



**TALKING NOTES FOR WINFRED LICHUMA CHAIRPERSON NGEC DURING THE
EVENT TO MARK THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S WEEK 2016 AT PANAFRIC
HOTEL NAIROBI, MARCH 7, 2016**

**Madam Sicily Kanini Kariuki, Cabinet Secretary Public Service, Youth and
Gender Affairs**

H.E. Prof. Paul Chepkwony, Governor, Kericho County

Hon. Cecily Mbarire, Chairperson, KEWOPA

Zebib Kavuma, UN Women, Country Director

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning;

Welcome to the celebrations of the International Women's Day 2016. What is the meaning of this day and why celebrate it? International Women's Day is celebrated in many countries around the world. It is a day when women are recognized for their achievements without regard to division, national, ethnic origin, linguistic, cultural, economic or political affiliation. It was born in 1909 as a labour movement but adopted by the UN Conference on Women in 1975 as a celebration of women when they launched the International Women Conference.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Every year, a theme is designed to focus the discussions and debate. This year the theme is "**Pledge for Parity**"

Parity must be achieved at all levels, individual and collective. **A host of questions come into mind in terms of the pledges. How to we move from rhetoric talk to purposeful action? How to we engage men and boys in partnership since it is not a competition? What can we do to reduce poverty; to reduce and eliminate gender based violence and harmful cultural practices? How do we invest in women in all spheres?**

As a country let us reflect on the achievement made. The Constitutional framework establishes the minimum framework otherwise known as the two third gender rule provided for in article 27(8) and 81(b) for political representation. All forms of discrimination is forbidden based on grounds that include colour, race, gender, ethnicity etc.

This day we celebrate being women with no apologies to give. The campaign to achieve equality has been a long winding one and therefore must be guarded with jealousy. Any Kenyan who in their right thinking mind would wish to take away the equality principle would be suggesting that we go back to the error before independence where the woman's place was in the kitchen, child bearing, being home makers with no exposure to education or any other development agenda. Rights are never given on a silver platter and we must strive to have them as a right and not a charity. Women cannot do this without partnership of men, unity amongst themselves and reciprocity and fiesta.

On this day while we celebrate, we also remember the struggles women also face in the social, economic, cultural and political engagement. Not many women have taken their rightful seats at the decision making table. Those who have taken the seat are not fully embraced as decision makers. Men still look at women in decision-making as inferior to them. At times fellow women are used to oppose others. This is patriarchy at work fighting back. So women be careful not to give away the rights within our hands. Women are still forced into harmful cultural practices for example FGM and early /forced and child marriages which sometimes are perpetuated by

women. Economically women are still disempowered and politically not celebrated for the role they play.

Gender Equality is a matter of human rights. It is also a driver for development progress. Women and girls must realize their rights in all spheres in order to achieve human development. It is important to integrate gender equality and inclusion of other vulnerable and marginalized groups who include persons with disabilities, the elderly, children, youth and marginalized communities with an aim of eliminating poverty that is a driver for inequality. We must eliminate gender based discrimination which prevents many women from enjoying their rights and escaping from the power of poverty.

Eleanor Roosevelt once said “Remember always that you do not only have the right to be an individual, you have an obligation to be one.

Equally Margaret Thatcher once strongly said, if you want something said, ask a man and if you want it done ask a woman. I wonder if this still true reflecting on the Kenyan situation. Your guess is as good as mine

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me reflect on the Key Global commitment as we set the agenda for ourselves for our future.

- Convention on Elimination of All Forms of discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1979 defines discrimination against women and affirms women's rights in specific areas in private and public sphere.
- Beijing Platform of Action 1995 sets the agenda for women's empowerment. It sets 12 critical areas for concern in order to realize gender equality. These are:
 1. Women and poverty
 2. Education and training of women

3. Women and health
 4. Violence against women
 5. Women and armed conflict
 6. Women and the economy
 7. Women in power and decision making
 8. Institutional mechanisms
 9. Human Rights of Women
 10. Women and the media
 11. Women and environment
 12. The girl child
- The Sustainable Development Goals 2015: This replaced the MDGs and sets goals for realization of Gender Equality in development. The Goals are set to transform the world by 2030. The 17 goals reinforce the 12 critical areas thus:
 1. No poverty
 2. Zero hunger
 3. Good Health and Well being
 4. Quality Education
 5. Gender Equality and empowerment of Women
 - End all forms of discrimination against women
 - Eliminate all forms of violence against women
 - Eliminate harmful practices such as child and early forced marriages
 - Recognize the value of unpaid care work
 - Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making
 - Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in ICPD Cairo in 1994

- Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property and financial services, inheritance and natural resources in accordance with national laws
- Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular ICT to promote empowerment of women
- Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

6. Clean water and Sanitation

7. Affordable clean energy

8. Decent Work and economic Growth

9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure

10.Reduce inequalities

11.Sustainable cities and communities

12.Responsible consumption and production

13.Climate action

14.Life below water

15.Life on Land

16.Peace, justice and strong institutions

17.Partnerships for the Goals

- UN Declaration on the elimination of violence against women-1993
- The international Conference on Population and Development (ICPD Cairo in 1994 on sexual and Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights)
- UN Resolution 1325 on Peace and Security
- The UN Framework on Climate change and specifically the Paris Agreement 2015 that has introduced a binding agreement and

recognizes the gender role in adaptation and mitigation of climate change.

- At the regional level at the African Union, a lot is happening. The Women Maputo protocol in 2003 set the stage for women's rights in Africa.
- The UN Global Strategy For Women's Children's and Adolescent Health (2016-2030). It was launched by UN Secretary General in 2010
 - It notes that there are high returns from investing in Women's and children's and adolescent's Health
 - It identifies a human rights based framework as the approach to overcome complex challenges of health faced by the target group.
 - These are requirement to enhance country leadership, Improved finances for health, health system resilience, individual potential, community engagement, multi-sectoral action, humanitarian and fragile settings, research and innovation and accountability for results, resources and rights. This has country accountability and global accountability.
 - Last week the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon **appointed** a 9-member high level panel to provide independent global assessment of progress and challenges to help strengthen the response from the international health community and from countries. I am privileged to have been appointed to this panel. Its work will be for the benefit of all women globally but specifically for the Kenyan Women

Conclusion and Way Forward

The big question is how do we accelerate the Goals set out in SDGs Goal 5 outlined above? How do we make the pledge to leave no one behind? What is the role of the rural women? How do we engage with them? And the girls in and out of school? What about those we have married off as

children? Those we have witnessed go through Female Genital Mutilation?
Those who are impregnated by people known to us and we keep silence?

Ladies and Gentlemen

Together we can

- End harmful cultural practices
- Say no to violence against women and report all cases of violence for perpetrators to undergo criminal prosecution
- End all forms of discrimination
- Work towards partnership of men and women, boys and girls to achieve gender equality
- Commit to support women leadership

**Our NGEN Slogan we call you to adopt is TUBADILI TUSITAWI PAMOJA meaning Partnership for Sustainable Development.
Enjoy the celebrations and make personal pledges,**

Thank you

Commissioner Winfred Lichuma