policies;
- c. Design and implement national policies and legal frameworks that promote and protect the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by all women and girls, including those living in rural areas, and create an environment that does not tolerate violations or abuses of their rights, including those involving domestic violence, sexual violence and all other forms of gender-based violence and discrimination;
- d. Enact legislation and undertake reforms to realize the equal rights of women and men, and where applicable girls and boys, to access natural resources and economic and productive resources, including access to, use of, ownership of and control over land, property and inheritance rights, including in diverse types of land tenure, appropriate new technology and financial services, including credit, banking and finance, including but not limited to microfinance, as well as equal access to justice and legal assistance in this regard, and ensure women's legal capacity and equal rights with men to conclude contracts;
- e. Enact legislation to promote women's, including rural women's, land registration and land title certification, regardless of their marital status, and address practices and stereotypes that undermine their land rights, including in the context of customary and traditional systems, which often govern land management, administration and transfer in rural areas;
- f. Eliminate all forms of discrimination against all women and girls, including in rural areas, and implement targeted measures to address, inter alia, the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, and the marginalization they face, through the development, where needed, and adoption of laws and comprehensive policy measures, their effective and accelerated implementation and monitoring, and the removal, where they exist, of discriminatory provisions in legal frameworks, including punitive provisions, and setting up legal, policy,

administrative and other comprehensive measures, including temporary special measures as appropriate, to ensure women's and girls' equal and effective access to justice and accountability for violations of the human rights of women and girls, and ensure that the provisions of multiple legal systems, where they exist, comply with international human rights obligations;

23 March 2018 ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION 9 g. Eliminate, prevent and respond to all forms of violence against rural women and girls in public and private spaces, through multisectoral and coordinated approaches to investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators of violence against rural women and girls and end impunity, and to provide protection as well as equal access to appropriate remedies and redress, to comprehensive social, health and legal services for all victims and survivors to support their full recovery and reintegration into society, including by providing access to psychosocial support and rehabilitation, access to affordable housing and employment, and bearing in mind the importance of all women and girls living free from violence, such as sexual and gender based-violence, domestic violence, gender-related killings, including femicide, as well as elder abuse, as well as of addressing the structural and underlying causes of violence against women and girls through enhanced prevention measures, research and strengthened coordination, monitoring and evaluation, by, inter alia, encouraging awareness-raising activities, including through publicizing the societal and economic costs of violence, and work with local communities; h. Eliminate harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage, which affect women and girls in rural areas disproportionately and may have long-term effects on girls' and women's lives, health and bodies, and which continue to persist in all regions of the world despite the increase in national, regional and international efforts, including by empowering all women and girls, working with local communities to combat negative social norms which condone such practices and empowering parents and communities to abandon them; i. Pursue, by effective means, programmes and strategies for preventing and eliminating sexual harassment against all women and girls, including harassment in the workplace and in schools, and cyber bullying and cyber stalking, including in rural areas, with an emphasis on effective legal, preventive and protective measures for victims of sexual harassment or those who are at risk of sexual harassment; j. Integrate a gender perspective into the design, implementation and evaluation of and follow-up to development policies, plans and programmes, including budget policies, where lacking, ensuring coordination between line ministries, gender policymakers, gender machineries and other relevant government organizations and institutions with gender expertise, and appropriate collaboration with the private sector, non-governmental and civil society organizations and national human rights institutions, where they exist, and paying increased attention to the needs of rural women and girls to ensure that they benefit from policies and programmes adopted in all spheres and that the disproportionate number of rural women living in poverty is reduced; k. Eliminate barriers and afford equal and effective access by all rural woman and girls to justice, legal remedies and legal support by, inter alia, providing adequate law enforcement and public safety infrastructure, accessible and affordable services, increasing rural women's and girls' legal literacy, such as awareness of and information about their legal rights, including on the existence of multiple legal systems, where they exist, providing legal assistance, gender-responsive training for police and security forces, prosecutors, judges and lawyers as well as other relevant authorities and officials in rural areas, as appropriate, putting in place mechanisms to ensure accountability and judicial remedies, and mainstreaming a gender perspective into justice systems at all levels to ensure the equal protection of the law for rural women and girls, taking into consideration, inter alia, the UN rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules); l. Guarantee the universal registration of births, including in rural areas, and ensure the timely registration of all marriages for individuals living in rural areas including by removing physical, administrative, procedural and any other barriers that impede access to registration and by providing, 23 March 2018 ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION

10 where lacking, mechanisms for the registration of customary and religious marriages, bearing in mind the vital importance of birth registration for the realization of their rights; Implement economic and social policies for the empowerment of all rural women and girls m. Design, implement and pursue gender-responsive economic and social policies that aim to, inter alia, eradicate poverty, including in rural areas, and combat feminization of poverty, ensure the full and equal participation of rural women in the development, implementation and follow-up of development policies and programmes and poverty eradication strategies, support increased rural employment and decent work, and promote the participation of women at all levels and sectors of the rural economy and in diverse on-farm and off-farm economic activities, including sustainable agricultural and fisheries production; n. Pursue macro-economic policies that support diverse economic activities, including smallholder agricultural production and the food security and nutrition of all rural women and girls and their communities by fostering the positive and mitigating the negative impact of international investment and trade rules; o. Emphasize the need for business enterprises, including transnational corporations and others, to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for human rights abuses by their operations, products or services on the wellbeing of women and girls in rural areas and provide for or cooperate in their remediation; p. Design and implement and pursue fiscal policies that, inter alia, promote gender equality and the empowerment of all rural women and girls, inter alia, by facilitating greater access to social protection and financial and business services, including credit, for women in rural areas, in particular women heads of households; q. Refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that impede the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries; r. Mainstream a gender perspective, and include sustainable agricultural and fisheries development issues, in national agricultural and rural development policies, strategies, plans and programmes, enabling rural women to act and be visible as stakeholders, decision makers and beneficiaries, taking into account the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security and the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication; s. Strengthen and support the critical role and contributions of rural women, including women farmers and fishers and farm workers, to enhancing sustainable agricultural and rural development, eradicating poverty, achieving food security and improved nutrition and the economic well-being of their families and communities; ensure their equal access to agricultural technologies that are affordable, durable, sustainable and accessible to women farmers and fishers, through investment, the transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms, and support research and development and integrated and multisectoral policies to improve their productive capacity and incomes, strengthen their resilience, and address the existing gaps in and barriers to trading their products in national, regional and international markets; t. Strengthen national, regional and international efforts, as appropriate, to enhance the capacity of developing countries to support rural women farmers, including smallholder farmers, and those in subsistence farming and fisheries, horticulture and livestock to achieve food security and improved nutrition, including through appropriate mechanization in agriculture, sustainable agricultural practices, 23 March 2018 ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION 11 and education and training on vaccination and management techniques and public and private investment to close the gender gap in agriculture and facilitate rural women's access to extension and financial services, agricultural inputs, land, water and irrigation; u. Strengthen sustainable production and consumption patterns, including family farming, respecting and protecting traditional and ancestral knowledge and practices of rural women in particular the preservation, production, use and exchange of endemic and native seeds, and supporting alternatives to the heavy use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides harmful to the health of rural women and girls and their communities; v. Invest in and strengthen efforts to empower rural women as important

actors in achieving food security and improved nutrition, ensuring that their right to food is met, including by supporting rural women's participation in all areas of economic activity, including commercial and artisan fisheries and aquaculture, promoting decent working conditions and personal security, facilitating sustainable access to and use of critical rural infrastructure, land, water and natural resources, and local, regional and global markets, and valuing rural women's, including indigenous women's, traditional and ancestral knowledge and contributions to the conservation and sustainable use of terrestrial and marine biodiversity, for present and future generations; w. Ensure integrated food and nutritional support for rural women and girls, including those who are pregnant and breast-feeding, and their access at all times to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food requirements for an active and healthy life; x. Invest in provision of and access to quality, resilient and gender responsive infrastructure and time and labour-saving technologies, information and communication technologies (ICTs), safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems, affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy, and safe drinking water and sanitation for all, including through technology transfer on mutually agreed terms, to improve the lives, livelihoods and wellbeing of all rural women and girls; y. Promote women's leadership and their full, effective and equal participation in decision-making on water and sanitation and household energy management and to ensure that a gender-based approach is adopted in relation to water and sanitation and energy programmes, through measures, inter alia, to reduce the time spent by women and girls in collecting household water and fuel, and to address the negative impact of inadequate water and sanitation and energy services on the access of girls to education as well as to protect women and girls from being physically threatened or assaulted and from sexual violence while collecting household water and fuel and when accessing sanitation facilities outside of their home or practising open defecation; z. Commit to encourage urban-rural interactions and connectivity and eliminate geographic and territorial disparities by strengthening gender-responsive sustainable and affordable transport and mobility, technology and communication networks and infrastructure, underpinned by planning instruments with a gender perspective, based on an integrated urban and territorial approach that maximizes the potential of these sectors for enhanced productivity, social, economic, and territorial cohesion, as well as safety and environmental sustainability; aa. Optimize fiscal expenditures to extend social protection coverage to all rural women and girls and establish nationally appropriate social protection floors to ensure access to social protection, without discrimination of any kind, and take measures to ensure sustainable, long-term financial support for social protection systems and make information on social protection measures and benefits widely available and accessible to all rural women and girls bearing in mind that social protection policies play a critical role in reducing poverty and inequality and supporting inclusive growth and contribute to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those living in rural areas; bb. Protect and promote the right to work and rights at work of all rural women in both agricultural and non-agricultural employment, taking into consideration international labour standards and national labour laws, including by setting wages that allow for an adequate standard of living, implementing policies and enforcing regulations that promote decent work and uphold the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, and taking measures to address gender-based discrimination, occupational segregation, the gender pay gap and unsafe and unhealthy working conditions; cc. Promote the economic empowerment of rural women and the transition of rural women from the informal to the formal economy by improving their skills, productivity and employment opportunities including through technical, agricultural, fisheries and vocational training, including their financial and digital literacy and facilitate the entry and re-entry of all rural women, especially young women, into the labour force; dd. Encourage and facilitate rural women's entrepreneurship and expand opportunities for their enterprises, cooperatives and self-help groups, to diversify and increase their productivity by engaging in sustainable agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture,

including mariculture, cultural and creative industries and other areas of economic activity, and improving access to financing and investment, technology and infrastructure, training and diverse markets; ee. Increase trade and procurement from rural women's enterprises, cooperatives and women-owned businesses, by building the capacities and skills of rural women, especially young women, to benefit from public and private sector procurement processes, including public food programmes, and fostering their access to local, national and international value chains and markets; ff. Take measures to facilitate the financial inclusion and financial literacy of rural women and their equal access to formal financial services, including timely and affordable credit, loans, savings, insurance, and remittance transfer schemes, integrate a gender perspective in finance sector policy and regulations, in accordance with national priorities and legislation, encourage financial institutions, such as commercial banks, development banks, agricultural banks, micro-finance institutions, mobile network operators, agent networks, cooperatives, postal banks and saving banks, to provide access to financial products, services and information to rural women, and encourage the use of innovative tools and platforms, including online and mobile banking; gg. Recognize, reduce and redistribute rural women and girls disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work, as well as contributions to on-farm and off-farm production, by promoting policies and initiatives supporting the reconciliation of work and family life and the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, through flexibility in working arrangements without reductions in labour and social protections, and through the provision of infrastructure, technology and public services, such as water and sanitation, renewable energy, transport and information and communications technology, as well as accessible, affordable and quality childcare and care facilities and maternity, paternity or parental leave and by challenging gender stereotypes and negative social norms and facilitating men's increased participation in unpaid care and domestic work and family responsibilities, including as fathers and caregivers; hh. Take steps to measure the value of unpaid care and domestic work in order to determine its contribution to the national economy, for example through periodic time-use surveys, and include such 23 March 2018 ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION 13 measurements in statistics as well as in the formulation of gender-responsive economic and social policies; ii. Invest in and strengthen family-oriented policies and programmes in rural areas that provide the necessary support and protection and are responsive to the diverse, specific and changing needs of rural women and girls and their family, as well as address the imbalances, risks and barriers that they face in enjoying their rights and protect all family members against any form of violence; as these policies and programmes are important tools for, inter alia, fighting poverty, social exclusion and inequality, promoting work-family balance and gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls and advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity; jj. Promote and respect women's and girls' right to education at all levels, throughout the life cycle, including women and girls living in rural areas and those who have been left furthest behind, by providing universal access to quality education, and free and compulsory primary and secondary education, ensuring inclusive, equal and non-discriminatory quality education, promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, eliminating female illiteracy, and striving to ensure the completion of early childhood, primary, and secondary education and expanding vocational and technical education for rural women and girls; and foster, as appropriate, intercultural and multilingual education for all; kk. Eliminate gender disparities and commit to scale up financing and investments in public education systems to fulfill the right to education for women and girls in rural areas by addressing gender-based discrimination, negative social norms and gender stereotypes in education systems, including in curricula, textbooks and teaching methodologies; combat gender norms that devalue girls' education and prevent women and girls from accessing education; provide inclusive, safe, non-violent and accessible schools with gender- and disability-sensitive infrastructure, including lighting, and safe, accessible and affordable transportation to school; maintain separate and adequate sanitation facilities; train, recruit and retain qualified teachers in rural areas, especially

women teachers where they are underrepresented; support rural women and girls with disabilities at all levels of education and training; ensure that rural women and girls have equal access to career development, training, scholarships and fellowships, and promote an effective transition from education or unemployment to decent work and active participation in public life; ll. Take steps to promote educational and health practices in order to foster a culture in which menstruation is recognized as healthy and natural, and girls are not stigmatised on this basis, recognising that girls' attendance at school can be affected by negative perceptions of menstruation and lack of means to maintain safe personal hygiene, such as water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in schools that meet the needs of girls; mm. Ensure that pregnant adolescents and young mothers, as well as single mothers, can continue and complete their education, and in this regard, design, implement and, where applicable, revise educational policies to allow them to remain in and return to school, providing them with access to health-care and social services and support, including childcare and breastfeeding facilities and crèches, and to education programmes with accessible locations, flexible schedules and distance education, including e-learning, and bearing in mind the important role and responsibilities of, and challenges faced by, fathers, including young fathers, in this regard; nn. Intensify efforts to prevent and eliminate violence and sexual harassment against girls at, and on the way to, school, including, inter alia, by implementing effective violence prevention and response activities in schools and communities, engaging men and boys, educating children from a young age regarding the importance of treating all people with dignity and respect, designing educational 23 March 2018 ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION 14 programmes and teaching materials that support gender equality, respectful relationships and nonviolent behaviour; oo. Develop policies and programmes with the support, where appropriate, of international organizations, civil society and non-governmental organizations, giving priority to formal, informal and non-formal education programmes, including scientifically accurate and age-appropriate comprehensive education, relevant to cultural contexts, that provides adolescent girls and boys and young women and men in and out of school, consistent with their evolving capacities, and with appropriate direction and guidance from parents and legal guardians, with the best interests of the child as their basic concern, information on sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention, gender equality and women's empowerment, human rights, physical, psychological and pubertal development and power in relationships between women and men, to enable them to build self-esteem and informed decision-making, communication and risk reduction skills and to develop respectful relationships, in full partnership with young persons, parents, legal guardians, caregivers, educators and health-care providers, in order to, inter alia, enable them to protect themselves from HIV infection and other risks; pp. Address the digital divide, which disproportionately affects rural women and girls, by facilitating their access to ICT and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education to promote their empowerment and to develop skills, information and knowledge that are needed to support their labour market entry, livelihoods, well-being and resilience and expand the scope of ICT-enabled mobile learning and literacy training while promoting a safe and secure cyberspace for women and girls; qq. Strengthen measures, including resource generation, to improve women's health, including maternal health, by addressing the specific health, nutrition and basic needs of rural women and taking concrete measures to realize the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health for women of all ages in rural areas, as well as quality, affordable, available and universally accessible primary health care and support services; rr. Increase financial investments in quality, affordable and accessible health-care systems and facilities and safe, effective, quality, essential, and affordable medicines and vaccines for all and health technologies, including through community outreach and private sector engagement, and with the support of the international community, towards achieving each country's path towards universal health coverage for all rural women and girls; ss. Increase investments in a more effective and socially accountable health workforce and address the shortage

and inequitable distribution of doctors, surgeons, midwives, nurses and other healthcare workers in rural areas, by promoting decent work with adequate remuneration and incentives to secure the presence in rural and remote areas of qualified health-care professionals, enabling safe working environments and conditions, and expanding rural and community-based health education and training and strengthening education for health professionals; tt. Take measures to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity, as well as neonatal, infant and child mortality and morbidity, in rural areas and increase access to quality health care before, during and after pregnancy and childbirth to all rural women and girls through interventions such as training and equipping community health workers, nurses, midwives, to provide basic pre- and post-natal care and emergency obstetric care, inter alia, by providing voluntary, informed family planning and empowering women and communities to identify risk factors and complications of pregnancy and childbirth and facilitate access to health facilities; Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences, including universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes, and recognizing that the human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on all matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence, as a contribution to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and the realization of their human rights; vv. Intensify national and international efforts to improve public health, strengthen health care systems, and increase the availability of motivated, well-trained and appropriately equipped health professionals and health workers, as well as access to health facilities, including access to diagnosis services, and for the prevention, treatment and care of non-communicable and communicable diseases, as well as neglected tropical diseases, by integrating gender-based approaches for the prevention and control of diseases based on data disaggregated by sex, age and other characteristics relevant in national contexts; ww. Strengthen efforts to achieve universal access to HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support for all women and girls, including those living in rural areas, living with, at risk of, or affected by HIV and AIDS, including co-infections and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and address their specific needs and concerns without stigma or discrimination, and promote the active and meaningful participation, contribution and leadership of women and girls living with HIV and AIDS in rural and remote areas in HIV and AIDS responses; xx. Devise, strengthen and implement comprehensive anti-trafficking strategies that integrate a human rights and sustainable development perspective, and enforce, as appropriate, legal frameworks, in a gender- and age-sensitive manner, to combat and eliminate all forms of trafficking in persons, raise public awareness of the issue of trafficking in persons, in particular women and girls, take measures to reduce the vulnerability of women and girls to modern slavery and sexual exploitation, provide access, as applicable, to protection and reintegration assistance to victims of trafficking in persons and enhance international cooperation, inter alia, to counter, with a view to eliminating, the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation, including sexual exploitation and forced labour; yy. Strengthen and build the resilience and adaptive capacity of all rural women and girls to respond to and recover from economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters, humanitarian emergencies and adverse impacts of climate change, natural disasters and extreme weather events by providing essential infrastructure, services, appropriate financing, technology, and social protection, humanitarian relief, forecast and early warning systems, and decent work for women; zz. Develop and adopt gender-responsive strategies on mitigation and adaptation to climate change to support the resilience and adaptive capacities of women and girls to respond to the adverse impacts of climate change, through, inter alia, the promotion of their health and well-being, as well as access to sustainable livelihoods,

and the provision of adequate resources to ensure women's full participation in decision-making at all levels on environmental issues, in particular on strategies and policies related to the adverse impacts of climate change, and ensuring the integration of their specific needs into humanitarian responses to natural disasters, into the planning, delivery and monitoring of disaster risk reduction policies and into sustainable natural resources management; aaa. Promote and protect the rights of indigenous women and girls living in rural and remote areas by addressing the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and barriers they face, including violence, ensuring access to quality and inclusive education, health care, public services, economic 23 March 2018 ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION 16 resources, including land and natural resources, and women's access to decent work, and promoting their meaningful participation in the economy and in decision-making processes at all levels and in all areas, while respecting and protecting their traditional and ancestral knowledge, and noting the importance of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for indigenous women and girls; bbb. Promote and protect the rights of older women in rural areas by ensuring their equal access to social, legal, and financial services, infrastructure, health care, social protection, and economic resources and their full and equal participation in decision making; ccc. Promote and protect the rights of women and girls with disabilities in rural areas, who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including by ensuring access on an equal basis with others, to economic and financial resources and disability-inclusive and accessible social infrastructure, transportation, justice mechanisms and services, in particular in relation to health and education and productive employment and decent work for women with disabilities, as well as by ensuring that the priorities and rights of women and girls with disabilities are fully incorporated into policies and programmes, and that they are closely consulted and actively involved in decision-making processes; ddd. Promote and protect the rights of Afro-descendant rural women and girls, including, where applicable the recognition of their lands and territories, and mainstream a gender perspective when designing and monitoring public policies, taking into account the specific needs and realities of rural women and girls of African descent; eee. Strengthen the capacity of national statistical offices and other relevant government institutions to collect, analyse and disseminate data, disaggregated by sex, age, disability and other characteristics relevant in national contexts, and gender statistics, to support policies and actions to improve the situation of rural women and girls, and to monitor and track the implementation of such policies and actions, and enhance partnerships and the mobilization, from all sources, of financial and technical assistance to enable developing countries to systematically design, collect and ensure access to highquality, reliable and timely disaggregated data and gender statistics; fff. Promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by reaffirming the commitments made in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, pursuing policy coherence and an enabling environment for sustainable development at all levels and by all actors and reinvigorating the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development; ggg. Take steps to significantly increase investment to close resource gaps, including through the mobilization of financial resources from all sources, including public, private, domestic and international resource mobilization and allocation, including by enhancing revenue administration through modernized, progressive tax systems, improved tax policy, more efficient tax collection, and increased priority on gender equality and the empowerment of women in official development assistance to build on progress achieved, and ensure that official development assistance is used effectively to accelerate the achievement of of gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls; hhh. Urge developed countries to fully implement their respective official development assistance commitments, including the commitment made by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national income for official development assistance to developing countries and the target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of their gross national income for official development assistance to the least developed countries, and encourage developing countries to build

on the progress achieved 23 March 2018 ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION 17 in ensuring that official development assistance is used effectively to help meet development goals and targets and help them, inter alia, to achieve gender equality the empowerment of rural women and girls; iii. Strengthen international cooperation, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, bearing in mind that South-South cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation, and invite all States to enhance South-South and triangular cooperation focusing on shared development priorities, with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in government, civil society and the private sector, while noting that national ownership and leadership in this regard are indispensable for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls; Strengthen the collective voice, leadership and decision-making jjj. Ensure that the perspectives of all rural women and girls are taken into account, and that women, and girls as appropriate, fully and equally participate in the design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of policies and activities that affect their livelihoods, well-being and resilience, and that women and their organizations, and girl- and youth-led organizations, are fully, safely and actively able to participate in the decision-making, policies and institutions at all levels, including by promoting and protecting the right to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, the right to vote and to be elected as provided by law, as well as to participate in local and self-governing bodies such as community and village councils, and in political parties and other organizations; kkk. Mainstream a gender perspective in decision-making processes and the management of natural resources, inter alia, in land, forestry, fisheries, marine and water management bodies, as well as in planning relating to rural infrastructure and services, transportation and energy, leveraging the participation and influence of women in managing the sustainable use of natural resources; lll. Protect and promote the rights to freedom of association, peaceful assembly and collective bargaining so as to enable rural women workers and entrepreneurs to organize and join unions, cooperatives and business associations, while recognizing that those legal entities are created, modified and dissolved in accordance with national law and taking into account each State's international legal obligations; mmm. Ensure that the perspectives of rural women, and girls as appropriate, in armed conflict and post-conflict situations and in humanitarian emergencies are taken into account and that they effectively and meaningfully participate, on equal terms with men, in the design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of policies and activities related to conflict prevention, peace mediation, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, as well as take into account the perspective of women and girls who are internally displaced and refugees; and ensure that the human rights of all rural women and girls are fully respected and protected in all response, recovery and reconstruction strategies and appropriate measures are taken to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against rural women and girls in this regard; nnn. Ensure that women affected by natural disasters, including those caused by the adverse impacts of climate change, are empowered to effectively and meaningfully participate, on equal terms with men, in leadership and decision-making processes in this regard; ooo. Support the effective participation, decision-making and leadership of rural women in enterprises, farmer and fisher organizations, producer cooperatives, trade unions, civil society and other relevant organizations ensuring a safe and enabling environment, and provide support for those organizations, 23 March 2018 ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION 18 including by investing in programmes that provide opportunities for rural women and girls to exercise their voice, agency and leadership; ppp. Develop and implement policies and strategies that promote rural women's and girls' participation in and access to the media and information and communications technologies (ICTs), including by increasing their digital literacy and access to information; qqq. Recognize the important role the media can play in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls, including through non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive coverage and by eliminating gender stereotypes, including those perpetuated by commercial advertisements, and encourage training for

those who work in the media and the development and strengthening of self-regulatory mechanisms to promote balanced and non-stereotypical portrayals of women and girls, which contribute to the empowerment of women and girls and the elimination of discrimination against and exploitation of women and girls. Support the important role of civil society actors in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms of rural women; take steps to protect them, including women human rights defenders, and to integrate a gender perspective into creating a safe and enabling environment for the defense of human rights and to prevent violations and abuses against them in rural areas, inter alia, threats, harassment and violence, in particular on issues relating to labor rights, environment, land and natural resources; and combat impunity by taking steps to ensure that violations or abuses are promptly and impartially investigated and that those responsible are held accountable;. Fully engage men and boys to take an active part in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those in rural areas, and the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls both in public and private spheres; design and implement national policies and programs that address the role and responsibility of men and boys and aim to ensure equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in caregiving and domestic work; transform with the aim to eliminate those social norms that condone violence against women and girls, and attitudes and social norms by which women and girls are regarded as subordinate to men and boys, including by understanding and addressing the root causes of gender inequality such as unequal power relations, social norms, practices and stereotypes that perpetuate discrimination against women and girls; and engage them in efforts to promote and achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls for the benefit of both women and men, girls and boys. 47. The Commission recognizes its primary role for the follow-up to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in which its work is grounded, and stresses that it is critical to address and integrate gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls throughout national, regional and global reviews of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to ensure synergies between the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action and the gender-responsive follow-up to the 2030 Agenda. 48. The Commission calls upon Governments to strengthen, as appropriate, the authority and capacity of national mechanisms for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, at all levels, which should be placed at the highest possible level of government, with sufficient funding, and to mainstream a gender perspective across all relevant national and local institutions, including labour, economic and financial government agencies, in order to ensure that national planning, decision-making, policy formulation and implementation, budgeting processes and institutional structures contribute to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including in rural areas. 49. The Commission calls upon the United Nations system entities, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World 23 March 2018 ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION 19 Food Programme, within their respective mandates, and relevant international financial institutions and multi-stakeholder platforms to support Member States, upon their request, in their efforts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all rural women and girls. 50. The Commission encourages the international community to enhance international cooperation and to devote resources to developing rural areas and sustainable agriculture and fisheries and to supporting smallholder farmers, especially women farmers, herders and fishers in developing countries, particularly in the least developed countries. 51. The Commission recalls General Assembly resolution 72/181 and encourages the secretariat to continue its consideration of how to enhance the participation, including at the sixty-third session of the Commission, of national human rights institutions that are fully compliant with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles), where they exist, in compliance with the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council. 52. The Commission calls upon UN-

Women to continue to play a central role in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and in supporting Governments and national women's machineries, upon their request, in coordinating the United Nations system and in mobilizing civil society, the private sector, employers' organizations and trade unions and other relevant stakeholders, at all levels, in support of the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including towards achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls.

## **ANNEX II: JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF THE CSW 62<sup>ND</sup> SESSION**

### **JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF THE 62<sup>ND</sup> COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, GOVERNMENT OF KENYA DELEGATION, MARCH 2018**

The 62<sup>nd</sup> Session on the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was held in New York, 12-23 March 2018, under the Priority theme: *Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls*"

The Government of Kenya delegation was drawn from National Government, County Government, State Agencies, Commissions, Office of First Ladies, Civil Society, Private Sector and Grassroots Individuals.

The Head of the Government delegations was Professor Margaret Kobia, PHD, EBS, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs.

In pursuance of Vision 2030 Agenda and the realization of the promise of the Constitution, delegates acknowledged the centrality of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls living in rural areas was critical and an essential contribution to achieving the Country's National goals and sustainable development.

Acknowledge with appreciation the support and political commitment from the highest level by H.E Uhuru Kenyatta, The President of the Republic of Kenya on the Gender Equality, which is at the centre of Kenya's national development.

Welcome His Excellency the President of Kenya for the Big Four Agenda and its potential impact to the livelihoods of women and girls living in the rural areas.

Recognized Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) as a strategic platform for Kenya to; highlight key issues, share best practice and help shape the global agenda.

Recognize the importance of fully engaging men and boys, as agents and beneficiaries of change, for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those in rural areas

The Government of Kenya Delegation to the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of Commission on the Status of Women Identify the following pillars as areas of priority to guide action in the empowerment of women and girls living in rural areas:

#### ***A. Enhance Women Participation In Leadership And Decision Making***

- i. Recognize the gains achieved out of the 2010 Constitution in women representation and decision making in; politics, public service, corporate boards and in communities, and noting the need to build on the gains and sustain them.
- ii. Agree to sustain the advocacy for increased numbers and effective participation of women in leadership at all levels of decision making in the private and public sectors and in particular on the realisation of the Two-Third Gender Principle.
- iii. Advocate for the development of a Policy framework on Obstetric fistula that would amongst other things direct free treatment for women suffering from fistula, capacity building and training of community health workers to identify and refer of and midwives to provide basic care cases as well as setting up of champions at communities.
- iv. As part of the strategy to increase levels of women's participation in political leadership and decision making, establish innovating mechanism for improved access of financial resources of women candidates.
- v. Underline the importance of strengthening rural women's and girls' voice, agency and leadership and full, informed, equal and effective participation at all levels of decision-making in all matters affecting them within the Counties, Nationally and at all levels.
- vi. Further recognizes the critical role played by rural women's civil society organizations, unions, enterprises and cooperatives in gathering and uniting rural women, supporting their voice, agency and representation in the political and economic spheres.

***B. Empowerment Of Women And Girls Living In Rural Areas Through Economic Empowerment And Financial Inclusion***

- i. Recognise the critical importance of economic empowerment of women to the delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, African Union Agenda 2063, the Big Four and called for equitable access to capacities, financial resources, natural resources, public contracts and markets, for example land, property rights, information communication technology, agribusiness opportunities, manufacturing, access to affordable credit and export promotion opportunities.
- ii. Acknowledge the centrality of equal access to education, completion and transition to decent work opportunities, equal pay and career progression to economic empowerment and participation of women and girls living in the rural areas.
- iii. Reaffirm that the economic empowerment of women is a political process that requires challenging and engaging with existing norms, structures and political actors to secure sustainable political goodwill and resources.

### ***C. Resourcing and Financing For Empowerment Of Women And Girls Living In Rural Areas***

- i. Reaffirm the importance of significantly increased investments to close resource gaps for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including women and girls living in rural areas, through, inter alia, the mobilization of financial resources from all sources, including domestic and international resource mobilization and allocation, the full implementation of official development assistance commitments and combating illicit financial flows.
- ii. Understand that this is to build on progress achieved and strengthens the international cooperation, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, bearing in mind that South-South cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation.
- iii. Recognise the importance of an enabling and conducive external environment in support of national efforts towards the economic empowerment of women, which includes the mobilization of adequate financial resources, capacity-building and the transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms, which in turn would enhance the use of enabling technologies to promote women's entrepreneurship and economic empowerment.
- iv. Identify the need to amend the Public Finance Management Act, 2012 to ensure the Budget Policy Statement is gender equality and equity responsive and the National and County Treasuries, on recommendation of the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), issue certificates of compliance as a precondition for Parliament and County Assemblies to appropriate budgetary resources to each government entity.
- v. The Standard Chart Accounts (SCAs) currently under review should include specific codes for allocation and tracking of gender equality and women empowerment initiatives.

### ***D. Women in Peace and Security***

- i. Express the need for the institution that is charged with data need to flag out indicators that support women involvement in peace and security.
- ii. Identify that women should head committees overseeing implementation of peace related programmes e.g. Nyumba Kumi, GBV Working Groups, Inter clan Groups, Intertribal Conflicts Groups from Ward Levels to National Levels.
- iii. Also acknowledge the need for budgetary allocations be gender responsive. Women should be involved when budgets are being made and this will promote peace and security as women are known to be able to budget and give equal attention to everyone with the available resources whether little or more.
- iv. Acknowledge the co-ordination role by organizations that have previously sustainably led the peace programmes e.g. Maendeleo Ya Wanawake, Mothers union, women's Guild, NYS, Caritas, Teachers Association, Council of Imams etc.

- v. Undertake the need for poverty reduction Programmes should be implemented through multi stake holder actors above for sustainable peace and Security

***E. Gender Gaps , Disaggregated Data and tools for Monitoring and Evaluating Progress in Gender Equality and Women Enterprise***

- i. Acknowledge the importance of accurate timely data and information, as well as clear targets, to underpin evidence based policy and monitoring.
- ii. Applaud the emerging innovative and citizen led work that is taking place with different actors in the collection of gender data and information.
- iii. Urge Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, the Gender Research and Documentation Centre, Kenyatta University, Centre for Women Research and Gender Analysis, Egerton University among other actors, to lead in the coordination of the work of all the various institution and agencies in the collection of gender specific data.
- iv. Call upon the acceleration of the implementation of the Every Women Count pilot programme on gender statistics in order to support policies and actions to improve the situation of women and girls living in rural areas

***F. Address Current And Emerging Issues In The Elimination of Gender Based Violence And Harmful Cultural Practices***

- i. Recognise that violence against women and children remains a critical issue affecting women's empowerment and should receive priority attention.
- ii. Welcome the continuing efforts to end violence against women and girls, including the prevention and elimination of child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation and other harmful traditional practices. As well as an appreciation that studies which estimate the costs of violence against women/gender based violence (GBV) are essential.
- iii. Strongly condemn all forms of violence against all women and girls and expresses its concern that violence in all its different forms and manifestations is under recognized and underreported, particularly at the community level, and pervasive, which is reflection discriminatory norms that reinforce stereotypes and gender inequality, the corresponding impunity and lack of accountability.
- iv. Express deep concern that women and girls continued practices of living in rural and remote areas are particularly more vulnerable to violence because of multidimensional poverty, their limited or lack of access to services including effective legal remedies, social care and protection services, and employment opportunities.
- v. Concerned as well that women and girls living with obstetric fistula continue to be stigmatised and discriminated adherent access to treatment and re-integration support.
- vi. Recognise that girls living in rural areas are disproportionately affected by child, early and forced marriage, and that its long-term effects, on women and girls may include

lack of decision-making power over their health and bodies, complications from early pregnancy and childbearing, which are the second leading cause of death for girls between 15 and 19, and increased vulnerability to violence and sexually transmitted infections including HIV and AIDs.

#### **G. Other factors**

- i. Civil Society recognised the disproportionate impact of climate change on women and girls and committed to engage in mitigation and adaptation initiatives, including disaster preparedness, response, recovery and related measures to build resilience in the rural areas of Kenya.
- ii. Call on greater collaboration between the Government through the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs and Civil Society and other agencies to accelerate efforts to end all forms of violence and harmful practices and facilitate access to essential social, health psycho-social support and just services for survivors.
- iii. Underscore the importance of strengthening rural women's and girls' voice, agency and leadership and full, informed, equal and effective participation at all levels of decision-making in all matters affecting them within the Counties, Nationally and at all levels.
- iv. Further recognizing the critical role played by rural women's civil society organizations, unions, enterprises and cooperatives in gathering and uniting rural women, supporting their voice, agency and representation in the political and economic spheres.
- v. Urge Government to ensure that Public Participation is cognisant of the time burden of women and girls particularly those living in rural areas.
- vi. Express concern that women and girls with disabilities, particularly those living in rural and remote areas, are subject to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, which limit their enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with others, particularly with regard to the equal access to education and employment, access to health-care services, including for sexual and reproductive health, access to justice and equal recognition before the law, the ability to participate in political and public life, live independently and be included in the community and have the freedom to make their own choices.
- vii. Further express concern that these challenges may be compounded for those living in rural and remote areas through the lack of affordable, inclusive and quality services in rural areas, including water, sanitation, electricity, health-care services, and education. The delegates expresses further concern that stereotypes, stigmatization and discrimination of women and girls with disabilities in rural and remote areas heightens the risk of violence, exploitation and abuse, including sexual violence and abuse compared to rural women and girls without disabilities, as well as men and boys with disabilities.
- viii. Recall the need to address the special situation and vulnerability of women and girls, particularly Widows and underline in this regard the obligation of States to protect the

human rights of widows so as to prevent and address abuse and exploitation.  
Therefore:

- ix. Call upon greater collaboration between the both levels of Government, Parliament, Judiciary, Public bodies, development partners, private sector, Civil Society and non-conventional partners through the joint/GOK programme on GBV.

## CALL TO ACTION

1. To develop a framework for the participation of women and girls in the Big Four Agenda as a framework for accountability and effective coordination across all sectors.
2. Call for strengthened systems to increase representation of women in decision-making at all levels, including through affirmative policies and electoral reform, where appropriate, for advancing women's effective political leadership.
3. Put concerted efforts to change the narrative of Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (GEWE) by highlighting the need to cooperate with men as partners and showcase the gains from GEWE and impact of women leadership.
4. Coordinate a County level mapping of viable business opportunities, markets and emerging frontiers that can expand decent work for all women including those living in rural areas based on the county level mapping, make policy recommendations to fast track economic development and industrialization.
5. Review and repeal legal restrictions in all relevant instruments related to women employment, property and assets rights.
6. Work towards the amendment of rules and regulations related to Access to Public Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) to ensure appropriate assignment of functions which include civic education, facilitating access to LPO financing, monitoring, evaluation and publication of national status reports.
7. Actualize the commitment to establish a Centre of Excellence for women, youth and persons with disabilities (PWDs) in procurement in Kenya as training hub for the common wealth member states.
8. Capacity build and invest in financial literacy and innovative transition pathways of women owned informal businesses to formal enterprises that can benefit from formal financing and other market support such as export promotion opportunities.
9. Build capacity of national and county assemblies and mainstream gender responsive budgeting, economic decision making and service provision at both the National and County governments
10. Extend access to social protection for women in the informal sector rural areas.
11. Capacity build women as negotiators and monitors of proposed trade agreements from a gender lens in order to secure and execute gender responsive trade agreements.
12. Ensure national statistics proactively and consistently capture and publish disaggregated economic data on girls education, completion rates, transition to the labour market, women's economic activities and contributions to the economy
13. Set up a framework localised and decentralised mechanism to monitor and evaluate the impact of gender programmes with special focus on affirmative funds, GBV and AGPO
14. Intensify efforts to ensure civic education is undertaken as a critical tool for M/E and increase participation for rural women

15. Establish a framework to engage men and boys as agents of change and champions of gender issues e.g. Two-thirds gender principle, SGBV.
16. Government to ensure that Public Participation is cognisant of the time burden of women and girls and necessary support is provided to ensure women's participation at meetings/events.
17. Establish a Trail Blazer programme for transformative women leaders from the National to grass root levels and include as part of the programme a databank to use as a pool of resource for capacity building, mentorship and training.
18. Create a legislation or policy to ensure gender assessment is undertaken as part of the negotiation and implementation of trade agreements, EPZ and ensure gender lens to any planned TAs.
19. Build capacities of National and County Assemblies on gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting, monitoring implementation and evaluating projects and programmes;
20. Ensure implementation of the recommendations of the report of the High Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows of 2015 of the African Union;
21. Stakeholders to engage with the National Treasury on the proposed amendments to the PFM Act and Regulations; and,
22. Engage with the National Treasury on the provision of specific codes in the Standard Chartered Accounts (SCA) is currently being reviewed.
23. Standard Chartered Account to facilitate and provide leadership to other EAC members states in taking on a regional approach to eliminating SGBV and other harmful practices.
24. Ensure women no matter their marital status are brought to the decision making tables of peace and security.
25. Appeal to Parliament to prioritise a Widows Bill on protection of widow's rights.
26. Scale up civic Education on Women Peace and Security at county levels sponsored.
27. Big Four - That the four priority areas enumerated were sub sectors of the broader conversation on inequality and there was need to bring the youth into focus specifically to harness the demographic dividend
28. Government to scale up the provision of National free sanitary pads in collaboration with other actors including county government, Beyond Zero among others.
29. Ensure the availability of comprehensive services for women and girls affected by gender-based violence. Those included one-stop centres and shelters, counselling and



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psychosocial assistance, adequate health care services, including for sexual and reproductive health and maternal health, and extension of coverage to rural areas.

30. Improve access to justice was critical in the effective reduction of violence against women and girls. The use of hotlines to report violence against women and girls and seek assistance and counselling, the training of police and judges, and strengthening of law enforcement in rural areas to close the gap between victims and the justice system.
31. We call upon all the actors to take all the necessary measures to implement the provisions of this Communique, including within their activities to promote and empower rural women and girls living in rural areas.
32. We acknowledge the important role of Ministry of Public Service Youth and Gender Affairs and request the Ministry to continue to provide coordination of the CSW meeting including convening regular (quarterly) meeting to review progress on agreed outcomes and plan for an effective participation of Kenya at the next 63<sup>rd</sup> Session on the Commission on the Status of Women.

**Signed by**

HON. PURITY WANGUINGIRI  
WDMAN REPRESENTATIVE  
KIRINYAGA COUNTY.

