



**SPEECH BY DR. JOYCE M. MUTINDA, CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL GENDER AND EQUALITY COMMISSION DURING THE 20<sup>TH</sup> GENDER AWARENESS DAY FOR EGERTON UNIVERSITY, NJORO, OCTOBER 18, 2021**

- The Vice-Chancellor: Prof. Isaac Ongubo Kibwage;
- Deputy Vice-Chancellors;
- Deans;
- Directors;
- Lecturers;
- Students;
- Distinguished Guests;
- Ladies and Gentlemen;

**All protocols observed!**

**Good morning!**

First and foremost, let me start by congratulating Prof. Kibwage on his recent appointment as the 6<sup>th</sup> Vice-Chancellor of Egerton University.

**Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am delighted to join you today as you celebrate the University's **20<sup>th</sup> Annual Gender Awareness Day**. This is indeed a very special day in the calendar of Egerton University and I feel greatly honoured and privileged to be part of this great occasion.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

For the last two decades, Egerton University has been at the forefront of advocating for gender equality through its outreach programmes. This **Gender Awareness Day** is one such outreach event. The event creates a forum for outreach to communities, schools, students, the entire University fraternity, partners and all other stakeholders to interact around a gender theme. It is a powerful tool for creating awareness on gender issues in society and advocating for Gender Equality in all spheres of life. We must therefore use occasions such as today to educate the public on gender issues of concern, to mobilize political will and resources to address local and global problems, to bring together people of every gender, age, ethnicity, race and religion to drive actions that will create the gender-equal world that we all deserve and to celebrate and reinforce achievements of humanity in gender equality.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As we celebrate this great day whose theme is ***“Women in Leadership: Achieving an Equal Future in a Covid-19 World”***, It important to note that this theme is aligned with the global priority theme of the 65th Session (March 2021) of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) which is: ***“Women’s full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls”***. It is also in tandem with the flagship ***Generation Equality campaign***, which calls for women’s right to decision-making in all areas of life, equal pay, equal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work, an end

to all forms of violence against women and girls, and health-care services that respond to their needs.

This theme is very timely especially for our country given the existing national Gender Gap. In *The World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report* of March 2021, Kenya was ranked number 95 globally out of the 156 countries that were assessed. In Africa, Kenya was at position 13. It lagged:

<b>Position in Africa- Country</b>	<b>Global Rank</b>
1. Namibia	- 06
2. Rwanda	- 07
3. South Africa	- 18
4. Burundi	- 26
5. Zimbabwe	- 47
6. Zambia	- 56
7. Madagascar	- 57
8. Uganda	- 66
9. Cape Verde	- 68
10. Botswana	- 71
11. Tanzania	- 82
12. Lesotho	- 92
13. Kenya	- 95

In Africa, the only two countries that were behind Kenya are Cameroon and Ethiopia. Globally these two countries were ranked number 96 and 97 respectively. These ranking are indicative of the yawning national Gender Gap in our country, that should compel each one of us to take action to close the national Gender Gap.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

During the last decade, the Africa Union has been leading the way in working towards gender equality in Africa. On 15<sup>th</sup> October 2010, in Nairobi, the African Union declared 2010–2020 as the **African Women’s Decade**

whose aim was to **advance gender equality**. The **AU Women's Decade** ended on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2020. Some of the glaring gains from the **AU Women's Decade**, for women in leadership, are evident in women's representation in the membership of the African Union Commission. At the beginning of February 2021, the African Union (AU) held the 38th Ordinary Session of its Executive Council. One of the agenda items was to elect members of the AU Commission. During these elections, H.E Moussa Faki Mahamat from Chad was re-elected as the Chairperson. H.E. Dr. Monique Nsanzabaganwa from Rwanda was elected the Deputy-Chairperson. She became the first woman Deputy Chairperson of the Africa Union Commission. Four Commissioners were also elected. Two of these commissioners were women while the other two were men. This translates into 50% women and 50% men and implies that the Commission's composition is reflective of the AU's objective of achieving gender equality in leadership. This objective is in tandem with **Aspiration 6 of the Union's Agenda 2063**. This is a great step towards the representation of women in leadership and gender equality!

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Education is key for participation in leadership and decision-making in the world today. It is however worth noting that COVID-19 has adverse effects on education, especially for the girl child. According to UN WOMEN, estimates show that an additional 11 million girls may leave school by the end of the COVID-19 crisis. Evidence from previous crises suggests that many will not return. A widening gender gap in education has serious implications

for women, including a significant reduction in what they earn and how, and an increase in child pregnancy and child marriage.

Lack of education and economic insecurity also increase the risk of gender-based violence. Without sufficient economic resources, women are unable to escape from abusive partners and face a greater threat of sexual exploitation and trafficking. These consequences won't disappear when the pandemic subsides: women are likely to experience long-term setbacks in workforce participation and income. Impacts on pensions and savings will have implications for women's economic security far down the road.

The impacts of crises are never gender-neutral, and COVID-19 is no exception. Economic insecurity is not just about the loss of jobs and income today. It has a snowball effect on the lives of women and girls for years to come. Impacts on education and employment have long-lasting consequences that, if unaddressed, will reverse hard-won gains in gender equality. It is therefore important for managers of educational institutions, Educationists and educationalists to ensure that the right to education is not violated during the COVID-19 pandemic. This University can lead the way by ensuring that within the communities that it interacts with, all people who are supposed to be pursuing education actualize their dreams.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I wish to remind you that, the University's Gender Awareness day is an outreach event that has been going on for the last 20 years. It is now time to take stock of the achievements of this noble annual event towards closing the national gender gap in the country. Egerton University, being an institution of higher learning that is mandated to teach, do community outreach and conduct research, should research gender issues and provide solutions on how gender equality can be attained in this country.

The data provided in Chapter 18 of *The Economic Survey 2021* would be useful in such a study. It gives gender-disaggregated data on participation in selected decision-making positions in the Public Service.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Before I conclude, allow me to share some data on the representation of both women and men in decision-making positions in the country as at 2020

<b>Position</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Female%</b>
1. Cabinet Secretaries	7	14	21	33.33
2. CAS (Chief Admin Secretary)	9	19	28	32.14
3. Principle Secretaries	8	35	43	18.60
4. Senators	21	46	67	31.34
5. Members of Parliament	76	270	346	21.97
6. MCAs (Member of County Assembly)	736	1450	2186	33.67

**NB: The Judiciary has complied with the 2/3rds gender principle at all levels except the Kadhis courts.**

**As I conclude,**

Let me applaud the University for this noble idea of holding **Annual Gender Awareness Day**. I thank you for inviting me to grace this occasion and promise you that The National Gender and Equality Commission, which I chair, will be ready to work with you especially in the area of research and public education on gender matters. The Commission will also explore possibilities of having similar events in all the Universities in the country.

*Asante Sana.*

*Thank you very much.*

**DR. JOYCE MWIKALI MUTINDA (PhD)**  
**CHAIRPERSON**  
**NATIONAL GENDER AND EQUALITY COMMISSION**