



EQUALITY BULLETIN

Creative Nation



Youth Creativity & Wellness: Kenya's young people are no longer waiting for change — they are creating it. At the heart of this movement is the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), leading national conversations on how youth creativity and mental well-being can drive equality and inclusion.

Through its Youth Engagement Forum on Harnessing the Power of the Creative Economy, the Commission brought together young filmmakers, musicians, digital creators and designers to explore how innovation can fuel both livelihoods and equality.

The dialogue also featured Australian High Commissioner Ms. Jenny Da Rin, who reaffirmed support for youth-led innovation and inclusive growth. **Page 5**



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A Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Kenya's creative economy stands as a powerful engine for opportunity, civic engagement, and social transformation. Across our nation, young people are turning art into agency — using film, design, music, and digital innovation to shape a more inclusive and equitable future.

At the National Gender and Equality Commission, we see creativity not just as expression, but as empowerment. It is a pathway to dignified work, cultural pride, and participation for women, youth, and persons with disabilities. When imagination is nurtured, equality finds new life — in stories told, ideas shared, and innovations born.

We are grateful to partners such as the **Government of Australia**, represented by High Commissioner Ms. Jenny Da Rin, for championing youth participation, creative entrepreneurship, and economic inclusion. Together, we are building bridges where creativity meets opportunity and inclusion drives growth.



As we celebrate this new wave of innovation, the Commission remains committed to ensuring that Kenya's creative future leaves no one behind. The future belongs to those who dare to create — and in empowering them, we move closer to equality for all.

Purity Ngina, PhD, MBS

Chief Executive Officer

National Gender and Equality Commission

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Kenya's Digital Dignity Drive: NGEK Takes Human Rights Debate Global

At a global human rights conference in Moscow, Kenya — represented by NGEK Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa — called for technology that uplifts humanity, not undermines it.

In Moscow, the international spotlight was turned toward the evolving intersection of technology and human rights when the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEK) took its place among global partners shaping tomorrow's digital agenda. The Commission's Chairperson, Hon. Rehema Dida Jaldesa, along with Vice Chairperson Mr Thomas Koyier, participated in the IX International Scientific and Practical Conference on "Protection of Human Rights in the Context of Digitalization of Society," a gathering of human-rights institutions, policymakers and technology stakeholders from across the world.

At the core of Chairperson Jaldesa's address lay a clear message: digital technology has revolutionised citizen-state relations, expanded access to justice and unlocked civic voice — but it has also introduced new arenas of risk which demand vigilant protection of rights.

"Technology has revolutionised how institutions engage with citizens and enhanced access to justice," she noted. "But it has also created new challenges that require vigilant protection of privacy, the prevention of online abuse, and the promotion of digital inclusivity."

She further elaborated that Kenya's stance on digitalisation is anchored on three



Commission Chairperson Hon. Rehema Dida Jaldesa and Vice Chairperson Mr. Thomas Koyier at the IX International Conference on Human Rights and Digitalization in Moscow, Russia.

defining pillars: inclusion, protection and accountability. "As technology continues to reshape our societies, we must ensure that no one is left behind, that individual rights are respected, and that institutions remain accountable in the digital space," she affirmed. These pillars, she argued, serve as a framework for ensuring that the digital transformation of services, governance and economy does not undermine but rather advances human dignity.

Jaldesa also highlighted the cooperation between NGEK and international partners. She referenced the memorandum of understanding signed in 2024 between NGEK and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation, which commits both institutions to collaboration in human-rights education, information sharing and

institutional capacity building. With this accord, Kenya deepens its engagement in global human-rights discourse and affirms that the protection of digital rights transcends borders.

Throughout the conference, discussions ranged from data protection and digital justice to artificial intelligence and the perils of online misinformation. A recurring theme was the dual nature of technology — as both enabler and disruptor — and the corresponding need for national institutions to evolve. Vice Chairperson Koyier underscored the point, stating, "It is not enough to react to harm once it occurs. We must anticipate threats, empower citizens with digital literacy, and build systems that make accountability part of the architecture of technology itself."

Kenya's participation at the forum signals more than a symbolic gesture. It reflects the country's commitment to being a proactive contributor to international norms around digital rights, and the NGEK's role as a champion of equality, dignity and justice in both offline and online spaces. For young Kenyans, persons with disabilities and women who risk being marginalised in rapid digital shifts, the pronouncements from Moscow carry real weight: that their rights matter, their inclusion is imperative, and their protections must be built into the systems of tomorrow. Ultimately, the discussions underscored a central truth: technology alone does not guarantee progress. It must be anchored in strong human-rights frameworks, institutional accountability, and the unwavering commitment to equality.

NGEK and A Smile from Kenya Join Forces to Rebuild Lives and Justice for GBV Survivors

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEK), through its Malindi Regional Office, has deepened its community outreach efforts by hosting A Smile from Kenya—an organisation dedicated to empowering vulnerable groups through psychosocial support, vocational skills, and income-generating programmes.

The engagement, held in Malindi, centred on building stronger partnerships in complaints handling, public education, and redress mechanisms — with a particular focus on supporting survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), especially girls.



Beatrice Zighe from the Malindi Regional Office with a delegation from A Smile from Kenya

Speaking during the meeting, representatives from both organisations underscored the importance of collaboration in bridging gaps between national human rights mechanisms and community-level realities. The partnership, they said, represents a shared commitment to

advancing equality, fostering healing, and building safer spaces for women and girls.

For the Commission, such engagements reflect its broader mission: ensuring that human rights and gender equality are not just principles enshrined in law, but lived experiences for all Kenyans — particularly those most at risk of exclusion and harm.

As NGEK continues to strengthen its presence at the grassroots, partnerships like this one serve as a reminder that transformative change begins in communities — where empathy, awareness, and action converge to build a more just and equal society.

Closing the Gap: Kenya Moves to Turn Equality from Promise to Policy

NGEC, in partnership with GIZ and DevTransform, leads a high-level dialogue to craft the Kenya Action Plan on Inequality Reduction — a national blueprint for fairer opportunity and inclusive growth.



Commissioner Nzomo Mbituka with NGECKENYA senior management and partners during a high-level workshop to shape the Kenya Action Plan on Inequality Reduction (KAPI).

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGECKENYA), in partnership with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and with support from DevTransform, convened a three-day high-level workshop to shape the Kenya Action Plan on Inequality Reduction (KAPI). The workshop assembled technical officers from ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), development partners and civil-society actors to align institutional priorities and cement ownership of a national roadmap to rebalance equity across sectors.

Against a backdrop of rising concern over entrenched disparities, the workshop focused on developing an actionable framework that addresses the structural drivers of inequality — from gender gaps and disability exclusion to youth unemployment, weak social protection systems, and the marginalisation of ethnic and religious minorities. Organisers said the aim was not merely to draft policy language but to build a living plan with measurable targets, implementation modalities and clear accountability mechanisms.

The objective is simple but profound,” said Commissioner Nzomo during the Technical Working Group session. “Over the past days, we have made meaningful progress toward transforming evidence into action to tackle inequality in Kenya.

Reducing inequality remains a shared national responsibility, one that requires sustained collaboration across sectors and levels of government. Stakeholder contributions will play a vital role in ensuring that KAPI is practical, inclusive, and aligned with Kenya’s development priorities.”

The gathering gave technical officers space to interrogate data, test policy options and negotiate realistic pathways for translating national commitments into county-level interventions. Breakout sessions examined how to mainstream equality into budgeting and public services, strengthen social protection for people left furthest behind, and remove barriers that prevent women, persons with disabilities and marginalised youth from accessing education, employment and land.

Participants emphasised the importance of evidence-based planning. Several ministries presented baseline studies and diagnostic reports that highlighted service gaps and regional disparities, while development partners outlined international best practices for monitoring, financing and multisectoral coordination. A recurring theme was the need to harmonise indicators across government systems so that progress on inequality can be tracked transparently and periodically.

The workshop emphasised that policy responses must reflect the multiple dimensions of disadvantage — economic, geographic, gender-based, generational and ability-linked. Drawing on GIZ’s expertise in inequality diagnostics and distributional policy approaches, participants considered how Kenya might build institutional systems that monitor, report and act on inequality in a manner that spans departments rather than being confined to silos.

Justice Wears a New Crown: NGECKENYA Honoured as Kenya’s Beacon of Equality

The Commission earns national recognition for its unwavering commitment to equality, dignity, and justice for all Kenyans.

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGECKENYA) has been recognised as a National Hero for its outstanding work in advancing inclusion, human rights, and transformative public policy — a distinction that reaffirms its vital role in building a just and equitable Kenya.



From right: Commissioner Carolyne Lentumpuru, Hamisi Dzole (Malindi), and Lotaruk Ekuam Nahashon (Isiolo)

The honour celebrates NGECKENYA’s relentless advocacy for equality across gender, age, and ability, and its commitment to ensuring that marginalized groups are heard and protected. For the Commission, the recognition is more than an institutional achievement — it is a tribute to the communities whose resilience continues to inspire its mission.

Celebrated were three champions whose work reflects NGECKENYA’s vision — Commissioner Carolyne Lentumpuru, Lotaruk Ekuam Nahashon (Isiolo), and Hamisi Dzole (Malindi) — recognised for bridging voices from the margins to the centre of national development. Their tireless service in advancing gender equality, protecting rights, and fostering inclusion has strengthened the Commission’s impact at the grassroots.

The recognition stands as a powerful affirmation that when institutions and individuals commit to fairness and dignity, they move the nation closer to its promise — a Kenya where every voice counts and every citizen belongs.

Mining Justice from the Ground Up: NGEC, Partners Unveil ‘Haki Mashinani’ Project”

Bondo, Siaya County — In the heart of Bondo, Siaya County, a quiet but powerful movement was set in motion this week. The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), through its Kisumu Regional Office and in partnership with Sulwe CBO, Child Ambassadors, Dak Achana, and Gender Dialogues, officially launched a new initiative titled “Peeling the Face of Business and Human Rights – Haki Mashinani.”

Held at the Legacy Hotel in Bondo, the launch brought together community leaders, youth representatives, civil society actors, and human-rights advocates to chart a new path for artisanal-mining communities—one that promotes economic inclusion while protecting vulnerable groups from exploitation and gender-based harm.



NGEC Kisumu Regional Office with partners during the launch of a new initiative in Bondo, Siaya County.

Funded by the European Commission and implemented under the Haki Ni Yetu Programme, the Haki Mashinani project seeks to raise awareness of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), map human-rights risks in the mining sector, and strengthen community-led prevention, reporting, and referral mechanisms.

While the mining industry has long been a source of livelihood for many in Western Kenya, it remains fraught with social, environmental, and human-rights challenges. In particular, women, youth, and persons with disabilities often bear the

brunt of unsafe working conditions, economic exclusion, and abuse.

Speaking during the launch, NGEC representatives underscored the need for a human-rights-based approach to development in the extractives sector.

“The mining sector presents immense potential for local economic growth, yet it also exposes communities to significant human-rights vulnerabilities,” the Commission noted. “Through Haki Mashinani, we aim to equip communities with the tools to identify, prevent and respond to gender-based violence and discrimination, while promoting equitable participation in resource governance.”

Planned activities include baseline studies to document gender-based risks and social inequalities, capacity-building workshops for community-based organisations, and multi-stakeholder dialogues designed to inform stronger national frameworks on business and human rights.

Peace Has a Woman’s Face: Kenya Rolls Out Third Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security



Cabinet Secretary for Gender Hon. Hannah Wendot and delegates during the official launch of the Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (KNAP III 2025–2029)

Nairobi — In a resounding affirmation of Kenya’s commitment to gender equality and peacebuilding, the country has officially launched its Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (KNAP III 2025–2029), coinciding with the 25th Anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

The landmark event, themed “Women Lead, Peace Follows,” took place at the Emara Ole Sereni Hotel, Nairobi, drawing together representatives from

government ministries, development partners, civil society, and international organisations. The gathering underscored a renewed national resolve to place women’s leadership at the centre of peace and security policy.

Convened by the Ministry of Gender, Culture and Children Services, the State Department for Gender Affairs and Affirmative Action, and the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, in collaboration with diverse stakeholders, the forum reflected Kenya’s growing recognition that sustainable peace cannot be achieved without the full~

participation and protection of women and girls.

In her keynote address, Cabinet Secretary for Gender, Hon. Hannah Wendot, who served as Chief Guest, delivered a rallying call for inclusive leadership in peacebuilding processes.

“Women’s leadership and participation are indispensable to achieving sustainable peace,” she said. “KNAP III builds on the progress of the last two action plans by deepening women’s involvement in peacebuilding, preventing and responding to gender-based violence, and integrating gender perspectives across all sectors of governance and security.”

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), which participated in the launch, welcomed the plan as a pivotal step in achieving inclusive peace. The Commission noted that advancing women’s leadership in conflict prevention and peacebuilding directly aligns with Kenya’s constitutional vision of equality and human rights.

The launch of KNAP III comes at a moment of reflection and renewal for Kenya’s WPS agenda. Over the past two decades, the country has made notable strides in recognizing women as peacebuilders — from mediating local conflicts to leading national dialogues.

» CONTINUATION

NGEC Celebrates Kenya's Youth: Powering Creativity, Championing Well-Being, and Building a Future of Equality

The Commission's heartfelt dialogue with Kenya's young innovators and changemakers underscores its enduring faith in Gen Z — a generation redefining leadership, equality, and civic responsibility.

In Kenya today, powered by a youthful population and teeming with ideas, a new frontier of nation-building is quietly unfolding. A generation primed for innovation is stepping forward not just as beneficiaries of change, but as architects of it. At the centre of this transformation is the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), which is engaging young Kenyans on two critical fronts: the creative economy — and their mental health and well-being.

The Commission convened a high-profile youth dialogue under the theme “Harnessing the Power of the Creative Economy”. Young people from across the country — filmmakers, musicians, digital media producers, fashion designers, visual artists — gathered to explore how their art could serve as more than expression: how it could become economic opportunity, civic voice and social change.

Kenya's young people are creators of culture, drivers of innovation and architects of the nation we are building together,” delivered by Commissioner Nzomo Mbithuka on behalf of NGECKENYA Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa. “When we listen to their ideas, amplify their voices, and open doors for their talent to thrive, the whole country rises. The creative economy is not peripheral to development — it is central to achieving equality, inclusion, and sustainable growth. It gives young people not only a way to earn but a way to be heard. Through film, fashion, music, and digital art, they are shaping Kenya's narrative, challenging stereotypes, and building a society that values imagination as much as innovation.”

Adding further weight to the event was a courtesy visit from the ~



Commissioner Nzomo Mbithuka, Australian High Commissioner Jenny Da Rin, and a youth representative during the youth dialogue themed “Harnessing the Power of the Creative Economy”

Australian High Commissioner, Jenny Da Rin, who reaffirmed her country's commitment to supporting youth participation, creative entrepreneurship and economic inclusion in Kenya.

“Australia recognises that young people everywhere are powerful agents of change,” she said. “Kenya's vibrant creative sector inspires us — its music, its design, its digital innovators — who are not only transforming their own futures but contributing to social cohesion and shared prosperity. Our partnership with NGECKENYA is rooted in a shared belief that inclusion is the foundation of lasting development.”

For Kenya — where youth unemployment remains alarmingly high and traditional job markets no longer absorb large entry-level cohorts — the creative economy offers a promising alternative. As noted in recent commentary, while 83.6 % of employed people are in the informal sector, the creative economy is emerging as a space of fulfilment, flexibility and faster returns.

Young Kenyan creators are increasingly leveraging digital platforms to tell authentically Kenyan stories and connect with global audiences. The shift is transformative: art becomes livelihood; talent becomes influence. But as NGECKENYA emphasises, such a shift must be anchored in supportive policy frameworks that protect rights and expand opportunities.



Caption: Australian High Commissioner Jenny Da Rin speaking at youth dialogue

“A more inclusive creative economy is not simply about entertainment — it is about dignity, agency and economic justice for every young Kenyan,” Jaldesa's statement concluded. “When creativity is valued as work, when talent is rewarded fairly, and when innovation is seen as leadership, we move closer to the Kenya we all imagine.”

A Parallel Conversation: Youth Mental Health and Well-Being

The dialogue did not stop at opportunity. In a parallel forum, NGECKENYA convened youth representatives alongside mental-health experts for an open conversation on the stresses facing young Kenyans. From unemployment and identity struggles, to stigma, trauma and digital-age anxieties, the forum delved into realities too often kept silent.



Director of Corporate Services, Emmah Orua, with youth representatives during a mental health and well-being forum.

Too many young people carry heavy burdens — in silence and without support. Recent data indicates that among adolescents in Kenya, 44.3 % experienced a mental-health problem in the past year and only 11.1 % accessed counselling or emotional-behavioural support.

In the forum, expert facilitators emphasised a vital truth: mental well-being is not merely a health issue — it is a rights and equality issue.

Voices from the Margins: Nationwide Drive to Shape Policy for Ethnic Minorities and Marginalised Communities



Members of the public during nationwide forums on the Draft National Policy and Bill on Ethnic Minorities and Marginalised Communities

In a landmark step toward strengthening inclusion and social justice, the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) has joined ongoing nationwide public participation forums on the Draft National Policy and Bill on Ethnic Minorities and Marginalised Communities. The exercise, convened by the Executive Office of the President through the Minorities and Marginalized Affairs Unit (MMAU), is giving Kenyans from historically underrepresented communities a rare and vital platform to shape policies that directly affect their lives.

Across 11 regions, representatives of minority and marginalised groups are coming together to share their lived experiences, aspirations, and challenges — ensuring that the voices long pushed to the periphery of development are finally heard at the centre of national decision-making. The engagement reflects a renewed national commitment to equality, inclusion, and participatory governance as enshrined in Kenya's Constitution.

During the sessions, community representatives presented memoranda outlining the barriers their communities continue to face — from limited access to education, healthcare, and infrastructure, to underrepresentation

in leadership and employment. Their submissions will form part of the national discourse informing the finalization of the National Policy and Bill on Ethnic Minorities and Marginalised Communities (EMMCs).



Community representatives present a memorandum to Commissioner Caroline N. Lentupuru

The Commission underscored the importance of these perspectives in shaping an inclusive policy framework that guarantees equal participation in national and county governance. “Public participation is not a formality; it is the essence of democracy,” noted one of the facilitators. “When citizens contribute to the laws and policies that govern them, those frameworks become stronger, fairer, and more reflective of the nation's diversity.”

In the coastal region, the Commission's Malindi Regional Office held a sensitisation forum with the Watta community at Sea Breeze Hotel — an essential prelude to the public

participation forum scheduled for the following day. The session created space for open dialogue, helping community members understand the purpose and implications of the proposed policy and empowering them to engage meaningfully in the national conversation.

For the National Gender and Equality Commission, participation in this process reinforces its constitutional mandate to promote equality and freedom from discrimination. The exercise aligns closely with the Commission's mission to protect the rights of special interest groups, including minorities and marginalised populations, ensuring that no Kenyan is left behind in the country's development agenda.

As the consultations progress, civil society and government partners have signalled that the inputs received will form the backbone of a revised policy and the final Bill. The documents circulating publicly suggest a comprehensive framework that, if enacted and resourced, would place minority and marginalised communities on firmer footing in matters of governance, service delivery and cultural rights.

For participants who travelled long distances to present memoranda, the exercise has renewed hope. “Being heard is the first step toward being included,” said one regional delegate, capturing the sentiment felt widely across forums.

Whether that hope matures into measurable change will depend on the political choices to be made in the months ahead — choices about budgets, institutional roles, and how national priorities are translated into county action.

Her Land, Her Voice: Isiolo Forum Champions Women's Right to Own and Thrive

NGEC joined partners in driving a bold agenda for women's land rights, equality, and sustainable rural development.

Nanyuki — The National Gender and Equality Commission's Isiolo Regional Office joined women leaders, policymakers, and development partners at the Pastoral Women Forum and celebration of the International Day of Rural Women, held at Aberdare Prestige & Royal Cottages in Nanyuki. The event brought together delegates from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, South Sudan, and Ethiopia to spotlight rural women's rights and advocate for equitable access to land and natural resources.



Anthony Alyaro of the Isiolo Office during the Pastoral Women Forum

The forum served as a vital space for reflection and dialogue on the pivotal role of rural women in driving sustainable development. It underscored that women in pastoral and agricultural communities are not only custodians of the land but also crucial contributors to environmental conservation and economic resilience.

Participants shared personal stories and community experiences that illuminated both the challenges and opportunities women face in accessing, managing, and benefiting from land and natural resources.



Anthony Alyaro of the Isiolo Office speaks during the Pastoral Women Forum

Organized by IMPACT Kenya with support from NAMATI and GIZ Kenya, the gathering carried a strong message: empowering rural women is essential for achieving inclusive and sustainable development. Discussions focused on how women's active participation in land governance leads to better environmental outcomes, stronger community resilience, and more equitable growth.

Many speakers highlighted the persistent gaps that hinder women's full participation — from traditional practices that limit ownership to institutional barriers that exclude them from decision-making.

One pastoralist woman captured the forum's spirit when she remarked that when women are involved in decisions about land use, the land thrives, and so do the families that depend on it. Her words reflected the shared understanding that land rights are more than a legal question — they are deeply tied to dignity, equality, and community survival.

For the National Gender and Equality Commission, the event reaffirmed its constitutional mandate to promote and ~

protect the rights of all Kenyans, particularly those in marginalized and rural areas. The Isiolo Regional Office's participation demonstrated a firm commitment to ensuring that women's voices shape the policies and practices that affect their lives and livelihoods.

The forum also emphasized regional solidarity, as participants from across East Africa exchanged strategies for inclusive land governance and sustainable pastoralism. They discussed the importance of cross-border cooperation in addressing shared challenges such as climate change, land degradation, and resource conflicts that disproportionately affect women. The conversations in Nanyuki were more than just policy debates; they were a testament to the resilience and determination of rural women who continue to lead in silence and strength.

By engaging in such regional dialogues, the Commission continues to advance gender equality and inclusivity as cornerstones of Kenya's national development. The Isiolo Regional Office's contribution to this forum reflects an unwavering belief that empowering women at the grassroots level is key to achieving both justice and sustainability in Kenya's rural landscapes.

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