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REPUBLIC OF KENYA



THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

12TH PARLIAMENT - THIRD SESSION

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REPORT OF KENYA'S PARTICIPATION IN THE 63RD SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW63) HELD AT THE
UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK FROM 11TH - 22ND
MARCH, 2019

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| THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PAPERS LAID | |
| DATE: | 25 SEP 2019 DAY: Wednesday |
| TABLED BY: | Hon. Purity Ngunjiri, MP |
| CLERK OF THE TABLE: | Halima Ahmed |

The Clerk's Chambers
The National Assembly
Main Parliament Buildings
NAIROBI.

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ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------|--|
| AGPO | Access to Government Procurement |
| AMWIK | Association of Media Women in Kenya |
| CEC | County Executive Committee |
| CHOGM | Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting |
| CPP | Country Position Paper |
| CSOs | Civil Society Organizations |
| CSW | Commission on the Status of Women |
| GBV | Gender Based Violence |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| IFAD | International Fund for Agricultural Development |
| MPSYGA | Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs |
| NGO | Non - Governmental Organizations |
| PWDs | Persons with Disabilities |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| IWD | International Women's Day |
| KEPSA | Kenya Private Sector Alliance |
| KEWOPA | Kenya Women Parliamentarians Association |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| WAMM | Women Affairs Ministerial Meeting |
| WEF | Women Enterprise Fund |
| YEDF | Youth Enterprise Development Fund |

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| BACKGROUND..... | 1 |
| Objectives of the CSW63..... | 4 |
| BACKGROUND..... | 6 |
| 1.0 Establishment..... | 6 |
| 1.1 Annual Sessions..... | 6 |
| 1.2 Members of the Bureau of the CSW..... | 7 |
| 1.3 Methods of Work..... | 7 |
| 1.4 Sixty-Third Session (2019)..... | 8 |
| 1.5 Understanding the 63 rd CSW Theme..... | 9 |
| 3.1 Ministerial Meetings..... | 21 |
| Annex II - Joint Communique by Kenya Delegation..... | 59 |
| The agreed Conclusions by Member States..... | 60 |
| Annex II..... | 99 |
| Joint Communique by Kenya Delegation..... | 99 |

FOREWARD

Honourable Speaker,

The 63rd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 11th to 22nd March, 2019. The theme was **“Social Protection systems: access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.”**

The 63rd Session brought together over seven thousand (7,000) men and women from all over the globe who converged and charted way forward on women agenda. The delegates were drawn from various Governments of the world and civil society organizations.

Honourable Speaker,

The Kenya National Assembly sent a delegation consisting of Members of Parliament and staff to the Annual Conference on the Commission on the Status of Women 63rd CSW as follows: -

1. The Hon. Ngirici Purity Wangui, MP - Chairperson KEWOPA & Leader of Delegation;
2. The Hon. Chepkwony Charity Kathambi, MP - Ass. Secretary, KEWOPA;
3. The Hon. Adagala Beatrice Kahai, MP - Member, KEWOPA;
4. The Hon. Janet Ong’era, MP - Member, KEWOPA;
5. The Hon. Mizighi Lydia Haika, MP - Member, KEWOPA;
6. The Hon. Chepkoech Joyce Korir, MP - Vice Chairperson, Committee on Labour & Social Welfare; and
7. The Hon. Wanga Gladys Nyasuna, MP - Member, Committee on Labour & Social Welfare.

The delegation was accompanied by Ms. Miriam Atabo Modo, Third Clerk Assistant (Secretary to the delegation) and Ms. Dinah Chepkemei Kimeto, Human Resource Officer.

Honourable Speaker,

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 CSW63. I can confirm to you that the National Assembly was adequately represented.

Finally, I wish to extend my most sincere gratitude to 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.

On behalf of the delegation, it is my pleasant duty and privilege, to present the Delegation's Report summarizing the proceedings and resolutions of the 63rd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 63), held in the United Nations Headquarters, New York from the 11th to 22nd March, 2019.



.....
THE HON. PURITY NGIRICI, MP

THE CHAIRPERSON, KEWOPA AND LEGAL OF DELEGATION

DATE: 07/08/2019

BACKGROUND

The United Nations 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. Further, it is a functional Commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) established in June 1946 with the sole mandate of 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. During the CSW, emerging issues that affect gender equality and the empowerment of women are discussed. Member States agree on further actions to accelerate progress and promote women's enjoyment of their rights in political, economic and social spheres.

Every year, representatives of United Nations (UN) Member States gather at the UN Headquarters in New York to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide.

The Commission holds a two-week event where representatives of the UN Member States, Civil Society groups, Non-Governmental Organizations, the Media and other UN entities converge at the UN Headquarters in consultation with ECOSOC to discuss priority themes critical to the well-being of women around the globe.

The 63rd Commission on the Status of Women

This year's 63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW63) was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 11th – 22nd March 2019, under the Priority theme: "***Social Protection Systems, Access to Public Services and Sustainable Infrastructure for gender equality and empowerment.***"

The Session also reviewed the theme of the 60th Session of the CSW (Agreed Conclusions) that focused on: "*Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development.*"

The CSW is the single largest forum for UN Member States, civil society organizations and other international actors. It focuses on building consensus and commitment on policy actions on gender equality and empowerment of women. The CSW63 delegates included global government leaders, NGOs, private sector actors, United Nations partners and activists from around the world.

Format of the Commission and expected outcomes:

In its current methodology of work, the Commission undertakes the following:

- (a) Holds ministerial meetings 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;
- (b) Engages in general discussion on the status of gender equality, identifying goals attained, achievements made and efforts underway to close gaps and meet challenges in relation to the priority theme and the review theme;
- (c) 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;
- (d) Evaluates progress in implementing agreed conclusions from previous sessions as a review theme;
- (e) Addresses emerging issues, trends, focus areas and new approaches to questions affecting the situation of women, that require timely consideration;
- (f) 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;
- (g) Considers in closed meeting the report of its Working Group on Communications; and,

(h) Agrees on further actions for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women by adopting agreed conclusions and resolutions (Outcome document).

This report highlights Kenya's engagement in the 63rd CSW process. It captures the emerging issues arising from the discussions, lessons learnt as well as recommendations on implementation of the priority areas for action as outlined in the implementation matrix.

Preparation and Kenya's Position Paper on the 63rd Session of the CSW

Kenya's preparations for the 63rd Session of the CSW were coordinated by the State Department for Gender Affairs through a national multi-sectoral task force that was constituted based on the priority theme. The task force undertook preparation of the Country's Position Paper which captured measures taken to enhance social protection systems, accessing public services and sustainable development for gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. The report highlighted the measures undertaken by the Kenyan government to accelerate gender equality and women empowerment through social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure development. The position paper was adopted during a Pre-CSW Meeting for the Kenyan Government Delegation that was organized by the Ministry of Public Service, youth and Gender Affairs on 27th February, 2019 at the Hilton Hotel. The Country Position Paper was presented at the 63rd CSW on Wednesday, 13th March, 2019.

The Task Force made preparations for the Kenya led Side Events and prepared technical papers for ministerial and other key meetings as well as the bilateral engagements. The work also entailed organizing and participating in a national stakeholders meeting and debriefing session for the Kenya's delegation in Nairobi. The meetings established Kenya's preparedness by reviewing the Country Position Paper, planned meetings and related documents including Kenya's side.

Kenya also participated in the Pre-63rd CSW Africa Ministerial Consultations. The meeting was held in Cairo, Egypt and contributed to the Outcome document on Africa's Common Position adopted by Ministers.

Kenya's participation in the 63rd CSW

Kenya delegation was drawn from National Government, Parliament, Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA), County Governments, County Assembly Forum, State Agencies, Constitutional Commissions, office of H.E the First Lady of the Republic of Kenya, County First Ladies Association, Civil Society, Private Sector and Grassroots communities. The Head of the Kenyan delegation was Professor Margaret Kobia, PhD, MGH, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs.

During the meeting, the Kenyan delegation held daily briefing and interactive sessions at the Kenya Mission to the United Nations Offices to share lessons learnt and plan for the activities of each day.

Objectives of the CSW63

The 63rd Session of the Commission (CSW63) took place between 11th to 22nd March 2019 with a priority theme which was "*Social Protection Systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and empowerment*" with the review theme of "*Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development.*" The 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.

Kenya continues to participate in CSW as an obligation and in recognition of its importance to Member States' strategic and political position on matters of gender equality and women's empowerment.

- (i) Share experiences and learn best practices in areas relating to the priority and review themes;
- (ii) Strengthen existing and/or establish new partnerships with partners and organizations;
- (iii) Negotiate on a common position and adopt the Agreed Conclusions for CSW; and,

(iv) Identify priority areas of interventions for Kenya in implementing outcomes of the 63rd CSW.

Kenya Led Side Events

Kenya planned and hosted a number of side events to show-case Kenya's best practices and success stories in relation to the achievements so far gained in areas that enhance social protection for its citizens. These events provided an opportunity for other delegates to scrutinize and advice on the Kenya Social Protection programmes. The main Kenya's side events were: -

- (i) Social Protection – transforming the Social Economic Landscape for Women, Girls and other vulnerable groups;
- (ii) Huduma Mashinani – accessing public services, leaving no one behind; and,
- (iii) The power of Women Agencies for better Health Outcomes (The Beyond Zero Campaign Initiative).

The outcome of the 63rd CSW

The 63rd Session of the CSW adopted Resolutions on the priority theme: *social protection systems: access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.* The resolutions of the Commission with recommendations for action are incorporated in the Appendix to this Report.

Further, observations and recommendations that emerged from various meetings that the National Assembly's delegation attended and participated in are included in the Report.

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 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.

1.2 Members of the Bureau of the CSW

The ECOSOC has 45 members elected for four years, on the basis of equitable geographical distribution. 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 pattern adopted for elections is as follows: -

- (a) Thirteen Members from African States;
- (b) Eleven Members from Asia-Pacific States;
- (c) Nine Members from Latin America and Caribbean States;
- (d) Eight Members from Western European and other States; and
- (e) Four Members from Eastern European States.

The Bureau of the 63rd Session of the CSW comprised the following: -

- (a) H.E. Geraldine Byrne Nason (Ireland), Chair, Western European and other States Groups;
- (b) Ms. Koki Muli Gringnon (Kenya) Vice Chair, African States Group;
- (c) Mr, Maruicio Carabali Baquero (Colombia), Vice Chair, Latin American and Caribbean States Group;
- (d) Ms. Rena Tasuja (Estonia), Vice Chair, Eastern European States Groups; and
- (e) Mr. Mohammed S. Marzooq (Iraq|), Vice Chair Designate, Asia Pacific States Group.

1.3 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 2015/16, at each Session the Commission-

- (1) Considers one priority theme based on the Beijing Declaration Platform for Action and outcomes of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly and possible linkages to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

- (2) Holds a ministerial meeting 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;
- (3) 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;
- (4) 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;
- (5) Evaluates progress in implementing agreed conclusions from previous sessions as a review theme;
- (6) Addresses emerging issues, trends, focus areas and new approaches to questions affecting the situation of women, that require timely consideration;
- (7) 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;
- (8) Considers in closed meeting the report of its Working Group on Communications; and,
- (9) Agrees on further actions for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women by adopting agreed conclusions and resolutions.

1.4 Sixty-Third Session (2019)

The Sixty-Third Session of the Commission took place from 11 to 22 March 2019. The Commission addressed as its priority theme '*Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and*

the empowerment of women and girls'. In addition, it evaluated progress in the implementation of the agreed conclusions from the sixtieth session (2016) on '*Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development*'. The Commission also discussed a focus area, '*Women and girls of African descent*'.

The ten-day session included a ministerial segment with round tables and other high-level interactive dialogues, a general discussion, as well as inter-active and expert panel discussions. Stakeholders organized many side events to draw attention to critical aspects of the work on gender equality.

1.5 Understanding the 63rd CSW Theme

According to the Kenya Country Position Paper, Social Protection is defined as public measures that respond to concerns of social justice and exclusion by providing relief from deprivation, preventing deprivation and enhancing incomes and capabilities.

Social Protection is a human right which needs to respond to social vulnerabilities occasioned by gender inequalities. Social protection programmes can accelerate gender equality and the empowerment of women through expanding opportunities for paid work, implementation of affirmative action for women in the public and private sectors, expanding access to credit facilities, promotion of the Universal Health Coverage (UHC), reservation of 30% of Government budgets to women, youth and persons with disabilities among others aspects.

Globally, men and women face different types of risks. The biological make up of men and women presents them with unique needs. Women also tend to have higher differentials in ensuring economic abilities due to their ability to balance work and home life where they take up a larger burden of unpaid work. In many instances, women take up heavier roles in ensuring they nurture homes and take care of their children, the elderly and the sick.

Poverty is a major determinant of how social protection systems should be designed. Culture too plays a major fact. For example, single women are more vulnerable to social stigma and lack of access to assets. Consequently, social

protection programmes need to be designed in tandem with the empowerment of women initiatives.

1.6 Kenya's participation in the 63rd CSW

The Government of Kenya, in participating in this event, recognized the importance of gender equality and empowerment of women in achieving its national development goals.

The Objectives of Kenya's participation to the 63rd CSW were to: -

- (a) to share experiences and learning best practices in areas relating to the priority theme and review themes;
- (b) strengthen existing or establishing new partnerships with organisations;
- (c) negotiate a common position, adopting the agreed conclusions; and,
- (d) identifies priority areas of intervention for Kenya to implement.

CHAPTER 2

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The Sixty-Third Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 63) took place in the United Nations headquarters in the New York from 11th to 22nd March 2019 under the priority theme '*Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.*' In addition, it evaluated progress in the implementation of the agreed conclusions from the sixtieth session (2016) on '*Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development*'. The Commission also discussed a focus area, '*Women and girls of African descent*'.

According to UN Women, representatives of Member States, UN entities, and ECOSOC-accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from all regions of the world attended the session. A mix of events and broad range of topics were discussed during the two weeks session. The delegates discussed various topical issues under the priority theme. 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.

2.1 OPENING SESSION

2.1.0 Remarks by H.E. Mrs. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, President of the 73rd Session of the UN General Assembly

The President of the 63rd Session of the UN General Assembly, H.E. Mrs. Maria Fernada Espinosa Gares delivered the opening remarks of the Session.

She began welcoming all delegates to New York, to the General Assembly, the Parliament of humanity. In particular, she recognized the great presence of human rights defenders and fierce women who are promoting the gender agenda.

Secondly, H.E. Mrs. Maria Fernada Espinosa Gares offered her condolences to the families of the victims of the Ethiopian Aircraft accident that claimed several members of the UN family. She extended her support to the governments of the

people of Ethiopia and Kenya and the countries which lost their citizens in the unfortunate tragedy.

She emphasized that the delegates must have their voices heard, once again and always, for the rights of women, to acknowledge their triumphs and progress and also defend the victims of violence and discrimination. She highlighted the millions of women and girls globally whose dreams are denied daily, and who are condemned to suffer poverty and marginalization.

She affirmed that the standards and policies established by the Commission every year are fundamental to strengthen the agenda of equality and link it to the sustainable development and human rights.

She observed that one year away from celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, various forms of violence, discrimination and intolerance are re-appearing within societies, jeopardizing the rights that women have conquered. To counter this, she insisted that countries must be vigilant and should never allow citizens to go back.

Regarding the theme of the 63rd Session of the CSW, she affirmed that social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure are tools essential in attaining gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. She therefore recommended that it was vital to have a cross-cutting gender approach in their design and implementation, as well as considering the specific needs and challenges of women such as: women with disabilities; elderly women; afro descendant women, indigenous and rural women; migrant women, refugee women and internally displaced women.

She underscored the fact that women are essential for sustainable development and it would be important to do more to ensure their full participation to tap in the potentials they have and to take advantage of their contributions. She however decried the fact that, owing to the persistence of the current trends, women risk not achieving Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda. A case in point is that figures in all fields were heart-breaking since every day, around 830 women die due to preventable causes related to pregnancy and birth, every year, 3 million girls are at risk of being subjected to female genital mutilation and further,

women continue to earn lower salaries for the same jobs and approximately, a woman must work ten more years to earn the same salary a man does.

In the same vein, she pointed out that one in every three women and girls has experienced some form of physical or sexual violence. However, she lauded the move by the General Assembly in December 2018 that witnessed the adoption of the First resolution to prevent and eliminate sexual harassment as well as all forms of violence against women and girls.

H. E. Mrs. Maria Fernanda observed that the world cannot ignore the historical and structural unequal power relations between women and men that can broaden the existing gender gaps and even perpetuate inequality and exclusion and as a result, her priority mandates as President of the General Assembly was gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and to ensure their inclusion in all dialogues, commitments and decisions

In her conclusion, she reminded delegates that challenges were many, but encouraged them to be optimistic and fight to ensure greater participation of women in policy making and in power to reduce the gaps of inequality.

Finally, she wished delegates fruitful Sessions and I urged them to persist and not give up in their quest for making the world a better place for women through transformative agenda, unity of purpose by both men and women, we can build the societies we all deserve to live with the sole motto of *“fairer, more inclusive, more sustainable and more peaceful societies.”*

2.1.1 Remarks by Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UN Women

In her opening remarks, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka expressed her sympathies and condolences to the families of the victims of the Ethiopian Aircraft accident that claimed several members of the UN family. She extended her support to the governments of the people of Ethiopia and Kenya and the countries which lost their citizens in the unfortunate tragedy.

Welcoming delegates, she stated that currently, the world has the largest population ever of women and girls and there has been much to acknowledge with regard. For instance, over the past two decades, many countries throughout

the developing world, have invested in infrastructure and access to public services and have expanded the scope and coverage of social protection for their people. She acknowledged the fact that there are more girls in school today than ever before and more countries have achieved gender parity in school enrolment. She further stated that access to essential health services has improved, with global rates of childbirth with a skilled health professional up from 61 per cent in 2000 to 79 per cent in 2016. Over the past decade, 274 reforms to laws and regulations supporting gender equality have been adopted in 131 countries. Eighty per cent of women in low- and middle-income countries now use or access a mobile phone; and 48 per cent of women in those countries now use mobile internet.

She however reiterated that, these gains are fragile, and we are seeing them reverse for instance, 131 million girls worldwide are out of school, and latest data show a 6 per cent increase in the number of girls not in primary school. On average, globally, women still have only three-quarters of the legal rights of men, and more than one billion have no recourse against violence or are restricted in their education or employment what is now being called 'economic violence'. Every day, approximately 830 women die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth; 99 per cent of them are women in developing countries. Their deaths link inextricably to poverty and lack of services and infrastructure. And the gender digital divide persists even as opportunities for women to own digital assets increases. Overall, progress is uneven, slow, insufficient and subject to backsliding. This picture indicates a worrying trend for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka urged delegates to focus on change that lasts, and that can withstand the shocks of political climates that may be uncondusive to human rights and women's rights. This means that we need big, bold steps not incremental steps. Well-coordinated and integrated infrastructure and social protection that reach large proportions of the population, especially the poorest, the young and old and most in need, can give us that leap ahead.

He further pointed the fact that families and communities most likely to be left behind are those who lack access to adequate infrastructure, who have restricted mobility, and those who cannot afford private services, such as child

care, water, education or telecommunications infrastructure. These are the millions who rely on charity, and public service and social protection to meet their basic needs. These are the priorities of CSW 63, which is going to focus on closing these gaps.

It is not surprising that universal social protection is integral to the vision of the 2030 Agenda and a component of several of the Sustainable Development Goals. But currently 71 per cent of the world's population has only partial or no access to its transformative benefits. Investment in gender-responsive social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure is critical to free up women's time, support their mobility, enhance their access to economic opportunities and strengthen their resilience to shocks.

She pointed out that the public service provision of something as basic as a birth certificate or identity card can have huge consequences for women's ability to access benefits and services, and important public and private service goods, from banking, land ownership and voter registration, to reclaiming property after conflict or climate disasters or after the death of a spouse. Most of the one billion people worldwide who continue to live in poverty are heavily concentrated in rural areas and in the informal economy. And, in low-income countries, 79 per cent of all employment in cities is informal, with little or no access to social protection.

She decried the fact that Women and girls are significantly affected by a lack of infrastructure, services and social protection. They are responsible for 80 per cent of water collection in households without onsite access to water, as well as multiple other unpaid household duties. Water collection can compromise their safety and takes up time that could otherwise spent on paid work, education or leisure. This scenario can occasion a greater chance of exposure to sexual violence as well as physical exhaustion. Therefore, just the simple provision of piped clean water to households can be a quiet revolution.

She recommended that with a good water supply, sanitation can be improved, and we can reduce girls' school dropout. Safe sanitation is still lacking in 23 per cent of the world's schools. Installing it can help turn around education retention for the growing number of adolescents, too many of whom already drop out. The

solution to this problem, she noted, was decisive leadership to enable a positive future for women and girls, especially when we also provide them access to enjoy their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

She also observed that women and girls have a vital role to play in shaping the policies, delivery of services and infrastructure that impact their lives. Their voices must be meaningfully included, as must the voices of people living with disabilities. In addition, large-scale infrastructure investment must be transparent and take the environment and people's rights into account. No human rights defender or anyone should have to die protecting land from development that compromises other important needs of communities. Whether they are parliamentarians, indigenous representatives, climate justice activists, or young activists who are trying to protect their communities, their cases should not go unheard and unresolved.

She further recommended that Public services can address safety in public spaces for example, considering where we locate bus terminals and how we provide the lighting in public spaces where women are at risk of being assaulted, and even raped. This is the aim of our innovative Safe Cities programme. Innovation in all its forms is a key component of development. It can have far-reaching impact to address the needs of poor communities. It can be a life-saving intervention, and it is not a luxury when it addresses the needs of poor communities.

In planning ahead, technologies should be intentionally directed to improve the lives of those who are furthest behind. Young people must be a part of the consultation process. Mobile technology has enabled a range of services and must be regarded as essential infrastructure for development, especially where it can save young people and old people from the need to travel long distances and pay exorbitant amounts to access services. It offers a historic opportunity for universal access and accelerated delivery. Today, algorithms increasingly determine selection, response and decision-making. We need to act on the growing evidence that women have been routinely left out of the data on which decisions are made. Artificial intelligence's logic and big data will fail women if their conclusions are reached on the basis of gender-blind information. Policies founded on gender-biased data will recycle gender inequality. But good policy

can be an equalizer and radically change the world for the poor, the young and the old.

Investments in public services can be a positive engine of job creation for women. Well-designed investments in early childhood education and care services can have major economic and social pay-offs. They can create decent jobs in the paid care sector and enhance children's capabilities.

Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka informed delegates that next year, 2020, the UN will be celebrating Women's 10th Anniversary and the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. It is also the 20th anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 and the last decade of the 2030 Agenda. These anniversaries will be marked to accelerate and scale up progress in the delivery of the interventions much needed by society. We invite you to take part in these big moments.

She recommended that there is need to have a strong response to the unprecedented population of young people so that it truly becomes a demographic dividend. We also need to deliver services in an era of longer life expectancy and ageing populations. Plans must be tailor-made for both the needs of the young and of the aging. Women and girls will be better served by using reliable data and innovative responses to public sector policies.

In her concluding remarks, she informed delegates that CSW63 was a moment to reflect on how we deliver, integrate and coordinate policies on much-needed and lifechanging policies and infrastructure and urged the Commission to seize this opportunity to make historic progress. It falls upon a generation to be great and make change, as Nelson Mandela said, and you are that generation.

2.1.2 Remarks by Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations

Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations welcomed delegates to the 63rd Session of the CSW. In his opening remarks, he stated that parity was about the very effectiveness of the world to secure peace, advancing human rights and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Put simply, when we exclude women, everyone pays the price. When we include women, the whole world wins.

He stated that gender equality is fundamentally a question of power. For millennia, women have been systematically marginalized, ignored and silenced, in a male dominated world with a male dominated culture.

People are more connected, yet societies are becoming more fragmented. Big challenges are growing outward – climate change, insecurity, conflict. Yet people are turning inward. More than ever, we need global responses to global challenges.

we need to robustly build global movements, raise awareness, inspire change and fight pushback on women's rights which have continued to deepen, are pervasive and relentless. For instance, the world continues to witness increased violence against women, especially human rights defenders and women running for political office, online harassment and abuse of women who speak out, women murder and rollback of legal protection against domestic violence or even female genital mutilation. Women last year were 26 percent less likely to be in employment than men. Fewer than one-third of managers are women - even though they are likely to be better educated.

He however, was happy to report that women's participation makes peace agreements more durable, but he urged that that all actors advocating for women rights need to struggle to make sure women are included in negotiating teams to fights aggravating inequality, splintering communities and all other setbacks curtailing women's rights and cutting vital services.

The United Nations Charter states: "the paramount consideration in the employment of the staff shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity". He concluded by stating that the point is men and women are equally efficient, equally competent, and with the same levels of integrity.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 Kenya's Position Paper and Country's Statement

Kenya prepared a country Position Paper to articulate the country's position on the 63rd CSW priority theme. The Position Paper was adopted during a pre-CSW meeting for the Kenya Government delegation that was organized by the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and gender Affairs on 27th February, 2019 at the Hilton Hotel and presented on Wednesday, 13th March, 2019.

The Paper noted that social protection is not sufficient to address the root causes of women's income insecurity including their disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care and domestic work.

The Paper elaborated that the Government of Kenya's social protection measures are found in policies and actions including legislative measures that are geared towards enhancing the capacity of and opportunities for the poor and vulnerable in order to improve and sustain their lives, livelihoods and welfare and that enable workers to earn a reasonable level of income through decent work. They are also aimed at improving access to affordable healthcare, social security and assistance.

The Position Paper highlighted the normative legal and policy frameworks that Kenya has committed itself to domestically and internationally. They are at the international and regional levels and include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995); Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (2000); the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the rights of women in Africa (2003), referred to as the Maputo Protocol and the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2008).

The Position Paper stated that at the National level, Kenya has a number of policies and legislation that support and promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the areas of social protection, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure. The Paper provided that some of these provisions are found in the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, Vision 2030 and the Big Four Agenda.

The Position Paper highlighted some of the programmes and interventions for social protection in Kenya which include: -

- (i) *Social Protection Response*: Cash Transfers, hunger response interventions, the school feeding programmes, the Hunger Safety Net and the fertilizer cost reduction programme;
- (ii) *The Health Security Response*: The health Insurance Subsidy Programme, the Managed Equipment Service (MES), *Linda Mama*, the Menstrual Health Management Programme and the Beyond Zero Initiative;
- (iii) *The Education Response*: The Higher Education Loans Board (HELB), the Presidential Secondary School Bursary, the County and Constituency Funds and the Private Sector Scholarships;
- (iv) *The Water and Sanitation Response*: The National Open Declaration Free (ODF) Kenya 2020 Campaign Framework to monitor rural sanitation and the Kenya Integrated Water Sanitation and Hygiene Programme;
- (v) *Social Protection and Peace Response, Social Justice and Inclusion Responses*: The Uwezo Fund, the Women Enterprise Fund (WEF); the Non-State Actors Initiative (Chama Women's Programme (Merry Go Rounds); the Uwiano Platform for Peace, enhancing Social Protection within the Public Service and the Huduma Centres (One Stop Service Centres);
- (vi) *Infrastructure Response*: The Energy and Information Communication Technology, the Rural Electrification Programme, Last Mile Connectivity Project, the Kenya Off Grid Solar Access Project, the LPG Uptake Promotion, the Kenya National Domestic Biogas Programme, the Last Mile Internet Fibre Connectivity, the technology and Digital Platform Infrastructure and Partnerships with private sector on energy.

In conclusion, the Position Paper emphasized that Kenya has made steady progress towards securing income security for vulnerable and poor members of the society.

3.1 Ministerial Meetings

A series of high-level ministerial roundtables and interactive dialogues were held in form of plenary sessions to examine priority issues relating to the themes. The meetings gave Kenya an opportunity to demonstrate its commitments and share good practices on the priority and review themes.

- Kenya's leadership, commitment and investment in gender equality and empowerment of women within the health and social sectors was applauded.
- It was evident that women of influence can leverage on their designated strategic positions to propel human development indicators that work towards creating an equitable world with dignity and respect.
- There is need for heightened investments towards addressing the neglected health issues affecting women including stigma associated with disability, HIV/AIDS, cancers and obstetric fistula as evidence shows that the returns are immense and worthwhile.

CHAPTER 4

KENYA-LED SIDE EVENTS

The Kenyan delegation participated in a number of activities, including: the official opening of the CSW63 session & General Assembly meetings; ministerial meetings; Kenya led and co-sponsored side events; bilateral meetings amongst other engagements.

Kenya hosted and co-sponsored the following side events: -

- (i) Social Protection – Transforming the Social Economic Landscape for Women, Girls and other vulnerable Groups;
- (ii) Huduma Mashinani – Accessing Public Service - Leaving No One Behind; and,
- (iii) The Power of Women’s Agency for better Health Outcomes (Beyond Zero Programme).

4.0 Social Protection – Transforming the Social Economic Landscape for Women, Girls and Other Vulnerable Groups

This side event was hosted by Kenya with panelists drawn from Kenya and Malawi. The objective of the event was to showcase best practices in Kenya that have enabled women prosper.

The event commenced with remarks by the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs, Prof. Margaret Kobia who indicated that Kenya has taken steps to ensure that the vulnerable do not suffer hunger or premature death. She indicated that lack of medical care, illiteracy caused serious challenges in the country.

She further reiterated Kenya’s commitment of not leaving anyone behind by ensuring urgency in the management of the economic rights of women and girls. Kenya ratified the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and regional charters such as the Maputo Protocol and the East African Community (EAC) market charter. These policies, she said, ensure prevention of discrimination and gender-based risks which expose girls and women through their lives., the long-

term goal is to ensure that all Kenyans live in dignity and are able to express their capability for social and economic development.

Amb. Ukur Yattani, the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection enumerated the role of the Ministry in supporting the policies and actions that have enhanced the capacity of the poor and vulnerable in Kenya.

Amb. Ukur Yattani, stated that the social protection instruments in Kenya included health care, social security and social assistance. The social assistance instruments include emergency assistance, income transfer, free primary education and health insurance. He noted that these interventions in Kenya have resulted in a drop-in poverty through support to about 1.3 million households.

Further, Amb. Ukur Yattani, reiterated that Kenya's long-term development strategy of Vision 2030 was Kenya in building a just and cohesive society. He highlighted some of the social assistance programmes in Kenya to include cash transfers, food distribution, grants, subsidies. Social welfare actions, informal community support *et cetera*.

On the *Inua Jamii Programme*, Amb. Ukur Yattani, noted that, of the number of Kenyans not under any pension scheme, 52 per cent were women and 48 per cent men. The number of women aged over 70 years also stands at 63 per cent.

Amb. Ukur Yattani, concluded his presentation by noting that Kenya's national social protection system was evolving. He provided positive impacts of social protection systems to include increased food security, nutrition and diversity; improved housing; changing social norms and relations; promoting financial inclusion for women enhancing financial decisions, increased, increased involvement in income generating activities and promoting family wellbeing through reduced child labour and decent work.

Hon. Cecilia Chazama, the Minister for Gender, Children Disability and Social Welfare in Malawi indicated that social protection in Malawi is implemented through the Malawi Social Protection Programme. She said that this programme has been rolled out in 28 districts in Malawi where 76 per cent of the households

are female headed. The Government of Malawi in future increase allocations to the elderly who are most vulnerable.

Hon. Cecilia Chazama also elaborated other social protection programmes in Malawi such as the school's meal programme and women's groups. The enactment of the Gender Equality Act has played an important role in ensuring equality for women in Malawi.

Sen. Johnson Sakaja, the Senator for Nairobi City County and the Chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on Labour and Social Welfare, who was also a Panelist at this event, made a presentation on the role of the Senate of Kenya in accelerating Social Protection for Women and Girls.

Sen. Sakaja began his presentation by emphasizing the special role of the Senate, of protecting the interests of the 47 counties and their Governments.

Focusing on what the Senate has done in accelerating social protection for women and girls in Kenya, Sen. Sakaja provided key legislative, oversight and other interventions.

On the legislative front, Sen. Sakaja cited key Acts and Bills that are accelerating social protection for women and girls to include County Allocation of Revenue Act which Outlines the financial responsibilities of County Governments within a given year. Further, he indicated that once every five years, the Senate determines the basis for equitable share among the 47 Counties. Increased allocations to Counties have ensured better infrastructural development which has enabled women and girls have access to better public services such as hospitals, schools and markets. This, he indicated has reduced poverty and opened up business opportunities for women.

Conditional grants to Level-5 Hospitals and leasing of medical equipment, he observed, have ensured that women are now assured of better maternity services and reduced child mortality.

Sen. Sakaja cited a number of Bills that the Senate has considered and which are critical in social protection including: -

- (i) The Food Security Bill, Senate Bills No. 12 of 2017 which promotes the constitutional right of every person to be free from hunger and have adequate food acceptable quality;
- (ii) The Warehouse Receipts Systems Bill, Senate Bill No. 10 of 2018 which provides a legal framework for development and regulation of a warehouse receipt system for agricultural commodities. As women are greatly involved in farm work leading to agricultural produce, the Bill creates a window of seek funds for their economic growth, hence reducing poverty levels;’
- (iii) The County Early Childhood Education Bill, Senate Bills No. 26 of 2018 which sets out standards for the establishment, management and administration of early childhood centres. This will ensure that women take their children to education centres and carry out other economic activities without worrying about the well-being of their children;
- (iv) The prevention of Human Dignity and Enforcement of Economic and Social Rights Bill, Senate Bill No. 27 of 2018. This Bill seeks to establish a framework for the promotion, monitoring and enforcement of economic and social rights. Such rights include accessibility to clean and safe water, reasonable standards or sanitation, basic nutrition and high standards of healthcare services all of which affect women the most.

Sen. Sakaja elaborated that the Senate has put in place other interventions including enhanced collaboration between the national and county governments by mobilizing counties in eliminating harmful practices that affect women and girls such as early and forced marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and trafficking of women and girls.

Sen. Sakaja also reiterated the role of Women Members of County Assemblies and the role of Senate is playing in building their capacity to ensure gender responsive budgeting, gender mainstreaming and monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects.

In his concluding remarks, he stressed on the role Senate plays in protecting counties and ensuring increased allocations to counties which has in turn

translated to sustainable infrastructural systems and public services to women and girls at the grassroots.

The Outcomes of the side event were as follows: -

- (i) Social protection should be affordable, sustainable and linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);**
- (ii) Policy, legislation and institutional frameworks are essential for effective social protection;**
- (iii) Social protection policies should go beyond welfare to empowerment, poverty reduction and closing the gender gap; and,**
- (iv) Counties should pay attention to quality, reach and coverage for various social protection systems.**

4.1 Huduma Mashinani – Accessing Public Service – Leaving No one behind

Huduma Mashinani, the Kenyan citizen centric programme is an international world class benchmark on best practice and is behind the Government of Kenya's commitment to transform the way public services are provided to Kenyans.

This side event was moderated by Mrs. Safina Kwekwe, the Principal Secretary for Gender Affairs. The Panelists were the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs, Prof. Margaret Kobia, the Woman Representative for Homa Bay, the Hon. Gladys Wanga, the Governor of Kericho, Prof. Paul Chepkwony and the Minister for Women in South Africa, the Hon., Bathabile Dlamini.

The side event emphasized that the objective of the Huduma Kenya Programme is to turn around public service delivery to ensure citizens have accessibility to efficient Government services. This side event focused on the following activities that focus on Huduma Mashinani –

- The Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) that provides accessible and affordable credit to support women start or expand business for wealth and employment creation;
- The Youth Enterprise Fund (YEF) which provides financial support and business development to youth owned enterprises;
- The Uwezo Fund which expands access to finances in the promotion of youth and women enterprises; and
- The Older Persons Cash Transfer Programme which provides predictable and regular cash transfers to persons over 65 in registered and deserving households.

The side event noted that Huduma Mashinani has transformed the lives of women living in rural areas. A new initiative, Rais Mashinani, which was launched in December, 2018, also enables the Presidency to engage with citizens directly, listen to their needs and articulate Government Policy and direction.

The Minister for Women in South Africa, the Hon. Bathabile Dlamini explained that South Africa has a similar model. Public services are offered at physical centres via mobile services that are responsive to empowerment of women and girls and include registration of birth certificates within one month and one stop support for survivors of Gender Based violence (GBV). The centres are well equipped with services offered by social workers, prosecutors, magistrates, magistrates, doctors and psychologists. The Minister also observed that sex offenders registers are critical in combating and ending impunity on gender based violence.

The Governor of Kericho County, Prof. Paul Chepkwony presented the county government's perspective on Huduma Mashinani. He indicated that the 47 Huduma County Stations bring services closer and eliminate travel costs. A positive to the Huduma station is reduced time to register businesses, which is a plus for devolution, registration of births has been reduced to two weeks in the major cities and use of mobile technology by all applicants has improved tracking of services.

Prof. Chepkwony, also explained that the Huduma Centres have assisted in monitoring access to Government procurement services for women, youth and Persons with Disabilities (PWDS). Counties have also raised revenue collection through the Huduma Centres.

Hon. Gladys Wanga, Member of the Labour and Social Welfare Committee of the Kenya National Assembly indicated that Homa Bay County has six islands where the locals require various Government services. She explained that the residents in these islands would use boats and dhows to access services in the mainland. The Huduma Mashinani Initiative, she explained, has enabled the citizens of these islands access services conveniently.

Hon. Wanga also provided the special legislative role of Parliament in ensuring provision of public services in a non-discriminatory manner. Further, she cited laws and regulations enacted to ensure provision of public services, for example, the Public Service (Values and Principles) Act, 2015.

The outcomes of this side event were as follows: -

- (i) Huduma Kenya Programme should be anchored in legislation for sustainability;**
- (ii) More Huduma centres should be established at the sub-county level to enhance outreach in line with the Medium-Term Plan (2018-2022) that provides for establishment of two hundred and ninety (290) Huduma centres (at least one per Constituency) by the end of the plan period;**
- (iii) Huduma on the Wheels should be operationalized for better outcomes;**
- (iv) Sex Offenders' registers should be established and operationalized and monitoring frameworks on the same be established; and,**
- (v) Establishment of one-stop Gender Based Violence (GBV) centers in every county should be fast tracked.**

4.2 The Power of Women's Agency in transforming Social Norms for Better Health Outcomes and Well being (Beyond Zero Initiative Model)

In line with the 63rd CSW theme on access to public services, the First Lady of the Republic of Kenya, Her Excellency Margaret Kenyatta presented the Beyond Zero Model that has proved how passion for an idea can bring change.

Beyond Zero is an initiative of the First Lady, Her Excellency Margaret Kenyatta which was launched in January, 2014. The objectives of the Beyond Zero Initiative are to increase awareness and promote a sense of urgency amongst leaders on the need to rapidly scale up high impact interventions for HIV control and maternal and child health, sensitize and advocate for national and county leadership to progressively allocate sufficient resources for HIV, Maternal and child health programmes, mobilize the support and participation of men in HIV control, maternal and health services and inspire and promote a culture of accountability for results amongst leaders on their commitment towards meeting HIV, maternal and child health targets.

The First Lady, H.E. Margaret Kenyatta, began by reiterating her clarion call that no woman should die giving life. She indicated that the Beyond Zero Initiative came up as a result of the need to spur action across Kenya against a backdrop of disturbing statistics on high maternal and neonatal death rates., in 2013. 6,300 maternal deaths and an average of 18-20 women died every day from pregnancy related causes. Then, she noted, the lifetime risk of maternal death was one in 53 compared to one in 2,900 in developed countries.

On child health, H.E, the First Lady indicated that by 2013, 108,000 children died each year before their fifth birthday. Also, 50 per cent of all new HIV infections among adults occurred among women aged 15-24 years and 15 per cent of deaths for children under the age of five were as a result of HIV complications.

It is against this background of Statistics that the Beyond Zero Initiative was formed. The First Lady was hopeful that the Initiative had grown in leaps and

bounds. Today, she said, the Initiative is at the core of planning health services, has involved a strong stakeholder participation including the First Ladies at the county level and has organized four successful Marathons to raise finances.

To ensure sustainability, the Initiative is fashioned to fit into existing policies and infrastructure. To-date, she indicated, the 47 counties have received a mobile clinic courtesy of the Initiative.

The First Lady further said that the Initiative has launched medical safaris with a focus on obstetrics fistula. The initiative has also focused on preventive mechanisms which include screening for breast and cervical cancers, immunization, encouraging breast feeding and HIV testing.

She concluded by challenging the audience to think of how they can be part of an innovative idea that can change the world and inspire others to participate in such an initiative.

The outcomes of this event include: -

- (i) Strengthening efforts towards achieving universal access to HIV/Aids prevention, treatment, care and support contributes to meaningful participation and contribution of women and girls living with HIV and AIDs.**
- (ii) Guaranteed access to maternity protection and adequate support especially during pregnancy, lactation, infancy and especially exclusive breastfeeding contributes to reduction in infant deaths.**

CHAPTER 5

OTHER SIDE-EVENTS

5.0 World Vision Side Event - Social Protection to eliminate Violence against Women

This side event was moderated by Mrs. Daniella Crooks, a Child Protection Officer, World Vision. Other panelists were; the Hon. Janet Onge'ra, Member of the Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA) in the Kenya National Assembly and a representative of Kisii County, Sulo Abna from Abania, Cornelius Abasuga from Uganda, Ms. Debra Howatt from Lumos and Mr, Howard Taylor from Hungary. Various topics by various panelists were discussed that fell under the overall theme.

Ms. Daniella on her topic on "*Protection of the rights of children*", began by stating that every child regardless of age, race, gender, wealth or birthplace has a basic right to live free of fear and want. Yet millions of children have their child right denied and their childhoods stolen from them by abuse, exploitation and slavery among other vices.

She went on to state that unresolved problems of the world were poverty, violence and gender inequalities and the Sustainable Development Goals provide systematic means of addressing these global problems specifically identification first, of the root causes so that appropriate solutions can be sought.

Ms. Daniella further stressed that solutions are found in the improved design of the social protection initiatives that are aimed at addressing problems faced by most vulnerable groups.

Mr. Cornelius Abasuga, gave a presentation on "security breakdown" with regards to the issue relating to violence against women and girls. He gave an insight that there has been breakdown in security when it comes to reporting of violence cases against women and girls.

He recommended that primary prevention was occasioned by lack of income and non-collection of evidence to aid in the implementation and address of those problems through legal and legislative frameworks. There was need to integrate programs to address prevalent problems facing women and girls facing various forms of violence. To this end, he further recommended that vulnerable groups be allowed to be part of groups designing programs from the onset.

Hon. Janet Onge'ra, Member of Parliament for Kisii County, on behalf of the Government of Kenya, appreciated World Vision for deeming it important to convene the platform to discuss social protection in the context of eliminating violence against women and girls.

She stated that, social protection programs can be implemented through public and/or private sectors, with the involvement of single or multiple government sectors, or by some combination of these actors. In general, SP programs are public interventions that support the poorest populations and assist individuals, households, and communities to better overcome social and economic risks.

Giving a contextual perspective of Kenya, Hon. Ong'era brought out practical social protection initiatives like the social assistance for instance, social safety nets, cash transfers, school feeding, and targeted food assistance, secondly, social insurance which entails old-age and disability pensions and unemployment insurance, thirdly, labour market programs which include skills building programs, job-search and matching programs, and improved labor regulations; and lastly, early childhood development. These initiatives she stated, were aimed at strengthening families' abilities to respond to hardships by promoting gender equality.

She decried the fact that women and girls, particularly those in situations of violence, are more vulnerable to social and economic risks. Poverty, limited choices, and harmful gender norms can have a greater negative impact on women and girls compared to men and boys; the contrast is starkest for women and girls living in poverty.

Due to intersecting forms of discrimination and disadvantage, certain groups of women (ethnic/racial minorities, for example) are even less likely to benefit from social protection programs if these programs fail to consider specific needs/circumstances.

While numerous social protection programs have shown significantly positive impacts on poverty, equity, and human development outcomes, there is a continued need to adapt these programs to better accommodate the specific needs of women and girls. The purpose and breadth of social protection programs mean they are uniquely positioned to reach the most vulnerable of populations, including women and girls in situations of violence. Nonetheless, adapting the design and implementation of social protection programs first requires an understanding of some of the persistent challenges related to gender and violence against women and girls.

She recommended three key areas for integrating initiatives on eliminating violence against women into social protection programs. First, at the Policy level by ensuring that survivors of VAWG benefit from social protection programs requires careful consideration of their unique needs and circumstances. Further, adapting social protection programs can help avoid potential harmful consequences, such as increased violence.

There was need to support the implementation of universal pension plans financed from general taxation, as opposed to pay roll taxes, as these provide men and women with an equal pension, regardless of their record in the labor market. A guaranteed pension not only recognizes women's contribution as caregivers but can be transformative for older women suffering from exclusion or discrimination or in situations of violence.

Further, formally recognizing and including informal work, such as domestic work, in the pension system would provide women with better job security and access to important benefits. Also, there is need to work to develop a gender-aware national employment plan that includes women in its planning and implementation. Increasing women's livelihood opportunities can lead to greater

financial independence, which may improve their ability to leave situations of violence

Secondly, at the institutional or sectoral level, there is need to include VAWG prevention activities within conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs and labor market activities, raising women's awareness about their rights, including the right to a life free of violence and ensuring that information is delivered in a format that is easy to understand and culturally appropriate.

Facilitating registration and national identification cards. Such cards are often required in order to access the benefits of social protection projects. For survivors of VAWG, the need for such cards is especially critical, as they can determine whether a woman has access to important services, such as shelters and healthcare

Exploring secure methods of transferring cash to women. When cash transfers are involved, women may be robbed on the way home, forced to give up the cash to partners, or forced to pay bribes. Options to prevent such situations from occurring include asking women whether they prefer in-kind or food transfers, or directly transferring funds to women's personal bank accounts.

Thirdly, at the community level through community behavior change and awareness raising activities that have to be integrated into social protection/assistance projects whenever possible. The entire community, including individuals of different ages, gender, and diversity, should be involved in efforts to change harmful gender norms and the acceptability of VAWG.

Encouraging creation of safe spaces where both men and women can discuss healthy relationships, conflict resolution, values, and behavior, ensuring these discussions are grounded in human rights discourses.

Promoting mentorship and strategies to raise women's self-esteem and self-confidence through peer networks, as improved self-esteem and social support can protect against Intimate Partner Violence and,

Engaging with men to garner community support for programs targeting women. Involving men, particularly community leaders, can help to avoid potential negative repercussions in household dynamics.

She concluded by stating the importance of social protection systems as being critical to the elimination of violence against women through the three areas she mentioned above which she cited as good entry points.

5.1 – Liechtenstein Side Event – Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking: Effectives Response for Woman and Girls

Trafficking in person is modern day slavery. Across the globe, millions of people are trafficked across regional and international borders. Others are slaves in their own countries. The common denominator in trafficking of persons is the use of force, fraud or coercion to exploit a person for commercial sex or for the purpose of subjecting them into forced labour, exploitation or marriage. The use of force can be direct or indirect. Most victims of modern slavery are women and children, many whom are forced into domestic work.

Today, example of human trafficking activities include domestic servitude, child labour and bonded labour, all arising because of poverty, conflict, cultural perspectives and lack of safeguards and legislations.

Victims of trafficking consequently lose their freedom or their employment contracts eventually becoming modern day slaves. This experience has a permanent physical and psychological harm, often causing restricted movement. In the case of children, they denied access to education and those who are married early end up having their reproductive and health rights interfered with.

These are also the victims, who are often low-skilled labourers who are trafficked from less developed communities to more developed areas. They too find themselves in some form of captivity as access to immediate help, especially if they are in another country, becomes difficult. It is with this back ground that Liechtenstein hosted this important side event which had the following highlights-

The Prime Minister of Aruba, Netherlands commenced the discussion by noting that slavery was not abolished in the 19th Century. About 71 per cent of human

trafficking is females who are enslaved for purpose of sexual exploitation. Women leave their countries in search of better opportunities for a better future. No government can tackle human trafficking on its own.

Ms. Kelly O'Dwyer, the Minister for women in Australia noted that it is a crime for countries to allow modern day slavery. She indicated that this is gender violence that has been occasioned by gender inequality. Arising from this, she provided the steps that Australia has taken to reduce modern day slavery and human trafficking as follows: Australia has criminalized forced labour and forced marriages. Further, the Australia Parliament passed the Modern Slavery Bill, 2018, now an Act of Parliament. This Act, she reported, established a modern slavery reporting requirement that require large businesses and other entities in Australia to make annual public reports on their actions to address modern slavery risks in their operations and supply chains. The Act, she emphasizes, has gone a long way in promoting regional and local efforts to end human trafficking.

The president of the Global Justice Centre, Janet Benshoof, a trainer and expert in human rights noted that conflict and instability cause the greatest negative impact on women and children. Further, she indicated that harmful gender stereotypes and practices such as child marriages and sexual coercion slavery and human trafficking, she recommended that countries focus on increased allocations towards survivors of criminal human trafficking and guaranteed medical and social healthcare.

Hon. Priscilla Nyokabi, a commissioner with the Kenya National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) concluded the event by urging member states to create laws that mitigate modern slavery and human trafficking. She further encouraged enhancement of international cooperation by criminalizing human trafficking; support by NGOs, promoting public awareness, addressing the root causes of the vices, promoting a strong rule of law at the local level and ensuring bilateral agreements between countries with women being at negotiating table.

Finally, the plenary urged members states to understand the immense scope of the problem requesting governments, employers, workers and the civil society to assist victims out of slavery and enable them access decent work.

The outcomes of this event include-

- i. There should be greater global recognition that trafficking of women and girls is the fastest form of growing organized crimes;**
- ii. Human trafficking and slavery constitutes Gender Based Violence (GBV);**
- iii. Trafficking in persons is a global challenge and countries are affected as sources, transit areas and destinations;**
- iv. Countries should deal with the emerging trend where terrorist groups are using trafficking to advance their mission.**

5.2 – Malawi Side Event – Empowering Rural Women and Girls

The government of Malawi identified social protection as an instrument to deal with poverty and vulnerability. According to the Minister for Gender, Children, Disability and Social welfare, Hon. Cecilia Chazama the Malawi National Social Protection Support Programme, micro edit, public works, school meals and village savings and loans. The overall planning of these programme is done by the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development under the Department of Poverty Reduction and Social protection.

She indicated that the programme has been rolled out in 28 districts in Malawi, 70 per cent of which are females headed. Out of the 1,208,000 children under the school feeding programme, 51 per cent are girls. In addition, she indicated that Malawi has a free and compulsory education system of education, tuition free secondary education, free vocational skills development programme in community colleges, loans to the needy students in public and private universities as well as bursaries to needy girls. The interventions have contributed to higher retention of girls in schools and reduction of child marriages.

She reiterated that the public works programme has focused on environment management which has resulted in the recharging of the water table and has therefore led to easy access water. Further, due to re-forestation, women are now able to access fire wood closer to their communities thus saving them time which has helped community access such as the rural road networks. This has

improved access to health facilities and markets. The wages have increased the purchasing power of households thus improving their access to a variety of nutritious foods which has reduced morbidity rates. All this has been possible because of political will by the government of Malawi and support by various stakeholders including development partners, Members of Parliament, civil society organizations and traditional leaders.

The Hon. Member of the National Assembly for Malawi provided mechanisms within which the National Assembly of Malawi has supported the social protection agenda by being instrumental in pushing for a well-integrated social protection system. The Assembly has a fully-fledged committee on community and social development whose key mandate is to defend the interests of the poor and the vulnerable communities in the country. In social protection, the committee is in charge of policy and guidance.

The Assembly has progressively supported the government of Malawi's increased allocation of resources to the Malawi Social Cash Transfer Programme. The Assembly has supported the Government of Malawi engage with several development partners who are supporting the social protection interventions in the country. These efforts are strengthened by other instruments such as the farm input subsidy programme whereby farm inputs are provided to men and women in the rural set up to enhance productivity and ensure food security in Malawi.

The meeting concluded by noting the important role social protection is playing in dealing with poverty, maintaining the environment through planting trees and appreciating the importance of community leaders, who have a greater understanding of the needs of various communities that they come from.

The outcomes of this event are as follow-

- i. Social protection programmes are crucial in enabling rural communities improve their social And economic status;**
- ii. Social protection programme can be done hand in hand with other programmes such as environmental conservation to ensure that even with some form of income, communities have safe environment to live in.**

5.3 – Hungary Side Event – Supporting single parents as a means of women’s empowerment

Globally, the number of single parents has been on the increase. About one in every seven children under the age of 18 around the world is living in a single parent household, more than 80 per cent which are led by women.

While the context of all single parents’ families may differ, the most widespread factors causing this are widowhood, divorce, separation or abandonment. Single parents and especially single mothers share many challenges. They often have face discriminatory laws and policies, violence and stigmatization as well as a higher risks of poverty and socio-economic marginalization. The high likelihood for intergenerational transmission of poverty also threatens to define the future of children growing up in families in vulnerable situations- the future of a new generation.

Discrimination in law or in practice against single mothers may occur in the form of limited rights to inheritance, land or property as well as social stigma and harmful traditional beliefs often resulting in multiple and intersecting of their human rights and women’s empowerment. In addition, female household are at a higher risk of poverty and marginalization due to the lack of or lower levels of income. Single mothers very often cannot achieve work- life balance as they face an increased share of unpaid care and domestic work, which most often leads to renouncing opportunities for decent work, professional commitment and career prospects, in order to fulfil family responsibilities. The discrimination also affects children growing up in single parent households, who often do not enjoy the same opportunities as their peers raised by both parents.

Governments, in partnership with local authorities, civil society, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders should work together to eliminate these barriers to gender equality and women’s empowerment and ensure that single mothers, their children and families are not left behind. Reviewing discriminatory legislation and addressing negative social norms are key in this regard.

The highlights of this side event which was hosted by Hungary were as follows-

H.E Dr. Attilia Beneda, Deputy Secretary of state for Human Affairs, Ministry Capacities in Hungary indicated that single parents are considered to be full families. Single parents perform both roles of the father and mother. In Hungary, various measures have been put in place to ease the burden of single parents among them, higher allowances based on the number of children a household has and easier access to day care facilities for the younger children. The Government provides free nursery care and single parents are provided with a home start subsidy. The Hungarian Government also funded the establishment of a single families centre.

Ms. Alia EL-Yassir, the UN women Regional Director for Europe and Asia emphasised that global policies must change because single mothers continue to face disparities and challenge across the globe. In rural areas, for example, single mothers may lack special skills for the labour market. Consequently, reducing the gender mothers. Institutions and government must therefore help allowing more leave and just place of work for all.

Ms. Teresa Omondi-Adeitan, the Executive Director, and FIDA-Kenya highlighted the positive activities that FIDA has participated in to deal with discrimination that faces single mothers. An example is the discrimination that has existed in Kenya as a result of some birth certificate not bearing the names of fathers. FIDA-Kenya challenged in the terminology “children born out wedlock” in court as indicated in the children’s Act citing that it was discriminatory. The Kenyan courts on 7th February 2019 declared that this section be repealed and Parliament was given 90 days to ensure this is complied with. Further, the court ordered for the removal of words “unwedded mother” from the succession Act as this was discriminatory and unconstitutional. Parliament was also given 90 days review this Act.

Ms Shreyasi Jha, the Senior Advisor, Gender and Rights, UNICEF indicated that UNICEF believes that no parents should choose to do their job or not to. Therefore, companies should set up women friendly policies and work environments. The policies are time related (Breast feeding breaks, flexible office hours) and work-related policies (maternity leave, paternity leave and maternity protection). Since early childhood bonding is crucial and a long-life impact on children, employers have the responsibility to take care of their employees’

children by reducing parental stress to allow for more positive outcomes especially by providing Good work environments. Family friendly policies are good for employees and businesses. Ms Shreyasi Jha concluded by saying that what good for the family is good for economy.

Ms Anna Nagy, the founder and leader of the single parents' centre in Budapest provided statistics that in Europe, 30 per cent of the next generation will be brought up by single parents, in the USA, 22 million children live in single parent families. Globally, according to UNICEF, more than half of single parent families face the poverty risk.

The event concluded that single parents are quiet crowd but with loud issues to be addressed. Government and their legislature must ensure adequate policies and see to it that laws do not promote discrimination of children and homes of single parents.

The outcomes of this event were as follow-

- i. Single parent families are on the increase globally; and,**
- ii. Parliament need to amend any laws that may cause discrimination to single parents or their children; and,**
- iii. In compiling data, government must have statistics on single parent household in order to plan for social assistance programmes.**

5.4 – The Inter Parliament Union Meeting

The senate delegation attended and participated in the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) meeting organized for all members of Parliament who were attending the 63rd CSW. The side event on investing in Gender Equality. Parliament Ensuring Social Protection, Public Services and Infrastructure Deliver for Women and Girls took place on 13th March, 2019 and was chaired by Sen. Susan Kihika, MP, and the president of the IPU Bureau of Women Parliamentarians. Sen. Johnson Arthur Sakaja, MP, CBS, was a panellist in this event.

Social protection, public services and infrastructure in the context of a legislative body are the legislative, oversight or representative measures that parliament take to ensure protection for citizens against risks and needs associated with vulnerability by women and girls that are occasioned by poverty, unemployment, variable income, parental responsibilities, healthcare, old age, housing and social exclusion.

In order to ensure social protection, Parliaments must legislate, ensure budgets are gender sensitive and promote the wellbeing of women and girls.

Well-resourced and gender responsive social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure systems are fundamental in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. By levelling the playing field for women and men in all areas of life, they are also key for promoting economically sustainable and fair societies.

Women have equal political rights. Women's equal political participation is essential to sustainable development. However, women's voices are missing at every decision making level in the world. Member states were urged to ensure women's full and effective participation at all levels of decision making in political and public life and ensure observance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The meeting observed that data on women in politics shows the world is far from equal. In 1995, the share of women represented in national parliament was 10 per cent. That figure has grown each year by less than one per cent. According to IPU, women hold 24 per cent of parliamentary seats. Three countries have 50

per cent or more women in parliament (single/lower chamber). Women still comprise under 20 per cent of parliamentary speakers while the global share of women elected to local governments is currently unknown.

The meeting further observed that gender quotas and affirmative action are working if they are implemented properly. There should be an understanding on why there are less women in cabinet and in parliament. There should be better legislation to make women a key element for change in the world.

Only 45 per cent of the global population is covered by one form of social protection or another. About four billion people are not covered globally. Only 29 per cent of the global population has comprehensive social protection. This creates a challenge for the realization of human rights and people's dignity.

To deal with social protection, parliaments must deal with gender inequalities (commit to tackling gender inequalities and promoting all women and girl's empowerment through social protection programmes and systems), investing in extending coverage and improving adequacy, investing in financing gender responsive social protection systems, building capacities for institutions, monitoring, and analysis and supporting participation.

A specific responsibility for parliament is to note that there is a huge under investment in social protection. Parliament should ensure that national and social protection system are appropriately anchored in legislation and ensure transparency and accountability.

The Universal Basic Income (UBI) (that is paid out with no conditions) is crucial in ensuring social protection for all. By having no conditions, this ensures less stress for women, older persons and persons with disabilities. An example of UBI is the cash transfer programme for the older persons in Kenya. UBIs provides economic freedom and are a sure way of dealing with poverty. Additionally, UBIs promote women empowerment.

Sen. Johnson Sakaja, the senator for Nairobi City County and the chairperson of senate committee on labour and social welfare gave his views on social protection in the context of a legislative body. He noted that globally, parliamentarians represent the hopes and aspirations of the people they

represent. Women and girls are the majority population in most countries. However, their biological make up and reproductive health makes their needs quite different from those of men. Consequently, parliaments are charged with ensuring special social programmes that are targeted to this group.

On how parliaments account for the social protection and financial security needs of all women, including those who do not participate in the formal economy. Sen Johnson Sakaja, explained that globally, the greatest threat to the wellbeing of women and girls is poverty. Unemployment, instability, disease and outdated cultural practices that promote early marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). He observed that Kenya has robust legislation that promotes gender equality, women's empowerment, access to public services and proper infrastructure for women and girls. Consequently, he recommended that parliaments should observe the following in ensuring social protection; legislate, ensure appropriate gender responsive budgets and ensure that members represent issues of women and girls by passing laws that promote the election and appointment of more women in strategic decision making positions in order to increase their influence.

On specific social protection needs of women who migrate or return to their country of origin after working abroad, Sen. Sakaja stated that women migrate because of a number of reasons. They may flee conflict, natural disasters or major environmental incidents. He noted that when women migrate, they face the following social risks-

- i. Gender inequalities depending on political and cultural backgrounds in the country of migration;
- ii. The lack of ability to realize political, economic and social expectations in the country they have migrated to due to restrictive laws and policies;
- iii. Discriminative laws in the countries women are migrating to that may limit their access to education and opportunities;
- iv. Opportunities in migrant countries that are 2 "female focused" for example, domestic workers, entertainers *et cetra* which only focus on women;
- v. Prohibitive conventions, laws and practices governing the rights of migrants women;

- vi. The trafficking of women and girls for prostitution which has become one of the greatest growing vices in the world today; and,
- vii. Forced labour, rape and harassment of women and girls whose travel document and pay are not submitted therefore limiting their social and economic capabilities.

In conclusion, Sen. Sakaja spoke on the Universal Basic Income (UBI) and its potential to ensure women's economic empowerment. He noted that when regular and controlled income is targeted to women, it increases their bargaining power, entrepreneurship skills and improves health and wellbeing because it reduces poverty and stress and adds to better relationships by reducing domestic violence, child abuse and less financial stress in families.

In Kenya, the Older Persons Cash Transfer Programmes operates similar to a UBI Model. It aims to strengthen the capacity of older people, who include women to better lives. This money, which is paid out on a monthly basis, ensures that women have better nutrition and money to enable them live longer and healthier lives.

In conclusion, Sen. Sakaja noted that social protection for women and girls is mandatory for purposes of ensuring gender equality. Parliaments around the globe must play their role in ensuring appropriate legislation that ensures this is enshrined in the laws governing local and international engagements.

The outcomes of this event were as follows-

- i. Parliaments should legislate to ensure the national and social protection systems are appropriately anchored in legislation;**
- ii. Women's equal political participation is essential to sustainable development.**

5.5 – women in politics – Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU)

This side event under the IPU was presented by Hon. Paddy Torsney, permanent observer of IPU to the UN. The event provided, an opportunity to review progress in the representation of women in parliaments and appointment in the executives across the globe.

The meeting observed that the world's regional average of women in parliament from 1995 to 1st January, 2019 stands at 24.3 per cent (America 30.7 per cent; Europe 28.5, per cent; Sub Saharan Africa, 23.7 per cent; MENA, 18.1 per cent; Pacific, 18.4 per cent and Asia at 19.6 per cent).

African parliament witnessed relatively modest progress. The regional average of women parliamentarians stood at 27.7 per cent. Women occupied 19.4 per cent of seats in lower and single houses and 27.5 per cent in the upper houses. Rwanda has occupied the top position in the world in terms of women in parliament. The representation of women in Rwanda stands at 61.3 per cent. Women speakers of parliament stood at 19.7 per cent.

On electoral systems, the meeting noted that women took up to 26.5 per cent of seats filled through proportion representative compared with 20 per cent through majoritarian systems. Ten countries with a good track record of women representation have a quota system of ensuring representation by women. Quotas are the main measures used to facilitate women's access to parliament. However, they must be ambitious, detailed and include implementation mechanisms.

In the executive, the meeting further noted, only 10 women are heads of the states at 6.6 per cent while the heads of government are at 10 women representing 5.2 per cent.

There are factors that impact on women's access to elected positions as observed during the meeting. They include; Electoral systems (proportional or mixed systems); political parties which are the main gatekeepers for women's access to parliament; gender stereotypes; cultural norms among the electorate and violence against women in politics.

The meeting observed that IPU had conducted a survey in parliament in Europe and noted incidents of sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians and staff of parliaments. Outside parliaments, women experienced various forms of violence, among them online violence, threats of physical violence, psychological harassment, sexual harassment and sometimes physical violence. Some of these acts, which are also experienced by Kenyan women parliamentarians and county assembly members are violations of fundamental rights and need to be addressed. They require immediate action to

be taken. This is especially so during campaigns where women are subjected to a rough political terrain.

The outcomes of this event were as follows -

- i. Parliaments should legislate to increase the number of women in political spaces by promoting the election and appointment of more women in strategic decision-making positions;**
- ii. Violence against female candidates contesting in various political seats should be dealt with through appropriate legislation and support by Government entities.**

5.6 – Women investing in peace – the permanent missions of Sri Lanka and Kenya

The permanent Mission of Sri Lanka and Kenya to the United Nations in partnership with the NGO Committee on Sustainable Development organized a high-level event on women's leadership investing in building cultures of peace for sustainable communities on Friday, 15th March, 2019. The event was moderated by Ms. Margo La Zaro, the president and the chair, NDO committee on sustainable development and the opening remarks given by H.E Dr. Amrith Rohan Perera, Ambassador and Permanent Representative Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations.

The panellist for the event were Hon. Rachel Wambui Shebesh, chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Public Service Youth and Gender Affairs and Dr. Ida Betty Odinga, wife of former prime minister, Hon. Raila Odinga and Patron of the “Embrace Women Building Bridges for Kenya” initiative.

The highlights of the event were as follows-

As the 20th anniversary of the UN Council resolution 1325 approaches in 2020, experts and advocates on women, peace and the security agenda took stock of this resolution which affirmed the importance of women and inclusion of gender perspectives in peace negotiations, humanitarian planning and peace keeping operations.

Post violent environment are a strain for women. There are women leaders who have dedicated their lives to build successful foundations of sustainable programmes thus allowing communities to foster peace.

Hon. Rachel Shebesh indicated that since the adoption of the United Nations security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and Security, Kenya has out in place measures under the Kenya National Action Plan(KNAP) anchored under four thematic areas namely; participation, promotion, prevention, protection, relief and recovery. The KNAP has delivered tangible results by enhancing coordination and synergies for duty bearers in the security sector. Notably, the KNAP has provided a platform for women moving from the margin to the centre on the decision making table on peace and security. She indicated that one such initiatives was “Embrace: Women Building Bridges for Kenya”.

Dr. Ida Betty Odinga, EGH, Patron of the “Embrace Women Building Bridges for Kenya Initiative” shared the country’s story on peace building and her story as the spouse of a leading contender in Kenya’s politics. She noted threats to Kenya posed by terrorist groups such as *al ashaabab* and *al Queda* who penetrate the country through the borders of Kenya and Somalia.

Dr. Ida Odinga noted that since the inception of multi-party politics in Kenya inn1992, every election cycle presents security challenges for women, girls and the people of Kenya in general in the form of turmoil and bloodshed. The worst violence was in 2007/2008 where many lost their lives and thousands displaced. This was as a result of organized militia, excessive force by security forces, political activities, et cetra. Social media, she noted, has been used in the past to propel ethnic propaganda. During such events, women and girls are affected with many losing their lives, husbands and children. Some are even sexually abused, with the destruction of homes and property disrupting their economic activities. This environment of violence suppresses women from participating in election activities making them shy away electro processes.

The discussion on women, peace and security is crucial for countries all over the world, including Kenya. She lauded the “handshake” that put aside the differences that were there between the two presidential contenders, His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta and the Rt. Hon. Raila Odinga who sought peace and sustainability for Kenya. The “handshake” she noted evolved further to harness a strong women movement across the country as a powerful tool to support the Government’s objectives. The Embrace Movement is serving as the women’s voice in ensuring gender parity, fighting corruption, ensuring that the

Big Four agenda is achieved and enabling women's participation in peace and security as well as other programmes such as the beyond zero campaign.

Hon. Marjan Mateen, Deputy Minister of Education of Afghanistan explained about the initiatives that have been implemented in Afghanistan to bring peace. The Afghanistan women's consensus on peace which commenced six months ago has provided a forum for listening to various perspective on the management of peace in Afghanistan. The Afghanistan women, the Government and civil society organizations, brought together women from different background to speak about peace and provide a way forward on the same. To the Afghan women, peace means no conflict and having women on the negotiation table. Inclusivity especially of the most vulnerable is paramount. Women should be negotiators to ensure their discussion are heard. Arising from war, Afghan women have lost their husbands, children and property. Women also ensure children and their husband do not join insurgent groups and shape them to be responsible nationals.

Ms. Heidi Kuhn, Founder and CEO of Roots of Peace begun by acknowledging that terrorist related activities and indiscriminate shooting like what happened in New Zealand do not discriminate against any gender. Such security situations affect all human beings irrespective of race, colour or religion.

The remnants of war such as landmines do not also discriminate. These remnants of war continue to kill and maim many innocent men, women and livestock and deprive the world the much needed land that could be used to do farming and improve food security.

Ms. Heidi that the Roots of Peace initiative was started in 1997 to eliminate land mines and cultivate land to enable local communities get new sources of food and income. This improves the lives of small holder farmers through various agro business approaches. Women form the bulk of these farmers. It is the priority of Roots of Peace to ensure that women are integrated into the entire agricultural chain- production, processing and distribution. All the programmes under Roots of Peace, especially in Afghanistan, are built on partnerships between the Government NGOs, farmers and business people. These value relationships are crucial.

The value line is to improve small holder's farmers with great focus on agriculture. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) has stated that 60 per cent of the world's population relies on agriculture and women comprise 45 per cent of the agricultural labour force. Since 2001, Roots of Peace has concentrated on improving tea crops and other spices for small holder farmers. Remote village have benefited from such programmes which have increased considerable economic benefit for women.

Ms. Heidi further stated that the Roots of Peace initiative has concentrated on training women in business, management, entrepreneurship, owning agro business initiatives and deal making resulting in regional trade.

Vietnam, which has had similar incident of land mines has also benefitted from Roots of Peace consequently gaining greatly through agricultural programmes. The Roots of Peace strive to eradicate all land mines on the face of the earth that have been as a result of previous wars.

The outcomes of this event were as follows-

- i. The security of women remains threatened even before conflict erupts. Sexual and gender based violence increases when tension increase.**
- ii. Women play an integral role in managing peace and security situations by being an important point of contract in homes where they influence their husbands, children and relatives.**

5.7 – UN WOMEN – Towards Gender Responsive Climate Action

In support of the UN Secretary General's 2019 Climate changes summit and 25th Anniversary of Beijing declaration and platform for Action (Beijing 25+), this side event provided impetus to gender equality and women's rights in the context of national level climate action. Global citizen have personal testimonies about the emerging climate changes that they are facing. We now extreme weather patterns that are affecting populations and in some cases threatening very existence of mankind.

The highlights of this side event were-

As explained by Ms. Agnes Leina, the Executive Director, Il'amatak Community concerns, Kenya, the pastoralist communities are now faced with severe drought

and women and young girls have to walk long distances in search of clean water for domestic use as well as that of their animals. Further, as she elaborated during this side event, predictable weather patterns and the co system are now a thing of the past. Birds that would traditionally signal changes in seasons are not spotted anymore in her community. The impacts of climate change that are being experienced include: food, insecurity, less access to clean water and increase in diseases.

Climate changes has a greater impact on all population and especially women and children, who are most reliant on natural resources for their livelihood and have the least capacity to respond to natural hazards such as drought, floods, hurricanes, landslides *et cetra*. The most vulnerable face higher risks and greater burdens from the impacts of climate change. Climate change affects the poorest the most. It is women, for example, who are responsible for collecting firewood, water, growing food *et cetra*. They are also compensated less than the men crisis of disasters.

In order to deal with concerns on climate change, as recommended by Ms. Pannelope Althea Beckles, the permanent representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the UN, women should be used as agent of change. Countries must pay special attention to the gender dynamics when they develop policies and put them into action. Women play a critical role in response to climate change due to their involvement at the household level and through various economic activities such as farming.

The speed with which the climate is changing requires faster progress. The gender context is now getting more attention. In 2014, at COP20 in Lima, a programme of action on gender was established “to advance implementation of gender responsive climate policies”. In 2017, COP23 established a Gender Action Plan. Therefore, the involvement of women is on course. The untapped role of ensuring women champion and participate in decision around climate is critical.

In order to see a change, this side event recommended that countries need to have National Adaption plans that will bring services closer to communities. Further, there should be policies on the use of new technology and involvement of women at the National and international levels to ensure their full participation in decision making.

Ms. Milena Zindovic, the Association of Women Architects, Serbia highlighted the role of cities and urban areas and their contribution to climate change. Leaders in cities and urban spaces should encourage the planting of more trees and ensure that there are parks that are safe for use especially by women and children. Further, cities and urban areas should design proper public transport services that take into account that women are the majority user of public transport and, therefore, require safe and reliable infrastructure. Such facilities should ensure that women are not sexually harassed and they have facilities to take care of their children, if need be.

Women's activities in community participation, management of homes, education of their children, use of energy for domestic use and agricultural production puts them at the centre of socio-economic development. Consequently, women can play a leading role in dealing with climate change.

The outcomes of this event were as follows-

- i. Climate change is a threat to sustainable development and undo decades of development.**
- ii. Climate change is not gender neutral – it impacts on everyone but the poor and vulnerable have less ability to adapt to severe weather conditions that result in droughts, floods, tsunamis *et cetra***
- iii. Involvement of women in decision making in governance and politics promotes more inclusive policy decisions that positively affect the environment with a multiplier effect.**
- iv. Countries should develop national adaption plans that are gender responsive and all inclusive.**

5.8 – Kenya County First Ladies Association – Real Solutions – Food Security Ventures Strengthen Social Protection Systems for Women

The world is today faced by chronic hunger arising from climate change and depleted water resources that resulted in a decline in agricultural production.

Globally, women who drive the agricultural sector are retracted in terms of access and ownership of land, agricultural inputs, technology, *et cetra*. Increasing women's access to resources and services is crucial in boosting

productivity and encouraging gains in agricultural production, food security and social welfare.

It is against this background that the Kenya County First Ladies and Dash Crop showcased their role in ensuring food security ventures that are strengthening social protection for women in counties within Kenya. The moderator of this side event was H.E Mrs. Dorothy Nyong'o, the First lady of Kisumu County.

Ms. Caroline Alango, the Chief Executive Officer, Dash Crop commenced her presentation by noting that one of the pillars of the Big four agenda is Agriculture, food security and nutrition. She noted that globally, women determine the kind of food that will be consumed in homes. Consequently, their involvement in agriculture is crucial. She indicated that Dash Crop, a Kenyan based agri-business company is working with over 12,000 farmers in Homa Bay, Migori, Kisumu, Busia and Siaya counties to promote climate smart agricultural approaches, practices and technologies in the farming of various products.

The First Lady of Marsabit County H.E. Alimitu Guyo presented to the side event the successes of agricultural programmes undertaken by women's groups and the socio-economic transformation thus has had. Marsabit is part of the Arid and Semi-Arid areas of Kenya, but the women groups have been able to farm and keep domestic animals and this has resulted in a major change in the lives of the locals.

The First Lady of Nyandarua County, H.E. Ann Kimemia spoke about value addition to one of the leading crops in Nyandarua, potatoes. She highlighted that the Office of the County First Lady has concentrated on educating women on nutrition under the WET Kitchen Programme. Here, women are taught how to grow a variety of vegetables that are nutritious to their families. Further, Mrs. Kimemia explained that the County Government of Nyandarua has invested in potato preservation methods such as manufacture of potato crisps and establishment of seven cold stores in different sub-counties. The county has also partnered with Safaricom to ensure that farmers are able to sell directly to the suppliers without going through the middlemen.

The First Lady of Narok County, H.E Mrs. Sarah Tunai informed the meeting of various projects that the Maasai women have been involved in to ensure their economic lives improve. One such programme is the processing of sour milk by

women groups. This milk is sold from vending machines to locals. This has engaged women in Narok County and reduced incidents of FGM and early marriages.

The First Lady of Taita Taveta County, H.E. Stellah Sambojah presented to the side event an activity that has led to wealth creation for women and the youth. This is the use of stoves that use less firewood. Women and youth in Taita Taveta have formed groups that are shown how to make these stoves. The overall goal has been a remarkable improvement in the health of women because the stoves are much safer and cause less pollution to homes and the environment. This has also increased the income base for the youth and women.

The First Lady of Bungoma County, H.E. Caroline Wangamati indicated that her area of focus is blood donation campaigns whose agenda arose after she observed the high maternal deaths arising from post-partum haemorrhage by women in Bungoma County. Further, she wanted to deal with haemorrhage arising from malaria and sickle cell anaemia. She indicated that she has been successful in this area although she highlighted some challenges including the myths around blood donations.

The First Lady of Kisumu County, H.E. Dorothy Nyong'o concluded this meeting by saying that Kisumu had focused on free screening camps for reproductive cancers. This has gone a long way in assisting communities deal with the cancer scourge that mostly drains families of their economic and social peace.

The outcome of this event was that County First Ladies have a critical role to play in ensuring social protection and the wellbeing of communities; through various programmes specific to their counties.

CHAPTER 6

OBSERVATIONS

The Delegation observed that: -

- (i) Social Protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure are key in ensuring gender equality and empowerment of women and girls;
- (ii) Increased investment and allocation of funds to Kenyan countries will ensure better infrastructural development that will enable women and girls have access to better and safer public services such as hospitals, schools and markets;
- (iii) Social Protection, Public Services and Sustainable Infrastructure contribute to efforts to eliminate, prevent and respond to all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private spaces;
- (iv) Gender-Based Violence (GBV) that goes beyond physical violence is on the increase. Discrimination and intolerance have also re-emerged. Trafficking of women and girls is the fastest growing form of organized crime;
- (v) Sustainability of social protection systems is wanting due to lack of relevant laws;
- (vi) Gender responsive budgeting ensures equitable distribution of resources;
- (vii) It is important to promote the full and equal participation and leadership of women and women's organizations in policy dialogues and decision making relating to social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure;
- (viii) Unequal power relations that broaden existing gender gaps should be addressed. Countries should actively ensure the full participation of women in policy and decision making; and
- (ix) Most countries including Kenya, are now facing extreme weather patterns that are a threat to the very existence of mankind.

CHAPTER 7

RECOMMENDATIONS

The National Assembly Delegation to the CSW recommends that: -

1. The National Assembly's Departmental Committee on Finance and National Planning to propose amendments to the relevant laws in order to compel gender-responsive budgets in the country.
2. The National Assembly's Departmental Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs considers the state of human trafficking and migrant workers and proposes relevant amendments to existing laws.
3. The National Assembly's Departmental Committee on Labour and Social Welfare: -
 - a) Ensures the anchoring of social protection systems into law; and,
 - b) Looks into the establishment of one-stop Gender-Based Violence (GBV) centre in the 47 counties.
4. The Departmental Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs to consider proposing mechanisms that can be used to increase the representation of women in elective and appointive positions.
5. The Departmental Committee on Environment and Natural Resources to follow up on implementation of existing policies and laws to ensure environmental management planting of trees and preservation of water catchment areas in the counties.
6. The National Assembly's Departmental Committee on Labour and Social Welfare considers the state of single parents in the country and puts in place policy measures and legislation to address their plight.

CHAPTER 8

CLOSING SESSION

8.0 *Remarks by the United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women, Mrs. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, to the 63rd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women*

Mrs. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women, thanked all delegates for their hard work, dedication, and the priority they placed on improving social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure for women and girls.

She thanked the Chair, Vice Chair and the Bureau for their commendable leadership, friendship and support, and for creating an enabling environment that made the negotiations succeed as planned. She extended her appreciation to the facilitator, Ambassador Koki Muli Grignon, without whom the complex processes involved would not have seen the light of the day.

She also thanked each delegate from capitals, missions, and all the people who supported them to attend the conference, for all the hard work, the long hours, the sleepless nights, the concentration, and the manner in which they sat to toil for the women and girls of the world.

She thanked her team, led by Christine Brautigam, who gave such valuable support all the UN Women staff who contributed directly and indirectly to supporting the team in their different ways. He reminded delegates that work did not only start with the negotiations. The week before, all of them were busy in the Commissions, discussing passionately, sharing ideas and lessons learnt.

She was impressed to share that the year was very special because of the number of young women and young people who participated and made their presence felt with contributions of high quality. This investment she promised, would have a high rate of return.

In her concluding remarks, she stated that with the Agreed Conclusions, the delegates have given the Commission the possibility to take the work forward, to

make sure that it addresses the discrimination that may be suffered by women and girls in every part of the world, whether because they are disabled, because of their sexuality, because they are human rights activists, or because of poverty. Further, the Agreed Conclusions, even though not everybody got everything they wanted, would give everyone enough to take home, to work and to take further the work of improving the quality of life of women and girls.

With regards to policies, everyone was able to tell share their prospects on policies and laws, and about data and ensuring that they are evidence-based.

She informed delegates that we are living in a world where we have the largest number of young people ever. This Commission is definitely one that can address the needs of young people, today and in the future. We must never miss that opportunity.

Finally, she appreciated the way delegations repeatedly went back to agreed language to ensure that they facilitate consensus. However, there was need to look forward and to leapfrog ahead, ensuring that there is constant addition of new and bold language that can take us significant steps forward. That balance would always be important, she stressed.

CHAPTER 9

ANNEXTURES

Annex I - The agreed Conclusions by Member States of the 63rd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW63)

Following days of negotiations, the *Agreed Conclusions* of CSW62 were adopted on 22nd March, 2019 (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 Member States 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 64) will be held in in the United Nations Headquarters, New York from 9th to 20th March 2020 with a priority theme of “*review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly.*” The review theme will be “*assessment of current challenges that affect the implementation of the Platform for Action and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and its contribution towards the full realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*”

Annex II - 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 62nd 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 CSW63. The delegation’s Joint Communique is annexed to this Report as (**Annex II**).

Annex I

The agreed Conclusions by Member States

Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-third session

11–22 March 2019

Agenda item 3 (a) (i)

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century” Implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives Priority theme: social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Agreed conclusions

1. The Commission on the Status of Women reaffirms the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,¹ the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly² and the declarations adopted by the Commission on the occasion of the tenth, fifteenth and twentieth anniversaries of the Fourth World Conference on Women.³
2. The Commission reiterates that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women⁴ and the Convention on the Rights of the Child,⁵
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 Development¹⁰ and to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

4. The Commission also 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 Action¹¹ and the outcome documents of its reviews. It recognizes that the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway,¹² the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030,¹³ the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development¹⁴ and the New Urban Agenda contribute,¹⁵ inter alia, to the improvement of the situation of all women and girls in the context of social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure. The Commission recalls the Paris Agreement,¹⁶ adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.¹⁷
5. The Commission recalls the Declaration on the Right to Development¹⁸ 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, and to social protection and public services, including the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No.202) of the International Labour Organization, and recalls the decent work agenda of the International Labour Organization and the International Labour Organization Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work,²⁰ and notes the importance of their effective implementation.
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 through promotion of their access to social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure.

8. 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 the full and equal participation of women and girls in society and for women's economic empowerment and should be mainstreamed into all policies and programmes aimed at the eradication of poverty and the reduction of social exclusion. The Commission 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.
9. 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.
10. The Commission emphasizes the mutually reinforcing relationship among achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, 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 women and girls and women's full and

equal participation and leadership 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.

11. The Commission recognizes the progress made in women's and girls' access to social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure, particularly in the areas of health and education. The Commission also recognizes that significant challenges and gender gaps remain, and that, in some contexts, progress could be undermined by budget cuts and austerity measures. The Commission stresses the importance of not reversing the levels of protection previously achieved and of addressing the remaining gaps that constrain equal access for women and girls to social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure.
12. The Commission recognizes that progress in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and the full enjoyment 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 of and control over resources, growing gaps in equality of opportunity and limited access to social protection systems and public services, including universal health-care services and education, gender-based violence, discriminatory laws and policies, negative social norms and gender stereotypes and the unequal **E/CN.6/2019/L.3** sharing of unpaid care and domestic work. It stresses the urgency of eliminating those structural barriers in order to realize gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.
13. 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, particularly at the community level. It expresses deep concern that women and girls 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 to health-care services. It re-emphasizes that violence against women and girls is a major impediment to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and that it violates and impairs or nullifies their full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

14. The Commission stresses that sexual harassment in private and public spaces, including in educational institutions and the workplace, as well as in digital contexts, leads to a hostile environment, which has a further negative impact on women and girls in the enjoyment of their rights and equal opportunities, including full and equal access to public services and sustainable infrastructure, and has negative and physical and mental health consequences for the victims and may negatively affect their families.

15. The Commission recognizes the importance of improving public services and infrastructure, such as transportation and sanitation facilities, in order to enhance the safety of women and girls. The Commission expresses its concern that certain aspects of mobility and transportation, including inaccessible platforms, overcrowded carriages or poorly lit stops can create barriers for women and girls and can expose them to violence, including attacks, harassment and other threats to their safety, limiting their ability to move freely and safely in the public sphere. The Commission is also concerned that women and girls are particularly at risk while collecting household water and fuel and when accessing sanitation facilities outside their homes.

16. The Commission recognizes that poverty, unemployment, lack of socioeconomic opportunities, lack of social protection, pervasive gender inequality and violence, discrimination, marginalization and persistent demand are among the underlying causes that make women and girls vulnerable to human trafficking.

17. The Commission expresses its deep concern about slow or stagnant economic growth and development, the rising inequalities within and among countries, volatile food and energy prices, continuing food and energy insecurity, the remaining effects of the world financial and economic crises, water scarcity, epidemics, demographic changes, unplanned and rapid urbanization of populations, insufficient investment in development, 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 the disadvantages, vulnerabilities and inequalities that women and men, girls and boys and their families face in accessing social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure.

18. The Commission expresses concern that the feminization of poverty persists and emphasizes that the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is indispensable for women's economic empowerment and **E/CN.6/2019/L.3** sustainable development. It recognizes that parents, including young parents, who live in poverty may not have access to health and education for their children, thus perpetuating the cycle of intergenerational poverty. The Commission acknowledges the need to elaborate and implement, where appropriate, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, comprehensive, participatory, gender-sensitive poverty eradication strategies that address social, structural and macroeconomic issues in order to ensure an adequate standard of living for women and girls, including through social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure.

19. The Commission expresses its concern about the continuing significant gender gaps in labour force participation and leadership, wages, income, pensions and social protection, as well as access to economic and productive resources. It is further concerned about the undervaluation of female-dominated industries, unequal working conditions and limited opportunities for career advancement, as well as the growing high incidence of informal and

non-standard forms of employment where women are overrepresented. It also expresses concern that these factors can restrict women's access to social protection when entitlements are tied closely to formal employment, which can perpetuate women's economic insecurity and poverty. The Commission recognizes that investments in and the provision of equitable, inclusive, quality, accessible and affordable early childhood education and care services are crucial in enabling women to enter and remain in the labour market.

20. The Commission is deeply concerned that climate change poses challenges for poverty eradication and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure and sustainable development, and that women and girls, especially in developing countries, including small island developing States, 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. Furthermore, the Commission recalls the Paris Agreement and that the parties thereto acknowledged that they should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and intergenerational equity and, in this context, also recalls the adoption of a gender action plan by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its twenty-third session.²¹ It acknowledges the necessity for every person, including women and girls, of present and future generations to have access to an environment adequate to their health and well-being and the critical importance of ensuring such access for the empowerment of women and girls and the sustainable development and resilience of communities. The Commission recognizes the important role of sustainable development in averting the loss and damage associated with the effects of climate change and in reducing the risk of loss and damage, especially for women and girls in vulnerable situations, as well as the active role of women as agents of change in safeguarding the environment.

21. The Commission emphasizes that social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. It stresses the need for coordinated approaches, financing and policy coherence at all levels to ensure that social protection systems, public services and infrastructure policies complement one another. The Commission stresses the need for integrated approaches to the design, implementation and evaluation of social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure that respond to the needs of women and girls and recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work, enable the mobility of women and girls, strengthen women's participation in public and political life, as well as their economic opportunities, in particular their full and productive employment and decent work and equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, and strengthen their resilience to shocks.
22. The Commission recognizes that social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure have not adequately addressed the needs of caregivers and care recipients. It further recognizes that women and girls often undertake a disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work, including caring for children, older persons, persons with disabilities and persons living with HIV and AIDS, which continues to be undervalued and underrecognized. Such uneven distribution of responsibilities between women and men is a significant constraint for women's completion of, or progress in, education and training, on 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 creating an enabling environment for the social and economic empowerment of all women and girls requires addressing attitudes and negative social norms by which women and girls are regarded as subordinate to men and boys at the household and community levels. 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, sustainable infrastructure, nationally appropriate social protection policies and accessible, affordable and quality social services, including care services, child care, maternity, paternity or parental leave.

23. The Commission notes that universal access to social protection plays a central role in reducing inequality, eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions and promoting inclusive growth. It reiterates that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of themselves and their families, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and that motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. The Commission, however, is concerned that gaps in coverage remain, especially for women and girls. It recognizes that social protection systems can make a critical contribution to the fulfilment of human rights for all, in particular for those who are trapped in poverty and those who are marginalized or in vulnerable situations and subject to discrimination.

24. The Commission notes the vital importance of birth registration for the realization of all human rights, including the right to social security, as well as access to social protection systems, and expresses concern at the low levels of birth registration among some indigenous women and girls, women and girls with disabilities, migrant women and girls and women and girls in rural areas, and expresses further concern that all persons without birth registration may be more vulnerable to marginalization, exclusion, discrimination, violence, statelessness, exploitation and abuse.

25. 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 that it is crucial for achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. 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.

E/CN.6/2019/L.3

26. 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, 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 the promotion thereof 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 those living in rural areas, and enabling the active participation of women in the design and implementation of health systems.
27. The Commission expresses its deep concern that, as a result of the lack of or limited access to essential health-care 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 and obstetric fistula, as well as more limited options for family planning, than women in urban areas. It expresses further concern that those disparities are exacerbated by multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.
28. The Commission recognizes that, despite gains in providing access to education, girls are still more likely than boys to remain excluded from education. It also recognizes that among the gender-specific barriers to girls' equal enjoyment of their right to education are the feminization of poverty, child labour undertaken by girls, child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, early and repeat pregnancies, all forms of gender-based violence, including sexual violence and harassment on the way to and from and at school, in their technology-mediated environment, the lack of safe and adequate sanitation facilities, including for menstrual hygiene management, the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work performed by girls and gender stereotypes and negative social norms that lead families and communities to place less value on the education of girls than that of boys and may influence the decision of parents to allow girls to attend school.

29. The Commission recognizes that women public service workers are underrepresented in leadership and decision-making roles, and overrepresented in front-line service delivery roles. The Commission further recognizes the need to provide workers with decent work and just and favourable conditions of work, including living wages, especially for women engaged in the delivery of public services.
30. The Commission recognizes that transport systems, when planned, should take into account the needs of women and girls, and that certain features, including inaccessible platforms, overcrowded carriages or poorly lit stops can create barriers for women's and girls' access to public services. The Commission reaffirms the importance of safe, affordable, accessible, age-, gender- and disability-sensitive and sustainable land and water transport systems and roadways that meet the needs of women and girls, and the commitment to enable meaningful participation of women and girls in social and economic activities by integrating transport and mobility plans into overall rural, urban and territorial plans and promoting a wide range of transport and mobility options.
31. The Commission expresses deep concern that women and girls face particular barriers in accessing safe and affordable drinking water and adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene, especially those living in isolated and remote communities, including in post-disaster settings, evacuation and refugee camps and in informal urban and rural settlements. It is also concerned that women and girls are particularly affected by water scarcity, unsafe water, inadequate sanitation and poor hygiene, and **E/CN.6/2019/L.3** that they shoulder the main burden of collecting household water and care responsibilities arising from water-borne diseases in many parts of the world, restricting their time for other activities, such as education and leisure, or for earning a livelihood.
32. The Commission recognizes the potential benefits and challenges of new forms of information and communications technology, including artificial intelligence, for the use and delivery of public services, in fields such as social

protection, public services and infrastructure while more attention needs to be paid to the impacts of such technology on women and girls.

33. The Commission acknowledges the benefit of implementing family-oriented policies aimed, *inter alia*, at achieving gender equality and the 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, including social protection policies, as well as public services and sustainable infrastructure, are responsive to the changing needs and expectations of families in fulfilling their numerous functions and that the rights, capabilities and responsibilities of all family members are respected.

34. The Commission recognizes that the sharing of family responsibilities creates an enabling family environment for women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work, which contributes to development, that women and men make a significant contribution to the welfare of their family, and that, in particular, women's contribution to the home, including unpaid care and domestic work, which is still not adequately recognized, generates human and social capital that is essential for social and economic development.

35. 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, 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.

36. The Commission acknowledges that all women and girls may not be able to fully access and benefit from social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure when they face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and marginalization. It respects and values the diversity of

situations and conditions of women and girls 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, women and girls in different contexts have particular needs and priorities, requiring appropriate responses.

37. The Commission recognizes that the positive contributions of migrant women and girls, in particular women migrant workers, have the potential to foster inclusive growth and sustainable development in countries of origin, transit and destination. It underlines the value and dignity of migrant women's labour in all sectors, including the labour of domestic and care workers. It is concerned that many migrant women, particularly those who are employed in the informal economy and in less skilled work, are especially vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. The Commission acknowledges the importance of assisting women migrant workers at all skills levels to have access to social protection in countries of destination and profit from the portability of applicable social security entitlements and earned benefits in their countries of origin or when they decide to take up work in another country. The Commission also recognizes the need to strengthen efforts to provide, make available and disseminate **E/CN.6/2019/L.3** accurate, timely, accessible and transparent information on migration-related aspects for and between States, communities and migrants at all stages of migration.

38. The Commission acknowledges the need to address the effects of armed conflict and post-conflict situations on women and girls, including victims and survivors of sexual violence, and their access to social protection systems.

39. The Commission recognizes the challenges faced by refugee women and girls and the need to protect and empower them, including in countries affected by armed conflict and post-conflict situations, and the need to strengthen the resilience of communities hosting refugees by providing humanitarian assistance to people in need.

40. The Commission stresses the importance of strengthening the voice, agency, participation and leadership of women and girls as users and beneficiaries of social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure. It also acknowledges the full, equal, effective and meaningful participation and leadership of women at all levels of decision-making in the design, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies in these sectors so that they support the empowerment of women and girls and address remaining gaps and biases.
41. 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.
42. The Commission reaffirms the importance of significantly increasing investments to close resource gaps for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all 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. It also affirms that accelerated investments in social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure, including in rural areas and outer islands, are important for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

43. The Commission underscores that, for all countries, public policies and the mobilization and effective use of domestic resources, underscored by the principle of national ownership, are central to the common pursuit of sustainable development, including social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure, and recognizes that domestic resources are first and foremost generated by economic growth, supported by an enabling environment at all levels, including well-functioning, efficient and transparent tax systems.
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 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. **E/CN.6/2019/L.3**
45. The Commission recognizes the importance of the full engagement of men and boys as agents and beneficiaries of change, and as strategic partners and allies in the promotion of women's and girls' access to social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure and in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.
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, 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 well-being;

(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) Ensure women's full and equal participation, including in institutions of governance and the judicial system, and secure their empowerment and full and equal access to justice;

(d) Consider ratification of and, for those that have done so, implementation of the fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organization, and note the importance of other relevant international labour standards, namely the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) and the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204) of the International Labour Organization, as well as the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), on decent work for domestic workers, of the International Labour Organization, in order to contribute to women's access to social protection;

(e) 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;

(f) Ensure the right to social security in national legal frameworks, as well as ensure universal access to social protection, supported by national strategies, policies, action plans and adequate resources, to enhance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;

(g) Adopt a comprehensive and integrated approach to the design, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure to ensure that gender-responsive policymaking **E/CN.6/2019/L.3** processes, including public financial management and public procurement processes, are designed to realize gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;

(h) Ensure that social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure contribute to efforts to eliminate, prevent and respond to all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private spaces, through multisectoral and coordinated approaches to investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators of violence against women and girls and end impunity, and to provide protection and 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, and 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, including sexual harassment, domestic violence, gender-related killings, including femicide, as well as elder abuse; and address 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 working with local communities;

(i) Eliminate harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage, which may have long-term effects on girls' and women's lives, health and bodies, including increased vulnerability to violence and sexually transmitted diseases, 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 that condone such practices and empowering parents and communities to abandon such practices, confronting family poverty and social exclusion and ensuring that girls and women at risk or affected by these practices have access to social protection and public services, including education and health care;

(j) 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 and 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; strengthen cooperation among all relevant actors to identify and disrupt illicit financial flows stemming from trafficking in women and girls, while also recognizing the need to protect the confidentiality of personal data of victims; and enhance international cooperation, information sharing, legislative and other measures to counter the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation of persons, especially women and girls;

(k) Take all appropriate measures to recognize, reduce and redistribute women's and girls' disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work by promoting the reconciliation of work and family life, the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men and men's equitable sharing of responsibilities with respect to care and household work, including as fathers and caregivers, through flexibility in working arrangements, without reductions in labour and social protections, support for breastfeeding mothers, the provision of infrastructure, technology and public services, such as water and sanitation, renewable energy, transport and information and communications technology, and the implementation and promotion of legislation and policies such as maternity, paternity, parental and other leave schemes, as well as accessible, affordable and quality social services, including child care and care facilities for children and other dependants, **E/CN.6/2019/L.3** take steps to measure the value of this work in order to determine its contribution to the national economy,

and challenge gender stereotypes and negative social norms in order to create an enabling environment for women's empowerment;

(l) Ensure access to social protection for unpaid caregivers of all ages, including coverage for health care and pensions, and in this regard strengthen social protection schemes that promote, as appropriate, the economic, social and legal recognition of unpaid care and domestic work, and allow such work to be valued within contributory schemes;

(m) Invest in and strengthen family-oriented policies and programmes that are responsive to the diverse, specific and changing needs of women and girls and their families, 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, and ensure that adequate measures are in place to protect and support women, including in cases of widowhood, such as access to the full range of social services and access to justice, as those 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 all women and girls and advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity;

(n) Fully engage men and boys as agents and beneficiaries of change, and as strategic partners and allies in: promoting women's and girls' access to social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure; eliminating all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls, in both public and private spheres, by understanding and addressing the root causes of gender inequality, such as unequal power relations, gender stereotypes and practices that perpetuate discrimination against women and girls; designing and implementing national policies and programmes that address the roles and responsibilities of men and boys, including the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in care and domestic work; ensuring the enforcement of child support laws; and transforming, with the aim of eliminating, negative social norms that condone violence against women and girls and attitudes by which women and girls are regarded as subordinate to men and boys;

(o) 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, on social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure, ensuring coordination between line ministries, gender policymakers, gender equality mechanisms 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, paying increased attention to the needs of women and girls to ensure that they benefit from policies and programmes adopted in all spheres;

(p) Guarantee the universal registration of births and ensure the timely registration of all marriages, including by removing physical, administrative, procedural and other barriers that impede access to registration and by providing, where lacking, mechanisms for the registration of births and marriages, including customary and religious marriages, bearing in mind the vital importance of birth registration for the realization of the rights of individuals, including the right to social security, as well as access to public services;

(q) Strengthen the capacity of national mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, at all levels, with sustainable and adequate funding, including through official development assistance, to support the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into the design, delivery and **E/CN.6/2019/L.3** evaluation of social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure, enhancing their linkages and implementing these three focus areas;

(r) Eliminate all forms of discrimination against all women and girls and implement targeted measures to address, inter alia, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and ensure that all women and girls enjoy equal access, both in law and in practice, to social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure, which can, inter alia, contribute to the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty and, in particular, the feminization of poverty, and to the reduction of inequalities through the

adoption, where needed, of laws and comprehensive policy measures and their effective and accelerated implementation and monitoring, ensuring women's and girls' access to justice and accountability for violations of their human rights; and ensure that the provisions of multiple legal systems, where they exist, comply with international human rights obligations;

(s) 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 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, recognizing 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 communications technologies, infrastructure, financial services, education and employment, while also recognizing their cultural, social, economic, political and environmental contributions, including to climate change mitigation and adaptation;

(t) Promote and protect the rights of women and girls with disabilities, who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including by ensuring their 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;

(u) Adopt national gender-responsive migration policies and legislation, in line with relevant obligations under international law, to: protect the human rights of all migrant women and girls, regardless of migration status; recognize the skills and education of women migrant workers to promote their economic

empowerment in all sectors and, as appropriate, facilitate their productive employment, decent work and integration into the labour force, including in the fields of education and science and technology; recognize the importance of protecting labour rights and a safe environment for women migrant workers and those in precarious employment, including preventing and addressing abuse and exploitation, protecting women migrant workers in all sectors and promoting labour mobility; provide newly arrived migrant women with targeted, gender-responsive, child-sensitive, accessible and comprehensive information and legal guidance on their rights and obligations, including on compliance with national and local laws, obtaining work and resident permits, status adjustments, registration with authorities, access to justice to file complaints about rights violations , as well as access to basic services; encourage cooperation among various stakeholders, including countries of origin, transit and destination, in ensuring that migrant women and girls have adequate identification and the provision of relevant documents to facilitate access to social protection **E/CN.6/2019/L.3** mechanisms; and facilitate the sustainable reintegration of returning migrant women and girls by providing them with equal access to social protection and services;

(v) Take measures to adopt or develop legislation and policies that provide rural women with access to land and support women's cooperatives and agricultural programmes, including for subsistence agriculture and fisheries, in order to contribute to school feeding programmes as a pull factor to keep children, in particular girl children, in school, noting that school meals and take-home rations attract and retain children in schools and recognizing that school feeding is an incentive to enhance enrolment and reduce absenteeism, especially for girls;

(w) Strengthen efforts to achieve universal access to HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support and provide HIV-sensitive social protection measures, including cash transfers and other multisectoral programmes, as appropriate, to ensure access to health care, education, housing and employment for all women and girls living with, at risk of or affected by HIV and AIDS, including co-infections and other sexually transmitted infections; 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 HIV and AIDS responses;

(x) Promote the effective and meaningful participation of older women, where relevant, in the design and implementation of normative and political frameworks related to social security and social protection systems, public services and infrastructure that benefit them;

(y) Promote access to social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure and mainstream a gender perspective when designing and monitoring public policies, taking into account the specific needs and realities of women and girls of African descent and bearing in mind the programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015–2024);²²

²² General Assembly resolution 69/16, annex.

(z) Ensure that women and girls belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities have equal and non-discriminatory access to social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure, including quality education, and take steps to provide affordable child care and affordable transportation to and from work;

(aa) Eliminate occupational segregation by addressing structural barriers, gender stereotypes and negative social norms, promoting women's equal access to and participation in labour markets and in education and training, supporting women so as to diversify their educational and occupational choices in emerging fields and growing economic sectors, such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics and information and communications technology, and recognizing the value of sectors that have large numbers of women workers;

(bb) Enact or strengthen and enforce laws and regulations that uphold the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value in the public and private sectors as a critical measure to eliminate the gender pay gap, provide in this regard effective means of redress and access to justice in cases of non-compliance, and promote the implementation of equal pay policies through, for

example, social dialogue, collective bargaining, job evaluations, awareness-raising campaigns, pay transparency and gender pay audits, as well as through certification and review of pay practices and increased availability of data and analysis on the gender pay gap;

(cc) Provide social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure that support the productivity and economic viability of women's work and protect women, especially those working in the informal economy, in rural and urban areas, while supporting their transition from the informal to the formal economy to ensure an adequate standard of living, and take measures to address unsafe and unhealthy working conditions in the informal economy by promoting occupational safety and health protection for workers in the informal economy;

(dd) Take measures to facilitate the financial inclusion and financial literacy of 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 into finance sector policy and regulations, in accordance with national priorities and legislation, encourage financial institutions, such as commercial banks, development banks, agricultural banks, microfinance institutions, mobile network operators, agent networks, cooperatives, postal banks and savings banks, to provide access to financial products, services and information to women and encourage the use of innovative tools and platforms, including online and mobile banking;

Strengthen women's and girls' access to social protection

(ee) Encourage and recognize the efforts at all levels to establish and strengthen social protection systems and measures, including national safety nets and programmes for all women and girls, such as food and cash-for-work, cash transfer and voucher programmes, school feeding programmes and mother-and-child nutrition programmes, and increase investment, capacity-building and systems development;

(ff) Improve the design, implementation and evaluation of social protection systems and nationally appropriate measures based on context-specific assessment of risks and vulnerabilities for all women and girls;

(gg) Work towards establishing or strengthening inclusive and gender-responsive social protection systems, including floors, to ensure full access to social protection for all without discrimination of any kind, and take measures to progressively achieve higher levels of protection, including facilitating the transition from informal to formal work;

(hh) Ensure that social protection measures are effectively incorporated into humanitarian response in the context of natural disasters, armed conflict and post-conflict situations and other emergencies, while strengthening gender-responsive programming and planning; and recognize the important role social protection systems can play in disaster risk management strategies in building

the resilience of communities and individuals and helping them cope with shocks, including those related to climate change, including through the transition of short-term emergency response programmes into long-term social protection systems;

(ii) Implement nutrition policies and provide integrated food and nutritional support and services, with special attention to women, girls, infants and young children; ensure 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; and support adequate care and optimal feeding practices, especially during pregnancy, lactation and infancy when the nutritional requirements are increased, including promoting exclusive breastfeeding up to six months, with adequate complementary feeding thereafter, therefore contributing to women's full and equal access to social protection and resources;

(jj) Promote legal, administrative and policy measures that strengthen unemployment protection schemes and ensure women's full and equal access to **E/CN.6/2019/L.3** pensions, including access to income security for older women, through contributory and/or non-contributory schemes that are independent of their employment trajectories, and reduce gender gaps in coverage and benefit levels;

(kk) Assist migrant workers at all skills levels to have access to social protection in countries of destination and to profit from the portability of applicable social security entitlements and earned benefits in their countries of origin or when they decide to take up work in another country;

(ll) Guarantee access to maternity protection and promote, inter alia, paid maternity, paternity and parental leave and adequate social security benefits for both women and men, taking appropriate steps to ensure they are not discriminated against when availing themselves of such benefits and promoting men's awareness and incentivizing their use of such opportunities, as a means of enabling women to increase their participation in the labour market; recognize the social significance of maternity, paternity, motherhood, fatherhood and the shared responsibility of parents in the upbringing of children; and provide

appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities through the development of universal and affordable services and facilities for the care of children, including breastfeeding facilities in the workplace;

(mm) Assess the need for and promote the revision of conditionalities, where they exist, related to cash transfer programmes, inter alia, to avoid reinforcing gender stereotypes and exacerbating women's unpaid work; and ensure that they are adequate, proportional and non-discriminatory and that non-compliance does not lead to punitive measures that exclude women and girls who are marginalized or in vulnerable situations;

Strengthen access to public services for women and girls

(nn) Ensure that quality public services are available, affordable, accessible and acceptable to all women and girls, including in situations of natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies, displacement and armed conflict and post-conflict situations;

(oo) Prioritize investments that contribute to the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including through accessible and affordable child care and other support services; extend the coverage and ensure equitable, inclusive, quality, accessible and affordable early childhood education and care services and facilities; and increase the availability of after-school services for children and adolescents;

(pp) Identify and remove barriers that constrain women's and girls' access to public services, such as geographic, legal and institutional barriers, including in rural and remote areas, in order to guarantee their access to these services on a regular basis and during emergencies;

(qq) Take concrete measures to realize the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health for all women and girls; and ensure the availability, accessibility and acceptability of quality health-care services to address all communicable and non-communicable diseases,

including through universally accessible primary health care and support services and social protection mechanisms;

(rr) Accelerate progress towards the goal of universal health coverage for all women and girls that comprises universal and equitable access to affordable, quality, essential and effective health-care services and medicines for all, while ensuring that the use of such services and medicines does not expose the users to financial hardship; **E/CN.6/2019/L.3**

(ss) Ensure and increase financial investments in affordable and accessible quality public health-care systems and facilities for all women and girls with safe, effective, quality, essential and affordable medicines and vaccines for all, as well as health technologies, the systematic utilization of new technologies and integrated health information systems, including through community outreach, private sector engagement and the support of the international community;

(tt) Increase investments in a more effective, socially accountable, motivated, appropriately equipped and well-trained health workforce, with ongoing education and training; and address the shortage and inequitable distribution of health-care workers by promoting decent work with adequate remuneration and incentives to secure the presence of qualified health-care professionals in rural and remote areas, including by utilising digital technologies for health-care providers and patients, enabling safe working environments and conditions and expanding community-based health education and training;

(uu) 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) Take measures to reduce maternal, neonatal, infant and child mortality and morbidity and increase access to quality health care before, during and after pregnancy and childbirth for all women through interventions such as improving transportation and health-care infrastructure, to ensure that women can access emergency obstetric services, and training and equipping community health workers, nurses and midwives to provide basic prenatal and postnatal care and emergency obstetric care, inter alia, by providing voluntary, informed family planning and empowering women, to identify risk factors and complications of pregnancy and childbirth and facilitating their access to health facilities;

(ww) Promote and respect women's and girls' right to education throughout the life cycle and at all levels, especially for those who have been left furthest behind, and address gender disparities, including by investing in public education systems and infrastructure, eliminating discriminatory laws and practices, providing universal access to inclusive, equal and non-discriminatory quality education, including free and compulsory primary and secondary education, promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, eliminating female illiteracy and promoting financial and digital literacy, ensuring that women and girls have equal access to career development, training, scholarships and fellowships, adopting positive actions to build women's and girls' leadership skills and influence and supporting women and girls in diversifying their educational and occupational choices in emerging fields, such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics and information and communications technology; strive to ensure the completion of early childhood, primary and secondary education and expand vocational and technical education for all women and girls, and foster, as appropriate, intercultural and multilingual education for all; and address negative social norms and gender stereotypes in education systems, including in curricula and teaching methodologies, that devalue girls' education and prevent women and girls from having access to, completing and continuing their education; **E/CN.6/2019/L.3**

(xx) 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;

(yy) Continue to develop and strengthen appropriate policies, strategies and programmes to enhance the employability of women, including young women, and their access to better remunerated employment options through formal and non-formal education, educational curricula and skills development and vocational training, lifelong learning and retraining and long-distance education; facilitate women's access to and opportunities in emerging fields, such as science, technology, engineering, mathematics, information and communications technology and technical development, by expanding the scope of education and training, particularly in developing countries; and enhance women's and, as appropriate, girls' participation as users, content creators, employees, entrepreneurs, innovators and leaders;

(zz) 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 that is 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 foster 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;

(aaa) Create opportunities, improve employment standards and promote conditions of decent work, security, social protection and decent remuneration for front-line women workers in the delivery of public services, such as health care and education, which are traditionally undervalued sectors, with a majority of female workers, and ensure their access to positions of decision-making and leadership;

Make infrastructure work for women and girls

(bbb) 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 and recover from adverse impacts of climate change, including natural disasters and extreme weather events, through the provision of essential infrastructure, social protection and public services that are sustainable, as well as appropriate financing technology, humanitarian assistance and forecast and early warning systems, and through, inter alia, the promotion of their health and well-being, as well as access to sustainable livelihoods and the provision of adequate resources, while ensuring women's meaningful participation in decision-making, at all levels, on environmental issues, in particular on strategies and policies related to the impacts of climate change, and by ensuring the integration of the specific needs of women and girls into humanitarian responses to natural disasters, into the planning, **E/CN.6/2019/L.3** delivery, implementation and monitoring of disaster risk reduction policies, in particular, urban and rural infrastructure and land-use planning and resettlement and relocation planning during the aftermath of natural disasters, and into sustainable natural resources management; and ensure that social protection systems, public services and infrastructure are sustainable through the integration of climate-smart dimensions and tools, including accurate and downscaled climate services developed in participation with the sectors involved, connecting science, policy and practice;

(ccc) Increase access of women to digital technologies to enhance their productivity and mobility in the labour market; enhance efficiency, accountability and transparency of social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure through enhanced use of information and communications technologies for the benefit of women and girls, including for those hardest to reach; work towards closing digital gender divides and promoting equal access to information and communications technologies and to the Internet for women and girls, explore appropriate ways to address any potential negative impact of new technologies on gender equality; and ensure that programmes, services and infrastructure are adaptable and suited to meet different positive cultural values and technological barriers, including literacy;

(ddd) Conduct systematic and transparent assessments of the gender and environmental impacts of infrastructure projects with the full, equal and effective participation of women and girls through social dialogues, thereby promoting the enjoyment of their human rights;

(eee) Ensure availability and sustainable management of water, as well as access to safe and affordable drinking water and adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all women and girls, as well as for menstrual hygiene management, including for hygiene facilities and services, in homes, schools, temporary shelters for refugees, migrants or people affected by natural disasters, humanitarian emergencies or armed conflict and post-conflict situations and in all other public and private spaces; take measures to reduce the time spent by women and girls on collecting household water; address the negative impact of inadequate and inequitable access to drinking water and to sanitation and energy services on the access of girls to education; and promote women's full, effective and equal participation in decision-making on water and sanitation;

(fff) Ensure that every household has access to adequate levels of affordable and reliable electricity through appropriate grid and decentralized off-grid solutions, including from renewable energy sources, that are adequately maintained and support women's and girls' specific livelihood needs;

(ggg) Provide targeted support and incentives for women's participation and leadership as users and producers of energy; and strengthen the provision of clean fuel for cooking to curb indoor air pollution, which disproportionately affects women and children;

(hhh) Integrate a gender perspective into the planning and use of public spaces, the design and development of smart cities, communities and rural areas and intelligent mobility planning processes; and promote the mobility and empowerment of women and girls, including those with disabilities and those who are homeless, and promote inclusive societies, including through adequate housing, and in doing so ensure that public urban, rural and peripheral transport, including land and water transport systems and infrastructure, are sustainable, accessible, safe, affordable and gender-responsive, that they take into account the different needs of women and men, girls and boys and are adapted to be used by persons with disabilities and older persons;

E/CN.6/2019/L.3

(iii) Promote safe public spaces and improve the security and safety of women and girls through gender-responsive rural and urban planning and infrastructure, including sustainable, safe, accessible and affordable public transportation systems, prevent and eliminate violence and harassment against women on their journey to and from work, and protect women and girls from being physically threatened or assaulted, including from sexual violence, while collecting household water and fuel and when accessing sanitation facilities outside their homes or practicing open defecation;

Mobilize resources, strengthen women's participation and improve evidence

(jjj) Take steps to significantly increase investment to close resource gaps, for example 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 policies, 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 gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;

(kkk) Take steps in the design, implementation and pursuit of fiscal policies and gender responsive-budgeting to promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by, inter alia, optimizing fiscal expenditures to extend social protection coverage, facilitating greater access to social protection and financial and business services, including credit for women, and promoting costing and cost-benefit calculation of the investments needed to ensure access to social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure, bearing in mind that such policies and budgeting play a critical role in reducing poverty and inequality and supporting inclusive growth;

(lll) Encourage the international community and promote partnerships to support developing countries in their efforts to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and to protect the poor and people in vulnerable situations, with a view to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, improving tax systems, promoting access to financial services, enhancing productive capacity, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, encouraging the formalization and growth of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and promoting full and productive employment and decent work for all;

(mmm) 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 in ensuring that official development assistance is used effectively to help meet development goals and targets, and to help them, inter alia, to promote social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls;

(nnn) Strengthen international and regional 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 **E/CN.6/2019/L.3** 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 women and girls and for improving their lives and well-being;

(ooo) Support the important role of civil society actors in promoting and protecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women; take steps to protect such actors, including women human rights defenders, and to integrate a gender perspective into the creation of a safe and enabling environment for the defence 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 labour rights, the 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;

(ppp) Ensure equal opportunities for women and girls in cultural, recreational and sport activities in all areas, including administration, management and participation in physical activities and sports at the national, regional and international levels, such as access, coaching, training, competition, remuneration and prizes;

(qqq) Consider evaluating the costs and benefits of private sector participation in social protection systems, public service delivery and infrastructure development;

(rrr) Create and strengthen gender-responsive accountability mechanisms, such as audits, and include beneficiaries and users in the evaluation of social protection, public service and infrastructure projects;

(sss) Strengthen the capacity of national statistical offices and other relevant government institutions to collect, analyse and disseminate data, disaggregated by sex, income, age, disability and other characteristics relevant in national contexts, to support policies and actions to improve the situation of women and girls through access to social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure, 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 high-quality, reliable and timely disaggregated data and gender statistics.

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 the United Nations system entities, within their respective mandates, and other relevant international financial institutions and multi-stakeholder platforms to support Member States, upon their request, in their efforts to enhance social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

49. The Commission recalls General Assembly resolution 72/181 of 19 December 2017, and encourages the secretariat to continue its consideration of how to enhance the participation, including at the sixty-fourth 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 (the **E/CN.6/2019/L.3**

50. The Commission calls upon the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (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 social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Annex II

Joint Communique by Kenya Delegation

WE, the delegates from Kenya at the 63rd session of CSW drawn from National Government, Parliament, Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA), County Governments, County Assembly Forum, State Agencies, Constitutional Commissions, Office of Her Excellency, the First Lady of the Republic of Kenya, County First Ladies Association, Civil Society, Private Sector, Community Based Organizations Grassroots Communities reiterate our commitments to the implementation at the Agreed Conclusions and follow up actions at national and county levels, in the spirit of the 2030 transformative agenda on the Sustainable Development Goals of leaving no one behind.

APPRECIATE, the Leadership provided by the Head of Government Delegation Prof. Margaret Kobia, Ph.D, MGH for her exemplary leadership during the 63rd CSW that ensured cohesiveness and delivery of results by the Kenya delegates;

AWARE, that full effective and accelerated implementation of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action will make a crucial contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls;

COGNISANT of 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, and to social protection and public services and importance of their effective implementation.

STRENGTHENED by a progressive Constitution, regional conventions, instruments and initiatives and their follow-up mechanisms to secure gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls including through promotion of their access to social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure;

RECOGNISING some measurable progress made in women's and girls' access to social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure, particularly in the areas of health and education

RESOLVE to scale up our efforts towards securing such progress through the following actions:

A. Strengthening normative, legal and institutional environment

- (i) Take action by increasing investments and resourcing 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 well-being
- (ii) Adopt a comprehensive and integrated approach to the design, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure to ensure that gender-responsive policymaking processes, including public financial management and public procurement processes, are designed to realize gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls
- (iii) Ensure that social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure contribute to efforts to eliminate, prevent and respond to all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private spaces, through multisectoral and coordinated approaches to investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators of violence against women and girls and end impunity, and to provide protection and 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
- (iv) Towards implementation of the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act, 2011 and the Children's Act 2001 scale up interventions to eliminate harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage, which may have long-term effects on girls' and women's lives, health and bodies, including increased vulnerability to violence and sexually

transmitted diseases. Design interventions for empowering all women and girls, working with local communities to combat negative social norms that condone such practices and empowering parents and communities to abandon such practices and ensuring that girls and women at risk or affected by these practices have access to social protection and public services, including education and health care;

- (v) Take all appropriate measures to recognize, reduce and redistribute women's and girls' disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work by promoting the reconciliation of work and family life, the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men and men's equitable sharing of responsibilities with respect to care and household work, including as fathers and caregivers, through flexibility in working arrangements, without reductions in labour and social protections, support for breastfeeding mothers, the provision of infrastructure, technology and public services, such as water and sanitation, renewable energy, transport and information and communications technology, and the implementation and promotion of maternity, paternity, parental and other leave schemes.
- (vi) Ensure access to social protection for unpaid caregivers of all ages, including coverage for health care and pensions, and in this regard strengthen social protection schemes that promote, as appropriate, the economic, social and legal recognition of unpaid care and domestic work, and allow such work to be valued within contributory schemes;
- (vii) Invest in and strengthen family-oriented policies and programmes that are responsive to the diverse, specific and changing needs of women and girls and their families, 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, and ensure that adequate measures are in place to protect and support women, including in cases of widowhood, such as access to the full range of social services and access to justice, as those 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 all women and girls;
- (viii) Fully engage men and boys as agents and beneficiaries of change, and as strategic partners and allies in: promoting women's and girls' access to social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure; eliminating all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls, in both public and private spheres. This will require understanding and addressing the root causes of gender inequality, such as unequal power relations, gender stereotypes and practices that perpetuate discrimination against women and girls;
 - (ix) Integrate a gender perspective into the design, implementation and evaluation of and follow-up to development policies, plans and programmes, including budget policies, on social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure, ensuring coordination and coherence between line ministries, gender policymakers, gender equality mechanisms and appropriate collaboration with the private sector, non-governmental and civil society organizations and national human rights institutions, paying increased attention to the needs of women and girls to ensure that they benefit from policies and programmes adopted in all spheres;
 - (x) Strengthen the capacity of national mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, at all levels, with sustainable and adequate funding, including through official development assistance, to support the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into the design, delivery and evaluation of social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure, enhancing their linkages and implementing these three focus areas;
 - (xi) Towards implementing the Persons with Disabilities Act 2003 and National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, promote and protect the rights of women and girls with disabilities, who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including by ensuring their 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.

- (xii) Take measures to adopt and implement legislation and policies that provide rural women with access to land and support women's cooperatives and agricultural programmes, including for subsistence agriculture and fisheries, in order to contribute to school feeding programmes as a pull factor to keep children, in particular girl children, in school, noting that school meals and take-home rations attract and retain children in schools and recognizing that school feeding is an incentive to enhance enrolment and reduce absenteeism, especially for girls;
- (xiii) Strengthen efforts to achieve universal access to HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support and provide HIV-sensitive social protection measures, including cash transfers and other multisectoral programmes, as appropriate, to ensure access to health care, education, housing and employment for all women and girls living with, at risk of or affected by HIV and AIDS, including co-infections and other sexually transmitted infections; 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 HIV and AIDS responses;
- (xiv) Promote the effective and meaningful participation of older women, in the design and implementation of normative and political frameworks related to social security and social protection systems, public services and infrastructure that benefit them;

- (xv) Provide social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure that support the productivity and economic viability of women's work and protect women, especially those working in the informal economy, in rural and urban areas, while supporting their transition from the informal to the formal economy to ensure an adequate standard of living, and take measures to address unsafe and unhealthy working conditions in the informal economy by promoting occupational safety and health protection for workers in the informal economy;
- (xvi) Take measures to facilitate the financial inclusion and financial literacy of 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 into finance sector policy and regulations, encourage financial institutions, such as commercial banks, development banks, agricultural banks, microfinance institutions, mobile network operators, agent networks, cooperatives, postal banks and savings banks, to provide access to financial products, services and information to women and encourage the use of innovative tools and platforms, including online and mobile banking;

B. Strengthen women's and girls' access to social protection

- (i) Encourage and recognize the efforts at all levels to establish and strengthen social protection systems and measures, including national safety nets such as the hunger safety nets, Njaa Marufukuu and other programmes for women and girls, such as food and cash-for-work, cash transfer and voucher programmes, school feeding programmes and mother-and-child nutrition programmes, and increase investment, capacity-building and systems development;
- (ii) Improve the design, implementation and evaluation of social protection systems and nationally appropriate measures based on context-specific assessment of risks and vulnerabilities for all women and girls;

- (iii) Work towards strengthening inclusive and gender-responsive social protection systems, to ensure full access to social protection for all without discrimination of any kind, and take measures to progressively achieve higher levels of protection, including facilitating the transition from informal to formal work;
- (iv) Ensure that social protection measures are effectively incorporated into humanitarian response in the context of natural disasters and other emergencies, while strengthening gender-responsive programming and planning; and recognize the important role social protection systems can play in disaster risk management strategies in building the resilience of communities and individuals and helping them cope with shocks, including those related to climate change;
- (v) In line with the **Big Four Agenda** on food security, implement nutrition policies and provide integrated food and nutritional support and services, with special attention to women, girls, infants and young children; ensure 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; and support adequate care and optimal feeding practices, especially during pregnancy, lactation and infancy when the nutritional requirements are increased, including promoting exclusive breastfeeding up to six months, with adequate complementary feeding thereafter, therefore contributing to women's full and equal access to social protection and resources;
- (vi) In accord to with the National Policy on Older Persons and Aging 2014, promote legal, administrative and policy measures that strengthen unemployment protection schemes and ensure women's full and equal access to pensions, including access to income security for older women, through contributory and/or non-contributory schemes that are independent of their employment trajectories, and reduce gender gaps in coverage and benefit levels such as the insurance schemes for the elderly and persons with disability.

- (vii) Guarantee access to maternity protection and promote, inter alia, paid maternity, paternity and parental leave and adequate social security benefits for both women and men, taking appropriate steps to ensure they are not discriminated against when availing themselves of such benefits and promoting men's awareness and incentivizing their use of such opportunities, as a means of enabling women to increase their participation in the labour market; recognize the social significance of maternity, paternity, motherhood, fatherhood and the shared responsibility of parents in the upbringing of children;

C. Strengthen women's and girls' access to public services

- (i) Ensure that quality public services are available, affordable, accessible and acceptable to all women and girls, including in situations of natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies and displacement;
- (ii) Prioritize investments that contribute to the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including through accessible and affordable child care and other support services; extend the coverage and ensure equitable, inclusive, quality, accessible and affordable early childhood education and care services and facilities;
- (iii) Identify and remove barriers that constrain women's and girls' access to public services, such as geographic, legal and institutional barriers, including in rural and remote areas, in order to guarantee their access to these services on a regular basis and during emergencies;
- (iv) In line with the Constitutional provisions, take concrete measures to realize the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health for all women and girls; and ensure the availability, accessibility and acceptability of quality health-care services to address all communicable and non-

communicable diseases, including through universally accessible primary health care and support services and social protection mechanisms;

- (v) In line with the **Big Four Agenda**,¹ specifically on Universal health coverage, accelerate equitable access for all women and girls to affordable, quality, essential and effective health-care services and medicines for all, while ensuring that the use of such services and medicines does not expose the users to financial hardship;
- (vi) Ensure and increase financial investments in affordable and accessible quality public health-care systems and facilities for all women and girls with safe, effective, quality, essential and affordable medicines and vaccines such as the health insurance subsidy programme, as well as health technologies, the systematic utilization of new technologies and integrated health information systems, including through community outreach, private sector engagement and the support of the international community;
- (vii) Increase investments in a more effective, socially accountable, motivated, appropriately equipped and well-trained health workforce, with ongoing education and training; and address the shortage and inequitable distribution of health-care workers by promoting decent work with adequate remuneration and incentives to secure the presence of qualified health-care professionals in rural and remote areas, including by utilising digital technologies for health-care providers and patients, enabling safe working environments and conditions and expanding community-based health education and training;
- (viii) In accord with the provisions of the Constitution, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and

¹ The Big 4 Agenda is an action plan being implemented by the Government focusing on shielding citizens from adverse effects of low incomes. Universal health coverage seeks to actualise 100% cost subsidy on essential health services through enrolment to the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF)

Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as a contribution to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and the realization of their human rights;

- (ix) Scale up measures to reduce maternal, neonatal, infant and child mortality and morbidity and increase access to quality health care before, during and after pregnancy and childbirth for all women through interventions such as improving transportation and health-care infrastructure; such as the maternal and child health advocacy programme of Beyond Zero Initiative;
- (x) Promote and respect women's and girls' right to education throughout the life cycle and at all levels, including by investing in public education systems and infrastructure, including free and compulsory primary and secondary education, promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, eliminating female illiteracy and promoting financial and digital literacy, adopting positive actions to build women's and girls' leadership skills and influence and supporting women and girls in diversifying their educational and occupational choices in emerging fields, such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics and information and communications technology; strive to ensure the completion of early childhood, primary and secondary education and expand vocational and technical education for all women and girls;
- (xi) Ensure that pregnant adolescents and young mothers, as well as single mothers, continue and complete their education, 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;

- (xii) Continue to develop and strengthen appropriate policies, strategies and programmes to enhance the employability of women, including young women, and their access to better remunerated employment options through formal and non-formal education, educational curricula and skills development and vocational training, lifelong learning and retraining and long-distance education; facilitate women's access to and opportunities in emerging fields, such as science, technology, engineering, mathematics, information and communications technology;
- (xiii) Create opportunities, improve employment standards and promote conditions of decent work, security, social protection and decent remuneration for front-line women workers in the delivery of public services, such as health care and education, which are traditionally undervalued sectors, with a majority of female workers, and ensure their access to positions of decision-making and leadership;

D. Make infrastructure work for women and girls

- (i) 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 and recover from adverse impacts of climate change, including natural disasters and extreme weather events, through the provision of essential infrastructure, social protection and public services that are sustainable, as well as appropriate financing technology, humanitarian assistance and forecast and early warning systems, and through, inter alia, the promotion of their health and well-being;
- (ii) Increase access of women to digital technologies to enhance their productivity and mobility in the labour market; enhance efficiency, accountability and transparency of social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure through enhanced use of information and communications technologies for the benefit of

women and girls, including for those hardest to reach; explore appropriate ways to address any potential negative impact of new technologies on gender equality; and ensure that programmes, services and infrastructure are adaptable and suited to meet different positive cultural values and technological barriers, including literacy;

- (iii) Conduct systematic and transparent assessments of the gender and environmental impacts of infrastructure projects with the full, equal and effective participation of women and girls through social dialogues, thereby promoting the enjoyment of their human rights;
- (iv) Ensure availability and sustainable management of water, as well as access to safe and affordable drinking water and adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all women and girls as well as for menstrual hygiene management in line with national sanitary towel initiative in schools as well as County First Ladies Association programme, take measures to reduce the time spent by women and girls on collecting household water; address the negative impact of inadequate and inequitable access to drinking water and to sanitation and energy services on the access of girls to education; and promote women's full, effective and equal participation in decision-making on water and sanitation;
- (v) Ensure that every household has access to adequate levels of affordable and reliable electricity through appropriate grid and decentralized off-grid solutions, including from renewable energy sources, that are adequately maintained and support women's and girls' specific livelihood needs. For instance, through the last mile connectivity project which has committed to achieving universal access to electricity by 2020;
- (vi) Provide targeted support and incentives for women's participation and leadership as users and producers of energy; and strengthen

the provision of clean fuel for cooking to curb indoor air pollution, which disproportionately affects women and children;

- (vii) Integrate a gender perspective into the planning and use of public spaces, the design and development of smart cities, communities and rural areas and intelligent mobility planning processes; and promote the mobility and empowerment of women and girls, including those with disabilities and those who are homeless, and promote inclusive societies, including through adequate housing, and in doing so ensure that public urban, rural and peripheral transport, including land and water transport systems and infrastructure, are sustainable, accessible, safe, affordable and gender-responsive, that they take into account the different needs of women and men, girls and boys and are adapted to be used by persons with disabilities and older persons;
- (viii) Promote safe public spaces and improve the security and safety of women and girls through gender-responsive rural and urban planning and infrastructure, including sustainable, safe, accessible and affordable public transportation systems, prevent and eliminate violence and harassment against women on their journey to and from work, and protect women and girls from being physically threatened or assaulted, including from sexual violence, while collecting household water and fuel and when accessing sanitation facilities outside their homes or practicing open defecation;

E. Mobilize resources, strengthen women's participation & improve evidence

- (i) Take steps in the design, implementation and pursuit of fiscal policies and gender responsive-budgeting to promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by, inter alia, optimizing fiscal expenditures to extend social protection coverage, facilitating greater access to social protection and

financial and business services, including credit for women, and promoting costing and cost-benefit calculation of the investments needed to ensure access to social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure, bearing in mind that such policies and budgeting play a critical role in reducing poverty and inequality and supporting inclusive growth; For instance, the sustained efforts by Controller of Budget to mainstream gender in all budgeting processes at all levels;

- (ii) Promote partnerships to support developing countries in their efforts to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and to protect the poor and people in vulnerable situations, with a view to achieving the internationally agreed development goals and promoting full and productive employment and decent work for all;
- (iii) Support the important role of civil society actors in promoting and protecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women; take steps to protect such actors, including women human rights defenders, and to integrate a gender perspective into the creation of a safe and enabling environment for the defence of human rights and to prevent violations and abuses against them;
- (iv) Ensure equal opportunities for women and girls in cultural, recreational and sport activities in all areas, including administration, management and participation in physical activities and sports at the national, regional and international levels, such as access, coaching, training, competition, remuneration and prizes;
- (v) Consider evaluating the costs and benefits of gender responsive participation of private sector in social protection systems, public service delivery and infrastructure development;

- (vi) Create and strengthen gender-responsive accountability mechanisms, such as audits, and include beneficiaries and users in the evaluation of social protection, public service and infrastructure projects;
- (vii) Strengthen the capacity of national statistical offices and other relevant government institutions to collect, analyse and disseminate data, disaggregated by sex, income, age, disability and other characteristics relevant in national contexts, to support policies and actions to improve the situation of women and girls through access to social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure, and to monitor and track the implementation of such policies and actions.

We commit to take all the necessary measures to implement the provisions of this Communiqué, and related activities to promote access to public services and social protection systems.

We appreciate and commend the Ministry of Public Service Youth and Gender for the pivotal role of coordinating CSW meetings and request that the national machinery continues in the same spirit including convening regular meetings to review progress on agreed outcomes and plan for an effective participation of Kenya in readiness for the 64th Session on the Commission on the Status of Women whose focus will be the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Further, we acknowledge the dedication and hospitality extended to the delegation by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Kenya Mission, UN, New York. We offer our special gratitude to the Deputy Permanent Representative Ambassador Koki Muli and staff of the *Third Committee* for their expertise and contribution throughout the CSW 63rd CSW.