

EQUALITY BULLETIN

Usawa kwa Wote; Equality For All

EDITION # 41

AUGUST 2026

SIGS: 2027 STARTS NOW

The IEBC electoral timetable begins binding political parties in October. What the Commission documented in 2022 shows what is at stake when Special Interest Groups meet these dates late. [Continue to Read....](#)

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The Commission took its 2022 monitoring evidence to a citizens' forum in Nakuru, where the argument was that preparedness has to begin well before election day.



For many widowed Kenyans, bereavement is followed by dispossession. A forum in Kayole brought the law, a complaints desk and a doctor into the same room.

Follow us on



Decisions taken inside a training institution determine who is admitted, who stays, who progresses and who reaches employment. The Commission took that argument to the senior management of a technical institute.

EDITORIAL TEAM

Published by the National Gender and Equality Commission, Executive Office of the Commission Secretary /CEO.

> Head of Public Communications :

Daniel Waitere

> Contributors :

Alice Njeri

Eric Muchiri

Risper Micheni

Salome Wanjiku

> Contacts

The National Gender and Equality Commission

1st Floor, Solution Tech Place,
5 Longonot Road, Upper Hill, Nairobi
P.O BOX 27512-00506
Nairobi, Kenya.

☎ +254 (709)375100

☎ 0800720187

✉ info@ngeckkenya.org

🌐 www.ngeckkenya.org

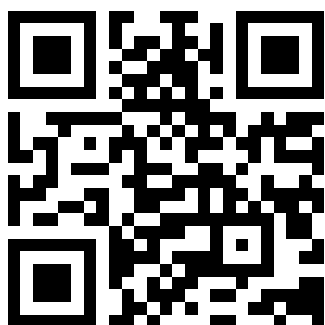
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MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSION SECRETARY / CEO



The electoral timetable for the 2027 General Election was gazetted on 20 August 2026. Four deadlines fall before this year ends, and the first of them binds political parties in October.

This edition is built around what those dates mean for women, youth, persons with disabilities, older members of society, and minority and marginalised communities. Our monitoring of the 2022 General Election gives us a clear view of what is at stake when the timetable moves faster than the people it is meant to serve.

The remaining pages report the same mandate at work in communities, in institutions, and in Kenya's engagements abroad. Equality is not delivered by declaration. It is delivered by institutions meeting their obligations on time.

PURITY NGINA, PhD, MBS
COMMISSION SECRETARY/CEO
NATIONAL GENDER AND EQUALITY COMMISSION

THE COMMISSION



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SIGS: 2027 STARTS NOW

The IEBC electoral timetable begins binding political parties in October. What the Commission documented in 2022 shows what is at stake when Special Interest Groups meet these dates late.

Political parties have until Thursday, 15 October 2026 to submit to the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission the names and specimen signatures of their authorised persons, the first of four deadlines falling this year that will shape whether women, youth, persons with disabilities, older members of society, and minority and marginalised communities appear on the ballot in the General Election of Tuesday, 10 August 2027.

The deadline is contained in Gazette Notices 13497 to 13503, published in the Kenya Gazette Vol. CXXVIII, No. 144 (Special Issue) of 20 August 2026, in which the IEBC issued the full electoral timetable for the 2027 General Election. Three further deadlines follow before the year ends. Political parties must have their nomination rules certified by the Registrar of Political Parties by Friday, 30 October 2026, must submit those certified rules to the IEBC by Friday, 6 November 2026, and every intending candidate becomes subject to the harambee restriction from Wednesday, 9 December 2026.

The nomination rules deadline carries the greatest consequence for Special Interest Groups. Nomination rules govern how a party conducts its primaries and how it compiles the party lists from which the twelve special interest seats in the National Assembly and the four in the Senate are filled. A party that lodges rules making no provision for the nomination of youth, persons with disabilities or minorities on 6 November 2026 has, in practical terms, settled that question for the entire electoral cycle. The next opportunity arises in 2032.

A mandate exercised across the full electoral cycle

The National Gender and Equality Commission is established under Article 59 (4) and (5) of the Constitution and the National Gender and Equality Commission Act, No. 15 of 2011. Section 8 (b) of the Act mandates the Commis-

sion to monitor, facilitate and advise on the integration of the principles of equality and freedom from discrimination in all national and county policies, laws and administrative regulations. Section 8 (d) obliges it to coordinate and facilitate the mainstreaming of the issues of gender, persons with disability and other marginalised groups in national development.

On that basis the Commission monitored the 2022 General Election and published its findings in the report, Involvement and Participation of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) in the 2022 General Elections in Kenya. The Commission deployed 104 monitors and recorded 3,000 observations across 44 of Kenya's 47 counties between 29 May and 6 August 2022. The report is the evidence base against which the Commission now reads the 2027 timetable.



What the Commission documented in 2022

The 2022 findings describe an electoral process that was open in law and uneven in practice. Sign language services were recorded in 1 per cent of the campaign sessions monitored. Campaign materials in large print appeared in 30 per cent. Local languages were used in 37 per cent. Youth candidates attended 42 per cent of the rallies observed and women candidates 40 per cent, but only a few rallies organised by Special Interest Group candidates were covered by mainstream television or radio.

Campaign finance was the sharpest constraint. Sixty per cent of Special Interest Group candidates financed their campaigns from friends and relatives. Twenty-seven per cent received support from their political parties. Seven per cent relied on community organisations, loans and savings. About half described the shortfall as high. Many, the report records, worked alongside financially stronger candidates simply to secure a platform on which to present their manifestos.

On polling day, one in five polling stations monitored was inaccessible to persons with disabilities and older persons, mainly for want of ramps, because of narrow entrances and staircases, or because the station sat on difficult ground. Seven per cent of stations had an electoral official with a disability. Nearly none offered sign language interpretation. In 47 per cent of observations, voters complained that the Kenya Integrated Election Management System kits failed to identify them, a problem reported most acutely among older persons whose fingerprints were worn. At the tallying stage, monitors recorded 36 instances in which accredited persons with disabilities were denied entry to tallying centres.

The report's third recommendation speaks directly to the timetable now in force. It states that failure to adhere to electoral timelines has a direct effect on the meaningful participation of SIG candidates, observers and voters, because such groups rarely receive information about changes to the electoral plan and are therefore excluded from the decisions that follow.

The 2027 timetable is not uniform across seats

The gazette notices set different campaign periods for the six elective seats. Campaigns for President, Member of the National Assembly and Senator run for 71 days, from Saturday, 29 May 2027.

Campaigns for Member of County Assembly run for 67 days from Wednesday, 2 June 2027, and for County Governor for 66 days from Thursday, 3 June 2027. Campaigns for County Woman Member to the National Assembly run for 62 days, commencing Monday, 7 June 2027, the shortest window of the six.

The County Woman Member seat was created under Article 97 (1) (b) of the Constitution to advance the representation of women in the National Assembly.

Its campaign window is nine days shorter than that available to candidates for the National Assembly and the Senate. The Commission is examining the implications of this difference for equality of opportunity under Articles 27 and 81 (b) of the Constitution and will pursue the matter through technical engagement with the IEBC.

A party that lodges rules making no provision for the nomination of youth, persons with disabilities or minorities on 6 November 2026 has, in practical terms, settled that question for the entire electoral cycle.

The party list remains the most direct route

Political parties must submit their party lists to the IEBC by 25 June 2027. Those lists determine who fills the twelve special interest seats in the National Assembly reserved for youth, persons with disabilities and workers, the sixteen seats reserved for women in the Senate, and the four Senate seats reserved for youth and persons with disabilities. Aspirants seeking nomination through this route are not helped by waiting until June 2027. The composition of the list is shaped by the nomination rules certified in October 2026 and lodged with the IEBC in November 2026.

The 2022 report recommended that the Registrar of Political Parties enforce sections 25 (2) (a) and (b) and 26 (1) of the Political Parties Act, which bar a party from drawing on the Political Parties Fund where more than two thirds of its office bearers are of the same gender or where its governing body has no representation of special interest groups, and which require that at least 30 per cent

of the Fund be applied to promoting the representation of women, persons with disabilities, youth, ethnic and other minorities and marginalised communities.

Campaign financing rules apply for the first time under new regulations

Gazette Notice 13503 sets the campaign financing timelines under the Election Campaign Financing Act and the Election Campaign Financing Regulations, 2026 (L.N. 142 of 2026). Parties and candidates must open a campaign financing account and submit its details to the IEBC by Wednesday, 10 February 2027. Party candidates must file a preliminary nomination expenditure report by Tuesday, 8 June 2027. Final expenditure reports from candidates, parties and independent candidates fall due on Monday, 22 November 2027, more than three months after polling day.

The obligation does not end on election night. A candidate who wins, loses or withdraws still carries a reporting duty into November 2027. The 2022 report recommended enforcement of campaign financing law precisely because unwritten and undisclosed campaign finance expectations operate to the disadvantage of candidates from Special Interest Groups.

The same date carries a second obligation

Wednesday, 10 February 2027 is also the last day on which a public officer intending to contest may resign from public office. The gazette notices set no extension and provide no discretionary window. For teachers, county officers, national government administrative officers, staff of state corporations and others whose employment status is not always self-evident, the Commission advises that status be confirmed in writing with the appointing authority and with the IEBC well before the date, and not in the weeks preceding it.

What the Commission expects, and from whom

The Commission's position, drawn from its 2022 findings and its constitutional mandate, is that inclusion in

2027 is determined by decisions taken in the next four months, not by conduct on polling day.

A note for aspirants on



verifying dates

Gazette Notice 13499, covering the election for Members of the Senate, gives the party list deadline as **"Saturday, 25th June, 2027"**.

"Notices 13498, 13500 and 13502 give the same date as **"Friday, 25th June, 2027"**.

The 25th of June 2027 falls on a Friday.

Aspirants and party officials should confirm all dates directly with the IEBC and should not rely on any secondary source, including this publication, as the operative authority. The gazette notices are the authority.

The Commission calls on political parties to open their nomination rules to scrutiny before certification on 30 October 2026, to publish those rules in accessible formats, and to demonstrate compliance with the Political Parties Act on the composition of governing bodies and the use of the Political Parties Fund.

It calls on the IEBC to budget for the reasonable adjustments the 2022 report identified, including accessible nomination and polling venues, sign language interpretation, and voter registers printed in large and legible type, and to confirm accessibility arrangements at nomination venues ahead of the nomination window in June 2027.

It calls on aspirants from Special Interest Groups to treat October 2026 rather than June 2027 as the start of their campaign, to secure Chapter Six clearance early, and to record and report any discrimination, harassment or violence encountered in the course of seeking nomination. The Commission will continue to monitor the electoral process through to the conclusion of post-election reporting in November 2027, and will report its findings publicly.

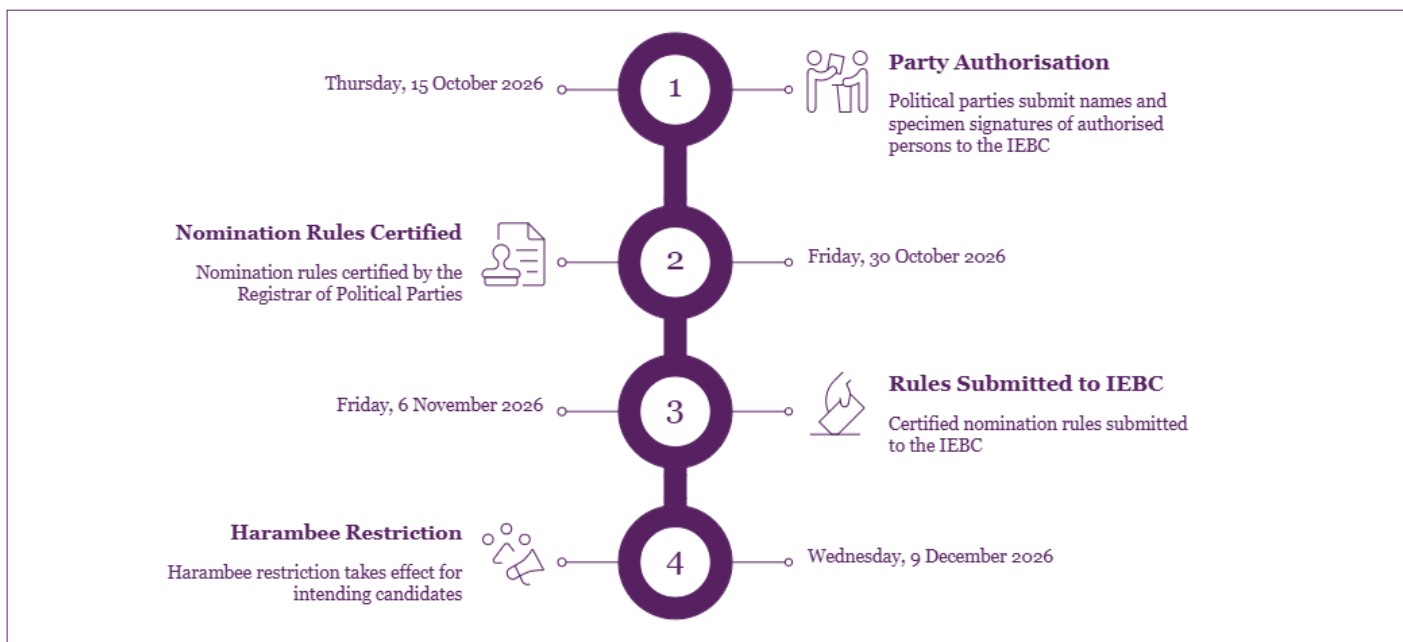
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Non-partisanship statement

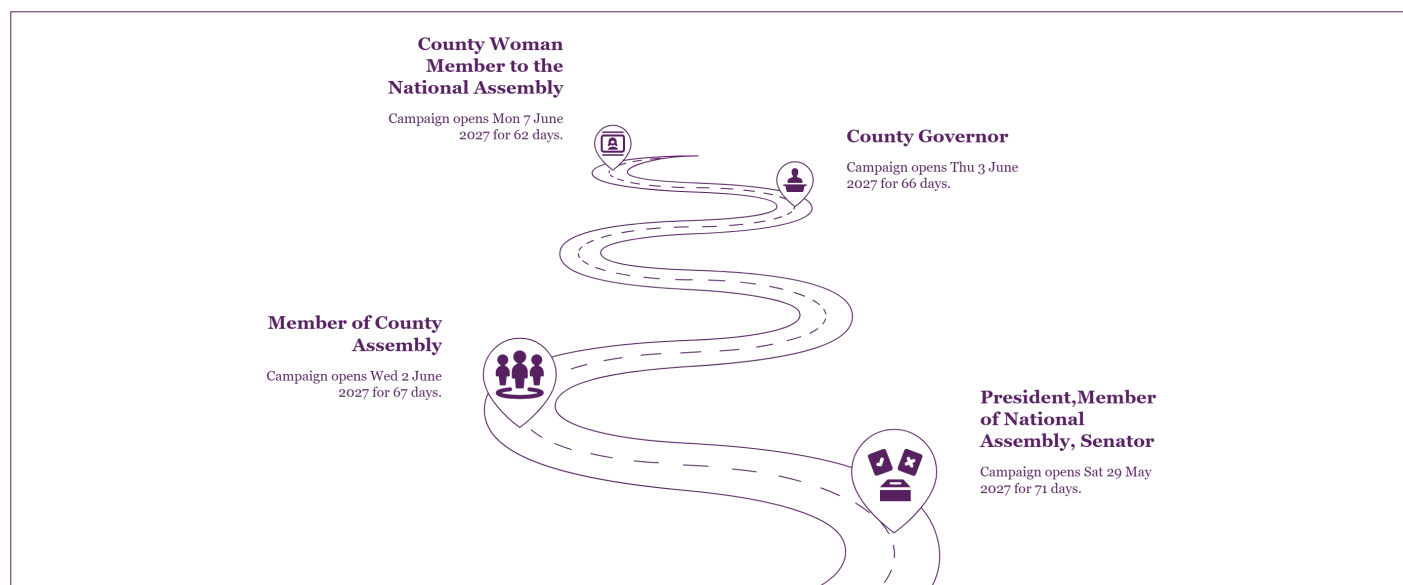
The National Gender and Equality Commission is an independent constitutional commission established under Article 59 (4) and (5) of the Constitution of Kenya. This information is provided for public education only. The Commission does not support, endorse or oppose any political party, candidate or aspirant. Aspirants and political parties should confirm all electoral dates and requirements directly with the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission.

The 2026 deadlines



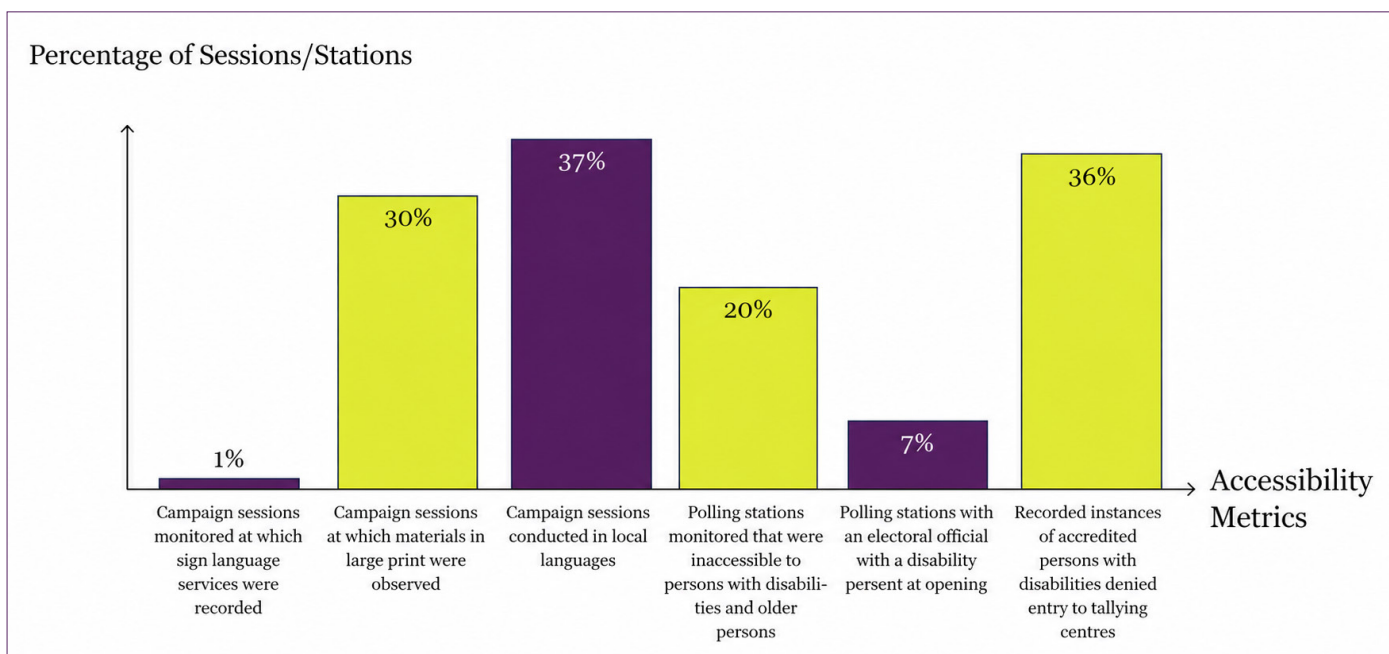
Source: Gazette Notices 13497 to 13502, Kenya Gazette Vol. CXXVIII, No. 144, 20 August 2026.

Four unequal campaign windows



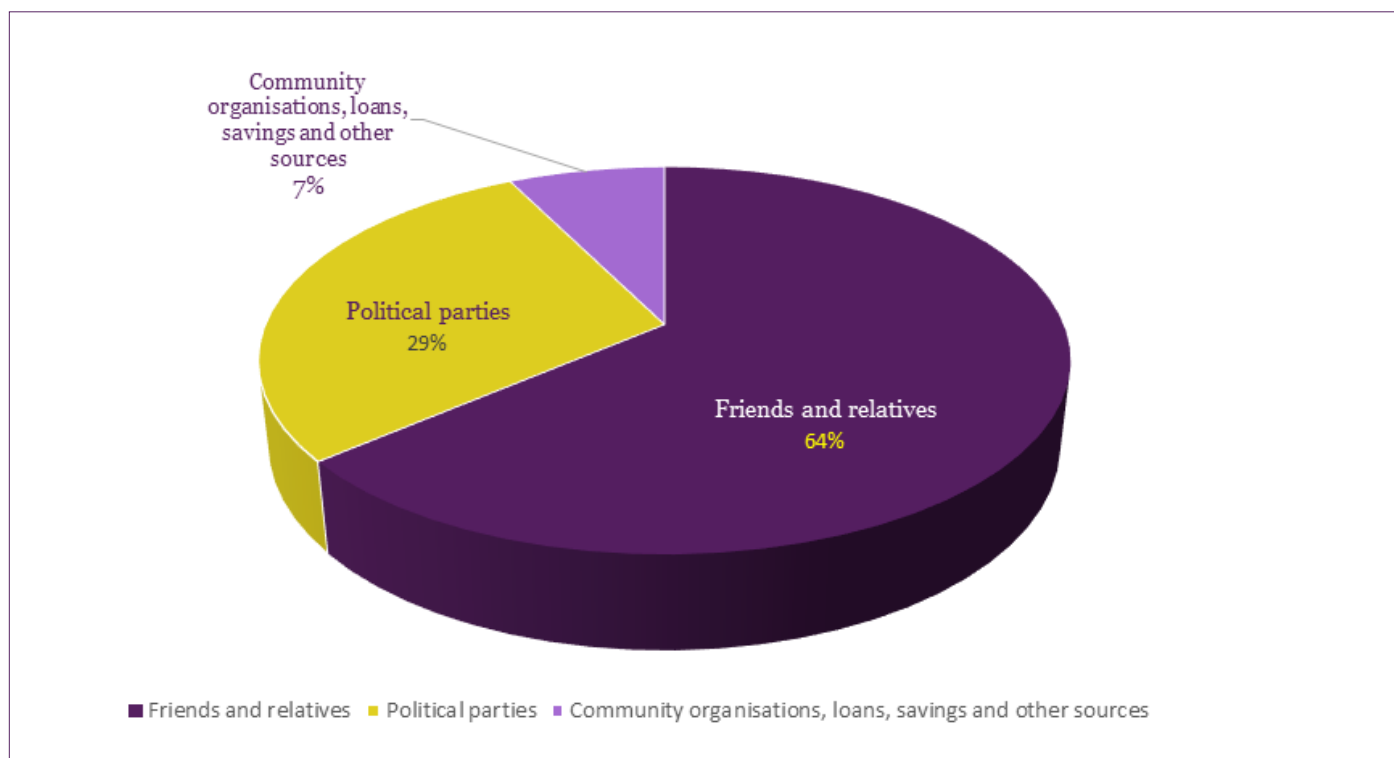
Source: Gazette Notices 13497 to 13502, Kenya Gazette Vol. CXXVIII, No. 144, 20 August 2026. Day counts inclusive of the opening and closing dates.

2022 in numbers: what the Commission observed



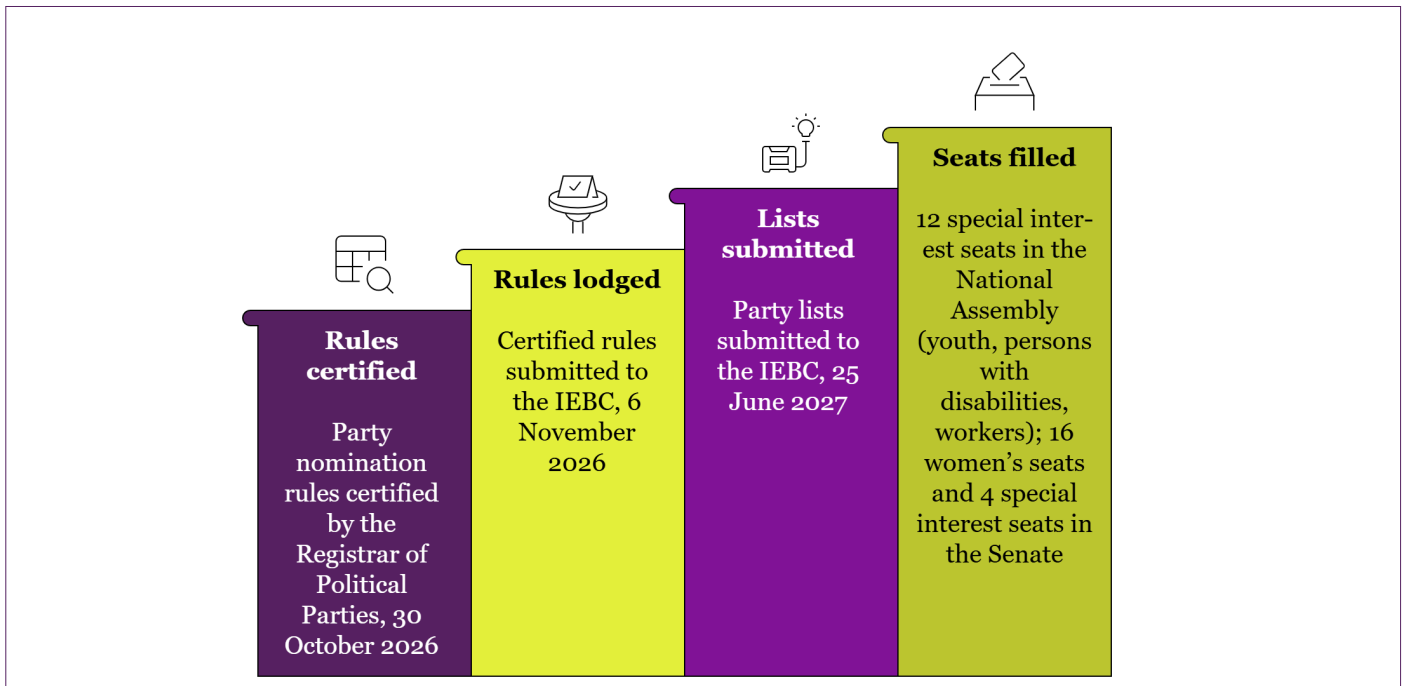
 Source:: NGEK, *Involvement and Participation of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) in the 2022 General Elections in Kenya (2023)*. Based on 3,000 observations by 104 monitors across 44 counties, 29 May to 6 August 2022.

Who paid for SIG campaigns in 2022



 Source: NGEK 2022 monitoring report. Shares as reported. The report does not account for the residual balance, which must not be inferred or shown as a category.

The party list route



 Source: : Gazette Notices 13498, 13499, 13500 and 13502, 20 August 2026; NGEC 2022 monitoring report on the composition of the National Assembly and the Senate.

The two obligations that share one date

Wednesday, 10 February 2027

Resignation of public officers

Campaign financing account opened and details submitted to the IEBC

 Source: Gazette Notices 13497 to 13502, paragraph (n) of each notice; Gazette Notice 13503, paragraph (b).

What the Commission expects, by duty bearer

Actor	Expectation
Political parties	Open nomination rules to scrutiny before certification; publish rules in accessible formats; comply with the Political Parties Act on governing body composition and use of the Fund
IEBC	Budget for reasonable adjustments; confirm accessibility at nomination venues; provide registers in large, legible type
Registrar of Political Parties	Apply sections 25 (2) and 26 (1) of the Political Parties Act to party lists and party funding
Media houses	Extend coverage to candidates from Special Interest Groups on fair terms
SIG aspirants	Treat October 2026 as the start of the campaign; secure Chapter Six clearance early; report discrimination, harassment or violence

 Source: Gazette Notices 13497 to 13502, Kenya Gazette Vol. CXXVIII, No. 144, 20 August 2026. Day counts inclusive of the opening and closing dates.

ARTICLE 27 AT SIXTEEN: WHAT THE RECORD SHOWS

Sixteen years after Kenyans voted equality into the Bill of Rights, the National Gender and Equality Commission has placed a measured verdict before the country. The constitutional architecture is working. The outcomes Article 27 promises remain outside the reach of the people it names.



Delegates follow proceedings at the national commemoration of the sixteenth anniversary of the promulgation of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, held at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre, Nairobi, on 27 August 2026. The Commission was represented at the event by the Chairperson, Hon. Rehema Jaldesa, and Commissioner Michael Nzomo.

The Commission joined His Excellency President William Ruto, constitutional commissions and independent offices at the national commemoration of the sixteenth anniversary of the promulgation of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, held at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre on 27 August 2026. The Chairperson, Hon. Rehema Jaldesa, and Commissioner Michael Nzomo represented the Commission.

The Commission used the occasion to release a one page assessment of the implementation of Article 27, the provision that converts equality from a national value under Article 10 into an enforceable entitlement and supplies the operative meaning of Articles 53 to 57, 54(2), 81(b) and 100.

The assessment reaches a conclusion the Commission states without qualification. Kenya has secured the norm. It has not secured the outcome. Compliance is reported. Equality is not delivered.

What the constitution has held

The record of the last thirteen years contains gains that did not exist before 2013 and that no honest assessment can set aside.

Women now exceed 50 per cent of the judiciary. The Supreme Court meets the not more than two thirds gender principle. Twenty six of the forty seven county assemblies seat members with disabilities. Youth sit in Parliament. The number of women serving in Cabinet and in government agencies continues to rise, and the gender function within devolved government is strengthening.

“At sixteen years, Kenya has secured the norm but not the outcome. Compliance is reported. Equality is not delivered.”

These outcomes followed sustained institutional work. Between FY 2019/20 and FY 2024/25 the Commission handled 1,008 complaints, reviewed 229

laws and policies, issued 492 advisories and pursued 18 strategic cases. Agency reporting compliance now stands at 92 per cent.

Where the test fails

The same period produced measurable shortfalls under every constitutionally protected ground.

Persons with disabilities held 1.9 per cent of parliamentary seats in 2017 and 2.0 per cent in 2022, against the 5 per cent floor set by Article 54(2). Twenty one county assemblies seat no member with a disability. As at October 2024, three counties had a County Executive Committee member with a disability and seventeen had a youth member.

The electoral data locates the obstacle precisely. In 2022, women were 1,962 of 16,100 cleared candidates, or 12 per cent. Success rates for women and men were both about 11 per cent. The barrier operates before the ballot, not at it.

..... Continued on page 10

ARTICLE 27 AT SIXTEEN: WHAT THE RECORD SHOWS

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..... Continued from page 09

In public employment, women are 40 per cent of the workforce and are concentrated in lower cadres. Persons with disabilities are 2 per cent, youth 18 per cent and ethnic minorities 6 per cent, with some sectors below 1 per cent. An audit of 32 public buildings found most premises entirely inaccessible to persons with disabilities.

The financing figure carries the argument. Gender and social inclusion functions account for 0.013 per cent of the national budget in FY 2025/2026. Public entities allocate under 0.05 per cent of their budgets to gender mainstreaming. An unfunded right, the Commission observes, is a declaratory right.

The private sector record follows the public one. Of audited companies listed on the Nairobi Securities Exchange, 40 per cent met the not more than two thirds principle and 9 per cent had no woman on the board.

The structural cause

The assessment traces these results to a single omission. Articles 27, 81(b) and 100 have no guiding statute.

Since 2011, fourteen legislative proposals on the not more than two thirds principle and three proposals on the operationalisation of Article 100 have failed. The Commission can establish non compliance. It cannot compel correction. Accountability therefore remains form driven and reactive, measured by reports filed rather than by conditions changed.

Five demands before 2027

The Commission has placed five priority actions before the State ahead of the 2027 electoral cycle.

One. Enact a law giving effect to the not more than two thirds gender principle under Articles 27(6) and 81(b).

Two. Enact the law giving full effect to Article 100 for the representation of persons with disabilities, youth and minority and marginalised communities in Parliament.

Three. Implement and enforce the socio economic frameworks already in place, among them the National Policy on Ethnic Minorities and Marginalised Communities 2025-2035, the Persons with Disabilities Act 2025, the Children's Act 2022, the Kenya Youth Development Policy 2019 and Sessional Paper No. 02 of 2019 on the National Policy on Gender and Development.

Four. Resource the equality and affirmative action function across labour, education, governance, energy and natural resource management.

Five. Invest in future generations by protecting the right of every child to education, health care and dignity, and by expanding opportunity for youth in training, innovation and the creative sectors.

THE QUESTION THAT REMAINS

Sixteen years of practice have removed the interpretive questions. The text is clear, the jurisprudence is settled and the audit trail exists.

What remains is a choice about accountability. As the Commission puts it, the question before the country is no longer what the Constitution requires on equality. It is whether the State is prepared to be measured against it.

The Commission at work | fy 2019/20 to fy 2024/25



1,008

Complaints handled



229

Laws and policies reviewed



492

Advisories issued



18

Strategic cases



92%

Agency reporting compliance

Sources and attribution

» National Gender and Equality Commission, Sixteen Years of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010: Assessment of the Implementation of Article 27 on Equality and Freedom from Discrimination, 27 August 2026.

» National Gender and Equality Commission, Complementary Memorandum to COIN-10, January 2026.

» National Gender and Equality Commission, Wajibika Summit Submission, 2026.

» National Gender and Equality Commission, Ten-Point Agenda Implementation Report, COIN-10, 7 March 2026.

HOMA BAY, AND THE QUESTION IT PUTS TO 2027

One person reported killed, dozens injured, and allegations that women were deliberately targeted. The Commission sets out what is established, what is not, and what it expects of every duty bearer between now and polling day.

On Sunday, 16 August 2026, a political rally in Homa Bay County ended in violence. Media reports carried an initial account of one person killed and 46 injured, among them people with deep panga wounds and four with reported gunshot injuries. Six vehicles were reported torched and other property destroyed. Subsequent reporting has carried differing figures, and the record is still settling.

Four days later, on 20 August, the Suba South Member of Parliament, Millie Odhiambo, publicly recounted the ordeal of a woman she said had been attacked with a panga after already sustaining injuries, and alleged that women were specifically targeted during the violence and that some were raped. Other reports have alleged that the violence was organised, that participants were paid, and that former or serving security personnel were involved.

The Commission has not established any of those allegations, and does not present them as established. It is setting out its position now because the difference between an allegation and a finding is a matter of process, and process takes time that survivors of violence do not have.

There is sufficient open-source reporting to accept that a serious violent incident occurred at a political gathering in Homa Bay County on 16 August 2026, involving loss of life, significant injuries including gunshot and panga wounds, destruction of property, and the disruption of a political assembly. The Commission proceeds on that basis.

The more serious allegations, concerning prior planning, payment of participants, the involvement of former or serving security officers, and sexual violence, are at this stage allegations. They require independent verification by the competent authorities. The Commission will not pronounce on them, will not attribute responsibility to any individual, political formation or agency, and will not treat the political narratives that have grown around the incident as

evidence of anything.

That restraint does not extend to the allegation of sexual violence,

The absence of a formally established case is not evidence that nothing happened. It is frequently evidence of how hard it is to report.

which requires attention now rather than after verification. Sexual violence is the most under-reported category of harm in almost every setting in which it has been studied. Stigma, fear of retaliation, the trauma of recounting, and doubt about confidentiality all suppress reporting, and they suppress it most severely in small communities where a survivor can be identified from a handful of details. An institution that waits for a formally established case before arranging care will arrange it too late, because the clinical window for post-exposure prophylaxis and forensic documentation closes in days, not months.

The Commission's immediate concern is therefore narrower and more practical than the question of who is responsible. It is whether the women affected in Homa Bay have access to confidential medical care, forensic services where applicable, psychosocial support, and protection from intimidation or retaliation. That question can be answered without establishing a single allegation.

Why this falls to the Commission

The National Gender and Equality Commission is established under Article 59 (4) and (5) of the Constitution and the National Gender and Equality Commission Act, No. 15 of 2011. Section 8 (b) of the Act requires it to monitor, facilitate and advise on the integration of the principles of equality and freedom from discrimination across national and county policy, law and administrative practice.

Four constitutional provisions are engaged at once. Article 38 guarantees every citizen the right to make political choices, to campaign, and to be a candidate for public office. Article 29 guarantees freedom and security of the person, including the right not to be subjected to any form of violence from public or private sources. Article 28 protects inherent dignity. Article 27 requires equal treatment and freedom from discrimination. A person who cannot attend a political gathering without risk to her body is not exercising a political right in any meaningful sense, whatever the law provides.

Violence at a political event that falls more heavily on women also produces a harm that no incident register captures. The women assaulted are counted. The women who hear what happened and stay away from the next gathering are not counted anywhere, and their absence is recorded later as low turnout, weak mobilisation or an absence of political interest.

This is not the first record of it

The Commission monitored the 2022 General Election and published its findings. Across 3,000 observations by 104 monitors in 44 counties between 29 May and 6 August 2022, monitors recorded six reports of sexual harassment, fifteen reports of physical violence and thirty-three cases of psychological violence. Those figures are what monitors observed or were told in the places they stood. They are not a national total, and for the reasons set out above they are certainly an undercount.

Two findings from that exercise bear directly on Homa Bay.

First, monitors recorded that most campaign violence was caused by the overlapping timing and venue of events held by different candidates.

Second, violence was most common where security officials were absent, and where officers were present it was largely contained. During polling, violence was recorded in fourteen instances, and in eleven of those, officers who were present defused it.

Both of those are administrative failures with identifiable owners. Neither is a fact of national temperament. The 2022 report also recorded assault and derogatory language directed at women candidates and voters, and documented voters from Special Interest Groups who cast their ballots hurriedly out of fear, or who did not vote at all because they had been threatened.

The calendar makes this urgent

Homa Bay is not an isolated event at the end of an electoral cycle. It falls at the beginning of one. The IEBC gazetted the timetable for the 2027 General Election on 20 August 2026, four days after the rally. Political parties must lodge certified nomination rules by 6 November 2026. The harambee restriction takes effect on 9 December 2026. Nomination takes place across the first eleven days of June 2027. The campaign period opens on 29 May 2027 and runs to 7 August 2027, with campaigning permitted between 7.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m.

If a rally in August 2026 produces this record, the twelve months that follow require planning rather than commentary. Every arrangement capable of reducing the harm has to be made before the campaign period opens. After 29 May 2027, institutions will be responding rather than preventing, and the experience of the last three electoral cycles is that response arrives late and unevenly.

What the Commission expects

» The National Police Service and the Directorate of Criminal Investigations should investigate the reported offences promptly and impartially, including the reported sexual violence, and should do so irrespective of the political affiliation or official status of any person implicated.

» Health facilities serving Homa Bay County should confirm capacity for post-rape care, including access within the clinical window for post-exposure prophylaxis, forensic documentation and referral for psychosocial support, and should ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

» The Homa Bay County Government should account for the conditions under which the venue was licensed and used, applying the standards it would apply to any other mass gathering, including safe access and exit.

» Political parties and political formations should enforce the Electoral Code of Conduct in the Second Schedule to the Elections Act, 2011 against their own supporters, coordinate event schedules so that competing gatherings are not placed

in the same location at the same time, and treat violence or harassment directed at women in political spaces as a matter for internal discipline rather than one for others to resolve.

» The IEBC and the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties should apply the Electoral Code of Conduct and the Code of Conduct for Political Parties to conduct at political events throughout the period leading to the campaign, and not only once the campaign period formally opens.

» Media houses should continue to report electoral violence, and should do so without identifying survivors of sexual violence by name, role, location or circumstance.



Reporting and support

The Commission receives complaints on discrimination and violations of equality rights through its **toll free line 0800 720 187**, or through online form <https://www.ngeckkenya.org/file-complaint> or through email to legal@ngeckkenya.org, and at its offices in Nairobi, Kisumu, Nakuru, Malindi, Garissa, Isiolo and Kitui. Homa Bay County is served by the Kisumu office.

Survivors of sexual violence are encouraged to seek medical care at the nearest health facility as early as possible, both for treatment and because clinical documentation supports any later investigation. Reports may also be made to the nearest police station, including through a gender desk where one is available.

The Commission does not publish the identity of complainants or survivors.

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ELECTORAL PREPAREDNESS

WATCHING 2027 FROM THE GROUND

The Commission took its 2022 monitoring evidence to a citizens' forum in Nakuru, where the argument was that preparedness has to begin well before election day.



Participants follow proceedings during the Citizens' Election Watch meeting in Nakuru, convened by the Center for Transformational Leadership (CTL) in partnership with URAIA Trust, to reflect on electoral experiences and strengthen citizen participation and safeguards for an inclusive and peaceful 2027 General Election.

The Commission's Nakuru Regional Office joined the Citizens' Election Watch meeting convened by the Center for Transformational Leadership in partnership with URAIA Trust, bringing stakeholders together to examine what the last General Election revealed and what citizens can do to safeguard a more inclusive and peaceful 2027.

The Commission presented evidence from its monitoring of the 2022 General Election on the participation of Special Interest Groups, covering women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, minorities and marginalised communities in their capacities as voters, candidates, agents and electoral officials. The monitoring examined campaign financing, access to information, accessibility, gender-based violence and electoral malpractice.

The findings have not lost their relevance. While the 2022 campaigns were generally peaceful, the Commission documented intimidation affecting candidates and voters from Special Interest Groups, alongside financial and structural barriers that limited the capacity of women, youth and persons with disabilities to campaign effectively.

The conclusion drawn in Nakuru was that preparedness for 2027 cannot be reduced to election-day logistics. Inclusive democracy begins earlier, with the ability to register, obtain information, participate inside a political party, contest for office, campaign without fear, vote without intimidation and have the resulting choice respected. Each of those is a separate point of failure, and each has its own deadline in the electoral calendar.

The Commission continues to engage Government institutions, electoral actors, civil society, communities and partners on safeguards for equality and peaceful political processes, and on an environment in which political difference is managed through dialogue rather than intimidation, violence or discrimination.



Participant discussing on the proceedings during the Citizens' Election Watch meeting in Nakuru.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

RIGHTS, DELIVERED AT THE BARAZA

In Kapkures, the Commission took its mandate to a chief's baraza. A right that a citizen does not know about is a right that citizen cannot claim.



NGEC Nakuru Regional Officer Douglas Wawire addresses residents during a public education forum in Kapkures, Nakuru West Sub-County, held in collaboration with (NGAO)

The Commission's Nakuru Regional Office, working with the National Government Administrative Office, held a public education forum at Kapkures in Nakuru West Sub-County, part of a continuing grassroots outreach programme delivered through chiefs' barazas.

The forum set out the Commission's mandate, the rights of Special Interest Groups, and the routes available to a person who experiences discrimination, inequality or the denial of equal opportunity. Discussion covered the rights and concerns of women, youth, persons with disabilities, children, older members of society, minorities and marginalised communities, with residents raising questions and issues from their own

circumstances.

The exchange was active, which is itself informative. It indicates a demand for direct contact between citizens and the institutions responsible for protecting their rights, and a gap that formal channels have not closed.

Public education is not peripheral to the Commission's work. Section 8 of the National Gender and Equality Commission Act, 2011 requires the Commission to coordinate and advise on public education programmes that build a culture of respect for equality and freedom from discrimination, and to investigate complaints of violations of equality and non-discrimination. The two functions

depend on each other. Complaints reach an institution only from people who know it exists and know what it does.

Complaints may be lodged with the Commission in person, online, by email, by post or by courier. Kapkures was therefore more than an information session. It connected a community to a public institution and to the machinery of redress, and allowed the Commission to hear directly about the barriers residents encounter in reaching services, opportunities and rights. The Commission will continue to expand these engagements with national and county institutions.



Complaints reach an institution only from people who know it exists and know what it does.



PICTURE SPEAK



A group photo of Commission Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa during the UNCCD COP17 side event in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.



Participants follow proceedings during the Citizens' Election Watch meeting in Nakuru, convened by the Center for Transformational Leadership (CTL) in partnership with URAIA Trust, to reflect on electoral experiences and strengthen citizen participation and safeguards for an inclusive and peaceful 2027 General Election.



NGEC Nakuru Regional Officer Lewis Mwaniki addresses residents during a public education forum in Kapkures, Nakuru West Sub-County, held in collaboration with (NGAO)



A photo following the Dialogue and Public Education Forum on the Rights of Widowed Persons at Kayole Social Hall, Nairobi.



Nakuru Regional Office Coordinator Lewis Mwaniki delivers a point during the Nakuru premiere of the Shuga short film anthology, #Unwrapped, as young people, Civil Society Organisations and Government stakeholders



A photo during the NGEK–IOM Partners' Briefing Meeting on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion under the Regional Counter-Smuggling Programme (RCSP), held in Nairobi.



Group photo following the Commission's capacity-building engagement with the senior management of P.C. Kinyanjui Technical Training Institute on gender mainstreaming.



Commission Secretary/CEO, Dr. Purity Ngina, meets Mr. Gilbert Kitiyo, Secretary of the National Registration Bureau, to explore collaboration on removing barriers to national identification for SIGs.



Commission Secretary/CEO, Dr. Purity Ngina, and Executive Director of Action for Sustainable Change (AFOSC-Kenya), Mohamed M. Sheikh.



Commission Secretary/CEO, Dr. Purity Ngina, meets Presiding Archbishop Zack Maina of Rehoboth House of Worship International Ministry.

RIGHTS OF WIDOWED PERSONS

THE SECOND LOSS

For many widowed Kenyans, bereavement is followed by dispossession. A forum in Kayole brought the law, a complaints desk and a doctor into the same room.



Group photo following the Dialogue and Public Education Forum on the Rights of Widowed Persons at Kayole Social Hall, Nairobi.

Losing a spouse is the first loss. For many widowed Kenyans, particularly women, a second follows within weeks: the family home, the land, the business, the bank account, the children's school fees, and the standing to object to any of it. The law provides for succession. Practice frequently does not.

The Commission, working with NAFRIWA, Laiser Insurance, the Gender Violence Recovery Centre and the Wangu Kanja Foundation, convened a Dialogue and Public Education Forum on the Rights of Widowed Persons at Kayole Social Hall in Nairobi, under the theme Promoting the Rights, Dignity, Well-being and Access to Justice for Widowed Persons.

The forum was built as a space in which widowed persons could set out their own experience and concerns directly to the institutions holding the relevant mandates, rather than have those experiences reported on their behalf. Discussion covered legal rights, inheritance and succession, property rights, access to justice, the prevention of and response to gender-based violence, survivor-centred support, healthcare and referral pathways.

The Commission ran a Complaint Handling Desk at the venue, at which participants registered complaints, reported violations and received guidance on the redress mechanisms open to them. A free medical desk provided basic health screening and information on available services. The forum also addressed mental health and psychosocial well-being, in recognition of the emotional and social pressure that bereavement and dispossession place on a household.

The desk is the part of this that deserves attention. Public education tells a person that a right exists. A complaints desk in the same hall converts that knowledge into a filed matter on the same afternoon, before the practical obstacles reassert themselves: the fare to town, the day's lost earnings, the relative who advises against making trouble. The distance between knowing a right and claiming it is where most claims are lost, and it is usually measured in logistics rather than in law.

The Commission and its partners will continue to strengthen protection, dignity, access to justice and inclusion for widowed persons in Kenya.

The distance between knowing a right and claiming it is where most claims are lost, and it is usually measured in logistics rather than in law.



Making a complaint

Complaints on discrimination and violations of equality rights may be lodged with the Commission in person, online, by **toll free line 0800 720 187**, or through online form <https://www.ngeckkenya.org/file-complaint> or through email to legal@ngeckkenya.org

The Commission has offices in Nairobi, Kisumu, Nakuru, Malindi, Garissa, Isiolo and Kitui.

PARTNERSHIPS, NORTHERN KENYA

NORTHERN KENYA'S DOUBLE BURDEN

Climate and humanitarian pressure does not distribute its costs evenly. A new engagement is aimed at the protection risks that intensify for women and children when it arrives.



The Commission Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, Dr Purity Ngina, hosted Mohamed M. Sheikh, Executive Director of Action for Sustainable Change (AFOSC-Kenya), for discussions on collaboration around gender equality, the prevention of gender-based violence, civic education and inclusive participation in Northern Kenya.

The engagement takes place in a setting where climate and humanitarian pressures deepen existing inequality and raise protection risks for women and children. Displacement, loss of livestock and livelihoods, and disrupted services do not affect a household evenly. They shift burdens onto those with the least capacity to absorb them and reduce the options available to anyone seeking to escape harm.

Kenya's National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence 2025 to 2029 points in the same direction,

emphasising stronger prevention, coordinated referral systems, gender-responsive data and multi-sectoral action. The discussions examined how community-led awareness, evidence and civic education can challenge harmful gender norms, strengthen prevention and widen participation in democratic and development processes. AFOSC-Kenya's community presence across Northern Kenya, and its work on democratic governance and political participation, offer practical ground for that. Opportunities were identified in community mobilisation, evidence generation, knowledge sharing and stakeholder coordination, with a shared emphasis on communities that face the greatest barriers to information, participation and services.

The Commission remains committed to partnerships that convert commitments on equality and non-discrimination into practical change in communities.

ENGAGING MEN AND BOYS

REACHING THE BOYS, AND THE MEN INSIDE

Preventing gender-based violence requires working with those who commit it and those at risk of doing so. A courtesy call opened a conversation about mentorship, rehabilitation and reintegration.



Presiding Archbishop Zack Maina of Rehoboth House of Worship International Ministry paid a courtesy call on the Commission Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, Dr Purity Ngina.

The engagement focused on his work mentoring young boys and supporting male prisoners through guidance, rehabilitation and personal transformation. The need is not marginal.

Many boys and men face social pressure and harmful expectations of masculinity with limited access to positive role models or to any safe space in which to seek support, and the absence of those supports has consequences that are eventually borne by others.

The discussions considered collaboration in promoting responsible masculinity, preventing gender-based violence and strengthening mentorship for boys and for incarcerated men. Rehabilitation that consists only of serving a sentence achieves little. It should produce accountability, changed behaviour and a workable return to family and community.

Engaging men and boys as partners in advancing gender equality is not a departure from the Commission's mandate. It is a condition of achieving it. Prevention that addresses only the people harmed leaves the source of the harm untouched.

Mentoring boys today is an investment in responsible men and safer communities tomorrow.

THREE NUMBERS, ONE GENERATION

New HIV infections, adolescent pregnancies and sexual violence against adolescents are usually treated as three problems. They arrive together, and a film screening in Nakuru was used to say so.



Kenya's latest AIDS Response Progress Report records an estimated 2,799 new HIV infections among adolescents in 2024, 240,915 adolescent pregnancies, and 17,361 reported cases of sexual and gender-based violence involving adolescents aged 10 to 17. The same data indicates that sexual and gender-based violence is a growing concern among young people.

These are not three separate policy files. They are the Triple Threat, and they share drivers, share victims and frequently share a single incident. A girl who is sexually assaulted may acquire an infection, may become pregnant, and may leave school. One event produces three entries in three national datasets and one interrupted life.

The Commission joined young people, civil society organisations and government stakeholders at the Nakuru premiere of the Shuga short film anthology *Unwrapped*, hosted by SSK in partnership with Bright Wellness and Haven of Dreams. The anthology follows young people navigating identity, relationships, self-discovery and difficult choices, and brings the Triple Threat into a

form that an audience will actually sit through.

The screening was not the point. At the Nakuru Art Baraza that followed, the conversation moved off the screen, and young people engaged stakeholders directly on the pressures facing their generation and on what they might do about them.

The Commission used the platform to press a specific argument: that young people should claim their space as active citizens, decision-makers and leaders, and not only as the recipients of programmes designed elsewhere. Meaningful participation means engaging in civic affairs, holding institutions to account, seeking leadership positions and shaping the decisions that determine their health, education, livelihoods, safety and prospects.

Kenya's youth policy agenda recognises the need to strengthen youth participation in decision-making, alongside current national attention to employability, skills, entrepreneurship, talent and economic opportunity.

For the Commission, listening is the beginning rather than the achievement. The commitment is to platforms where what young people say informs advocacy, public education and action, because solutions to problems affecting young people have to be built with them rather than for them.

Young people have accounts to give, ideas to contribute and futures to shape. The space has to exist for them to speak. The obligation to listen and act sits with everyone else.

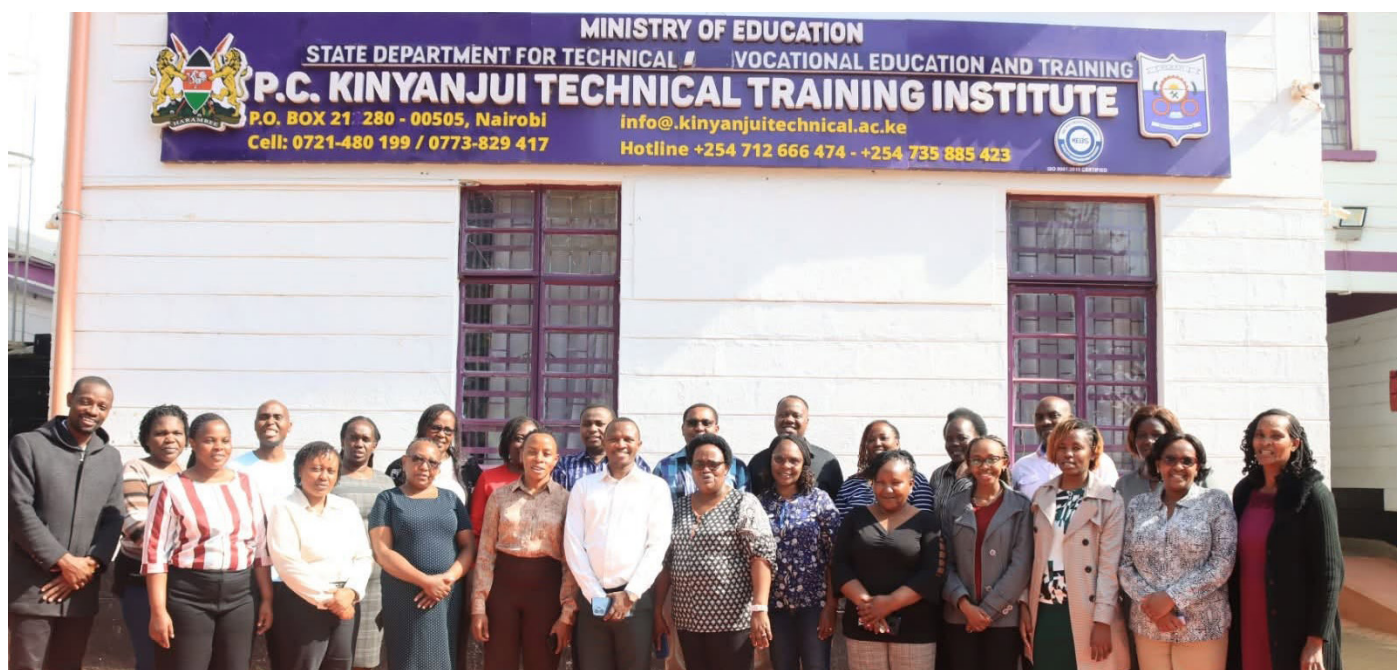
Figure	Label
2,799	Estimated new HIV infections among adolescents, 2024
240,915	Adolescent pregnancies
17,361	Reported cases of sexual and gender-based



Source: Kenya AIDS Response Progress Report.

WHO GETS THROUGH THE DOOR

Decisions taken inside a training institution determine who is admitted, who stays, who progresses and who reaches employment. The Commission took that argument to the senior management of a technical institute.



Group photo following the Commission's capacity-building engagement with the senior management of P.C. Kinyanjui Technical Training Institute on gender mainstreaming

The Commission held a capacity-building session on gender and inclusivity with the senior management of P.C. Kinyanjui Technical Training Institute, bringing institutional leadership into a working conversation about the barriers to equal participation inside their own institution.

The session covered gender concepts and perspectives, gender mainstreaming, gender-based violence, unconscious bias, workplace gender policies and compliance, diversity, equity and inclusion, disability inclusion, and inclusive recruitment, retention and career development.

The choice of audience is the substance of the story. Exclusion in technical and vocational education is rarely the product of a written rule. It is produced by admission decisions, by which workshops are physically reachable, by whether a harassment complaint is heard or absorbed, by how a timetable treats a student with caring responsibilities, and by who is encouraged to continue after a difficult first term. Every one of those is a management decision, and management decisions are made by the people who were in that room.

The Commission's Model Gender Mainstreaming Policy for the technical and vocational education and training sector identifies the barriers: gender stereotypes, discrimination, financial constraints, unfriendly training environments, information gaps and limited prospects for decent work. It calls for stronger institutional capacity to address them, which is a different requirement from awareness.

The engagement was therefore aimed past sensitisation, at the capacity of institutional leaders to mainstream gender and inclusion in policy, programmes, workplace practice and decision-making, and to build environments in which women, men, persons with disabilities and other Special Interest Groups can participate and benefit on equal terms.

Inclusive skills development is not a question of access to training alone. It is a question of whether every learner and member of staff has a fair opportunity to participate, progress and reach their potential. Where leadership understands inclusion, an institution is in a position to make equality part of ordinary practice rather than an annual event.

Every one of those is a management decision, and management decisions are made by the people who were in that room.

Barriers identified in the Model Gender Mainstreaming Policy

- ✓ Gender stereotypes
- ✓ Financial constraints
- ✓ Information gaps
- ✓ Unfriendly training environments
- ✓ Limited prospects for decent work

SECURING BORDERS WITHOUT LOSING PEOPLE

A regional counter-smuggling programme is strengthening Kenya's airports and border systems. The Commission is working to ensure the people moving through them do not disappear inside the security response.



Group photo during the NGEI–IOM Partners' Briefing Meeting on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion under the Regional Counter-Smuggling Programme (RCSP), held in Nairobi.

The Commission hosted the NGEI and IOM Partners' Briefing Meeting in Nairobi on the gender equality and social inclusion component of the Regional Counter-Smuggling Programme, bringing the Commission together with the International Organization for Migration in Kenya on a protection-centred approach to counter-smuggling.

The programme runs across Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia over three years, supported by the UK Home Office Border Security Command and implemented by IOM. It is directed at strengthening airport and border management systems, disrupting smuggling networks, improving inter-agency cooperation and enhancing protection for vulnerable migrants. In Kenya it supports operations at Jomo Kenyatta International, Moi International, Kisumu International, Eldoret International and Malindi airports.

The context is a region under sustained pressure. Conflict, economic hardship, climate shocks and limited livelihoods continue to shape migration and displacement across the Horn of Africa. IOM estimates that 1.7 million people, including migrants and members of host communities across Djibouti,

Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania and Yemen, will require assistance in 2026. Migrants on some routes face extortion, arbitrary detention, violence, exploitation and abuse.

Those risks are not distributed evenly. Gender, age and disability compound them. Women and girls face heightened exposure to sexual exploitation, gender-based violence and trafficking. Children require age-appropriate safeguarding. Persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups encounter additional barriers to information, assistance, reporting mechanisms and essential services.

This is the Commission's central point. Equality and inclusion are part of migration governance, not a consideration added once the systems are already built. A system designed without them will process people it cannot see.

Commission Secretary and Chief Executive Officer Dr Purity Ngina joined Ms Nomagugu Ncube, Chief of Mission, IOM Kenya, and Vice Chairperson Thomas Koyier, EBS, in opening the discussions. The technical session on gender equality and social inclusion was led by Fiona Njeru. Director of Pro-

grammes and Research Paul Kuria guided discussion on a proposed Technical Working Group, which would provide a standing mechanism for coordination, technical guidance and shared responsibility across the component.

The briefing examined the programme's objectives, scope, target institutions and expected results, and considered institutional coordination, technical capacity, information sharing, referral mechanisms and the integration of equality considerations into implementation.

The distinction the Commission is drawing is a practical one. Counter-smuggling work must be firm in disrupting criminal networks and protecting borders. A protection-sensitive system must at the same time be capable of identifying vulnerability, preventing exploitation, making referrals and ensuring that those who need assistance can obtain it without discrimination.

Kenya is a country of origin, transit and destination. A secure border protects territory. A just migration system also protects people. Kenya needs both.

SAFE DIGITAL SPACES

The Commission's campaign to end technology-facilitated gender-based violence



DIGITAL INCLUSION MEANS SAFETY TOO

Access is not enough.

For persons with disabilities and other Special Interest Groups, meaningful digital participation also requires accessibility, safety, privacy, information and effective avenues for reporting abuse.

#YouthVoices #EndTFGBV #DigitalSafety #GenderEquality

info@ngeckkenya.org 0800 720 187 (Toll Free) 0748353653



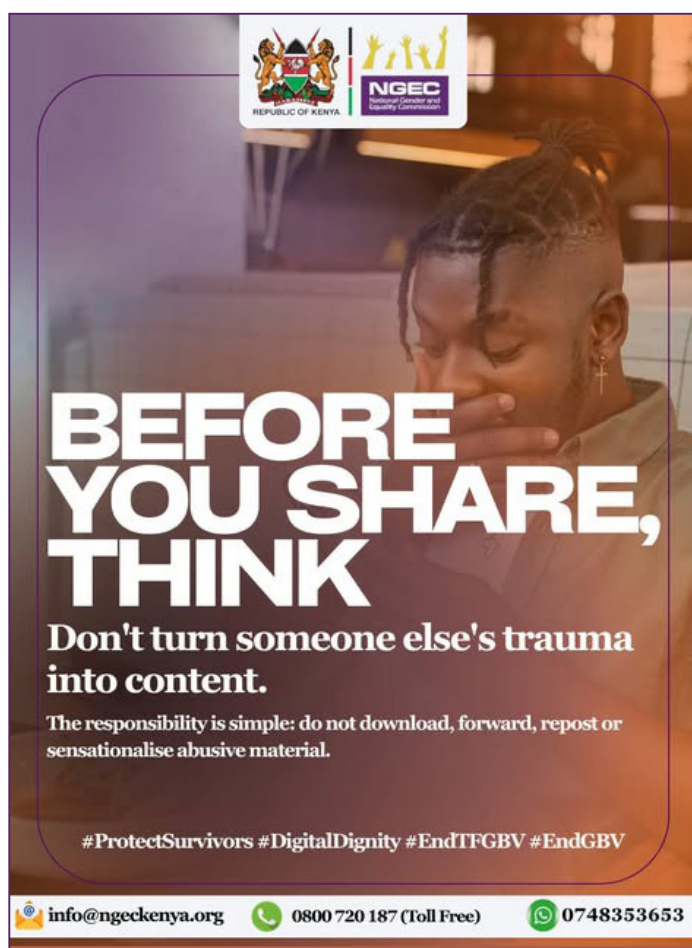
YOUNG PEOPLE DESERVE SAFE DIGITAL SPACES

A digitally empowered generation must also be digitally protected.

Young people need information, opportunity, protection and a meaningful voice in shaping the solutions.

#YouthVoices #EndTFGBV #DigitalSafety #GenderEquality

info@ngeckkenya.org 0800 720 187 (Toll Free) 0748353653



BEFORE YOU SHARE, THINK

Don't turn someone else's trauma into content.

The responsibility is simple: do not download, forward, repost or sensationalise abusive material.

#ProtectSurvivors #DigitalDignity #EndTFGBV #EndGBV

info@ngeckkenya.org 0800 720 187 (Toll Free) 0748353653



PROTECT HER DIGITAL FUTURE

A girl should not have to leave the internet to feel safe.

Every girl deserves a digital future defined by opportunity—not fear.

#GirlsRights #EndTFGBV #SafeDigitalSpaces #GenderEquality

info@ngeckkenya.org 0800 720 187 (Toll Free) 0748353653

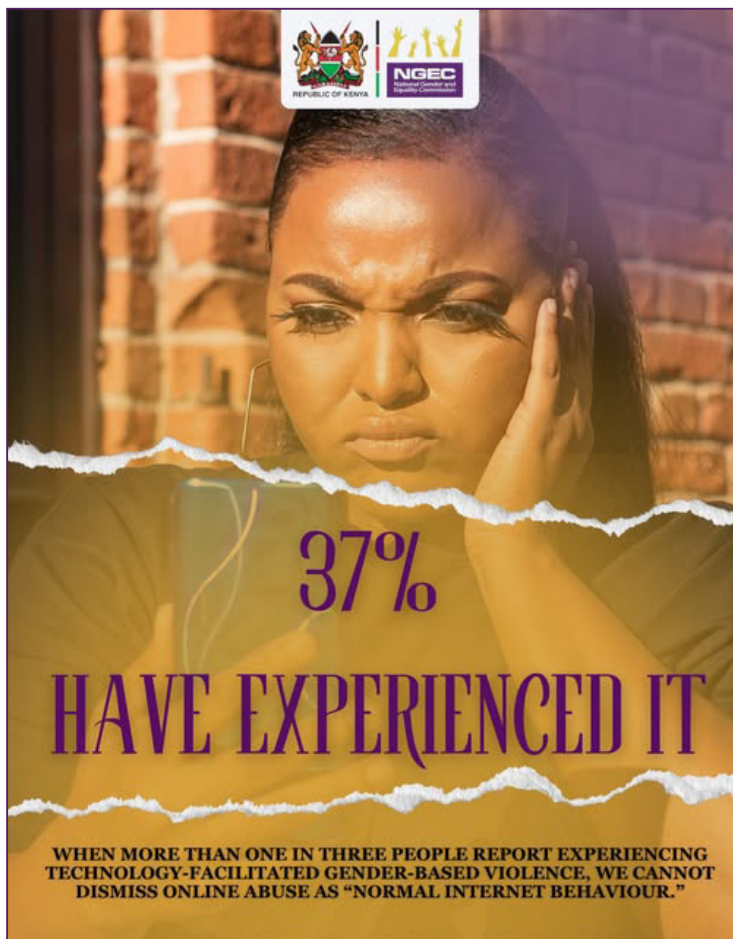
SAFE DIGITAL SPACES



WHEN WOMEN ARE SILENCED ONLINE

Democracy loses a voice.
Political competition should challenge ideas—not weaponise gender-based abuse.

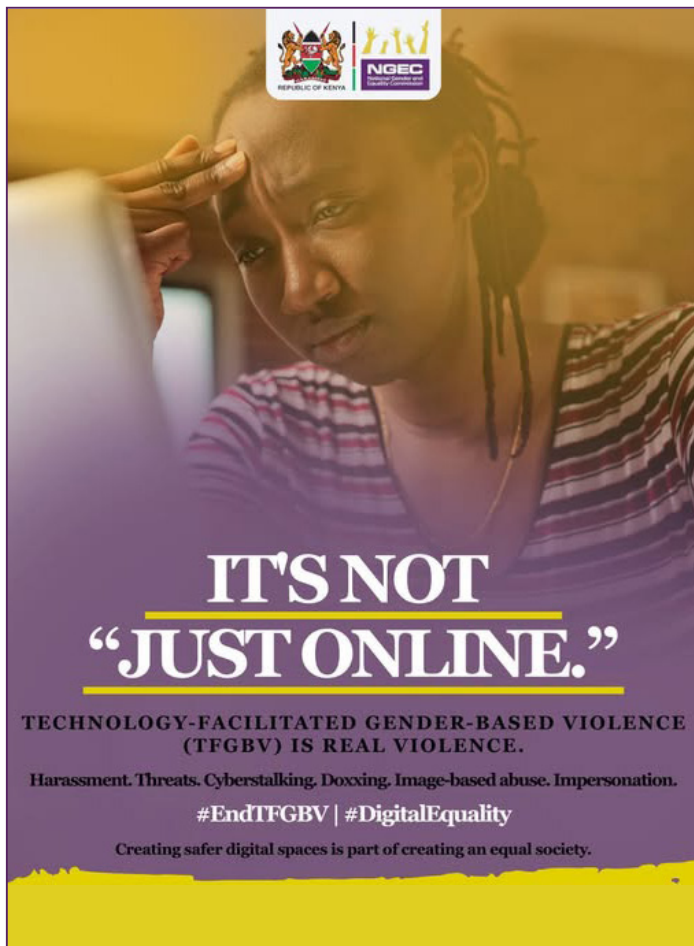
#WomenInLeadership #EndTFGBV #InclusiveGovernance #2027Elections



37%

HAVE EXPERIENCED IT

WHEN MORE THAN ONE IN THREE PEOPLE REPORT EXPERIENCING TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, WE CANNOT DISMISS ONLINE ABUSE AS “NORMAL INTERNET BEHAVIOUR.”



IT'S NOT “JUST ONLINE.”

TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (TFGBV) IS REAL VIOLENCE.

Harassment. Threats. Cyberstalking. Doxxing. Image-based abuse. Impersonation.

#EndTFGBV | #DigitalEquality

Creating safer digital spaces is part of creating an equal society.

#DigitalEquality

#DisabilityInclusion

#EndTFGBV

#LeaveNoOneBehind

PASTORALIST RIGHTS

KENYA PRESSES PASTORALIST RIGHTS IN MONGOLIA

Rangelands sustain millions and underpin food systems, biodiversity and climate resilience. At UNCCD COP17, the Commission's Chairperson argued that recognition of that fact has not translated into land security or finance.



Commission Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa delivers remarks during the UNCCD COP17 side event in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

Rangelands support millions of pastoralists and contribute to food systems, biodiversity, livelihoods and climate resilience. Pastoralist communities nonetheless continue to face insecure land tenure, restricted access to finance and pressure on the traditional mobility systems on which their production depends.

Speaking at a UNCCD COP17 side event in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, themed *Shepherding the Future: Voices from African Indigenous Pastoralists*, the Commission's Chairperson, Hon. Rehema Jaldesa, set out three requirements: stronger financing, secure land rights and protected mobility corridors. She called for the meaningful participation of Indigenous pastoralists in decisions on land use and development, and for the deliberate inclusion of women, youth, older persons and persons with disabilities within those communities. That second point carries weight. Where a community is itself marginalised, the groups marginalised within it are easily overlooked in the arrangements made on its behalf.

The International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists Conference 2026 has drawn international attention to rangeland systems. The Commission's position is that the attention must now convert into implementation.

Pastoralists are not beneficiaries of development. They are knowledge holders, custodians of land, and necessary partners in building resilient rangelands.

The Commission's concern in this area is distributional. Article 55 of the Constitution requires the State to take measures, including affirmative action programmes, to ensure that youth have access to relevant education and training, opportunities to associate and to participate in political, social, economic and other spheres of life, and access to employment. Section 8 (d) of the National Gender and Equality Commission Act, 2011 requires the Commission to coordinate and facilitate the mainstreaming of the issues of gender, persons with disability and other marginalised groups in national development.

A youth programme can meet its targets while reaching only those young people already closest to it. Young women, young persons with disabilities, and young people in minority and marginalised communities encounter additional barriers at each stage: awareness that a programme exists, the documentation required to apply, the cost of reaching the point of delivery, and the collateral or credit history that entry conditions frequently assume.

Partnership between the two institutions offers a practical route to examining who existing initiatives reach, and who they do not.



NGEC CEO Dr Purity Ngina and National Youth Council CEO Gloria Wawira during a courtesy call to discuss collaboration on inclusive youth economic empowerment and participation.

YOUTH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

WHO THE OPPORTUNITY REACHES

A courtesy call between two institutions with overlapping constituencies. The Commission's interest is in whether youth economic programmes reach the young people furthest from them.

The Commission Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, Dr Purity Ngina, paid a courtesy call on the Chief Executive Officer of the National Youth Council Gloria Wawira for discussions on collaboration to advance youth economic development.

The engagement examined areas of mutual interest, among them access to economic empowerment initiatives, skills development, entrepreneurship, leadership and the meaningful participation of young people in decision-making.

PREVENTING ELECTORAL VIOLENCE

PREVENTION HAS A DEADLINE TOO

In Kisumu, justice and security institutions met to examine the risk of election-related violence in western Kenya. The Commission's argument was that the arrangements capable of preventing it must be in place before the campaign period opens.



Kisumu Regional Coordinator Davis Okeyo makes a point during a stakeholder forum on preventing election-related violence in Western Kenya, emphasising the need for early preparedness and coordinated action.

Violence has no place in a democracy, and the arrangements that prevent it are made long before voters reach the ballot box.

The Commission's Kisumu Regional Office joined justice and security institutions, civil society, social justice actors and the media at a stakeholder forum convened by the Law Society of Kenya, Western Kenya Chapter, with support from the Open Society for East Africa, to examine the growing risk of election-related violence in the region.

The forum brought together the National Gender and Equality Commission, the National Police Service, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Independent Policing Oversight Authority, the Law Society of Kenya, civil society organisations, social justice movements and the media. Stakeholders raised concern over the emergence of organised groups allegedly mobilised around political interests, and examined recent incidents in Kisumu and Homa Bay in which political activities were disrupted, citizens injured, property destroyed and lives lost.

The Commission's contribution was directed at what the incident register does not capture. Women, youth, persons with disabilities, minorities and marginalised communities face heightened barriers to political participation once fear, intimidation and violence enter the electoral space. For a woman or a person with a disability seeking office, an unsafe environment discourages attendance at rallies, limits engagement with voters and with party structures, restricts access to campaign spaces, and narrows the practical exercise of a constitutional right.

That makes this an equality question as much as an electoral one. Article 38 of the Constitution guarantees every citizen the right to make political choices, to participate in a political party, to campaign, to vote and to stand for public office. Article 81 requires that elections be free from violence, intimidation, improper influence and corruption, and provides for the fair representation of persons with disabilities.

Kenya's own electoral record establishes the cost. The Commission's analysis of the 2017 General Election found wom-

en and youth among the main reported victims of electoral violence, alongside persons with disabilities and minorities. The Commission's recent engagements in Kisumu have identified political intolerance, election-related violence and technology-facilitated gender-based violence as concerns requiring stronger monitoring, reporting, referral and prevention.

Stakeholders called for stronger accountability, sustained multi-agency coordination, deeper involvement of political parties and the Judiciary, and continued engagement with communities before incidents escalate.

Each of those requirements has an owner and a lead time. Coordination arrangements, referral pathways and early warning mechanisms take months to establish and cannot be assembled in the week a rally is called. The Commission will continue to work with State and non-State actors to protect the rights of all citizens, particularly Special Interest Groups, and to secure an electoral environment in which people participate freely, safely and without discrimination.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

WHAT DEVOLUTION IS MEASURED BY

Ahead of the 13th National and County Government Co-ordinating Summit, the Commission put a case to fellow constitutional commissions and independent offices: equitable development is a test of who development reaches.



NGEC CEO Dr Purity Ngina makes a presentation during a consultative meeting of Constitutional Commissions and Independent Offices, highlighting the importance of gender equality, inclusion and equitable development in national and devolved governance.

The Commission Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, Dr Purity Ngina, presented before a consultative meeting of Constitutional Commissions and Independent Offices convened in preparation for the 13th National and County Government Co-ordinating Summit.

The presentation placed gender equality, inclusion and the needs of Special Interest Groups at the centre of the national and devolved governance agenda, and set out what institutions should be able to demonstrate rather than assert.

The meeting brought together the Salaries and Remuneration Commission, the Commission on Revenue Allocation, the Public Service Commission, the Kenya Law Reform Commission, the Office of the Controller of Budget, the Office of the Auditor-General, the National Gender and Equality Commission

and the Intergovernmental Budget and Economic Council.

Article 174 sets among the objects of devolution the protection and promotion of the interests and rights of minorities and marginalised communities, and the recognition of the right of communities to manage their own affairs. Article 27 requires equal treatment and freedom from discrimination. Section 8 (b) of the National Gender and Equality Commission Act, 2011 requires the Commission to monitor, facilitate and advise on the integration of the principles of equality and freedom from discrimination in all national and county policies, laws and administrative regulations.

Read together, those provisions establish a standard that a county or a national programme can be measured against.

Equitable development is not established by the volume of expenditure or the number of projects commissioned. It is established by evidence of who obtained the service, who was employed, who was consulted, and who was left out of both the plan and the record.

That evidence requires coordination. Allocation, remuneration, appointment, budget execution and audit sit with different institutions, and a gap in any one of them is where an inclusion commitment quietly lapses. The Commission will continue to advocate for inclusive governance and for institutional partnerships that advance equality, strengthen accountability and deliver equitable development at both levels of government.

COMMISSION PRESSES FOR INCLUSION SAFEGUARDS IN HORN OF AFRICA GATEWAY ROAD ASSESSMENT

The environmental and social assessment is the last low-cost moment to design a major road corridor around the people it might otherwise pass by.



Garissa Regional Coordinator Ibrahim Abdiwahab receives the East Africa Engineering Consultants delegation at the Commission's Garissa Regional Office.

A delegation from East Africa Engineering Consultants, the firm conducting the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for the Horn of Africa Gateway Development Project (HoAGDP) road corridor, held talks with the Commission at its Garissa Regional Office on how the project will address gender equality, social inclusion, community participation and the protection of vulnerable groups.

Road corridors decide who moves. The HoAGDP alignment passes through Garissa and the wider frontier region served by the Frontier Counties Development Council, where the distance to a health facility, a school, a market or a court already shapes what a household can and cannot do. Whether the corridor narrows that distance for everyone, or only for those already able to travel, turns on decisions taken at assessment stage on land, compensation, labour, access and safety. Once construction begins, corrections cost considerably more and are seldom made.

The Commission's position is that inclusion in public investment is a legal obligation rather than a matter of

goodwill. Article 27 of the Constitution guarantees equality and freedom from discrimination, and the National Gender and Equality Commission Act, 2011 gives the Commission the mandate to monitor how public institutions, and the contractors acting on their behalf, give effect to that guarantee.

Discussion centred on meaningful community participation. Attendance registers are a weak measure of it. Participation is tested by whether affected residents can take part on equal terms, which requires information in accessible formats and local languages, venues that persons with disabilities and older persons can reach, sitting times that account for women's care and livelihood responsibilities, and a documented record of how the views collected changed the design.

Social assessment of a project of this scale examines risks that fall unevenly. Among them are the effect of land acquisition on women whose interest in family land is undocumented, safety and gender-based violence risks associated with labour influx and construction camps, disruption of access routes used

by pastoralist households, and the exclusion of persons with disabilities both from consultation and from the finished road environment.

The Commission's interest is in the evidence trail the assessment leaves behind. The measure of the ESIA will be whether its final report can demonstrate how the views of women, persons with disabilities, older persons, young people and minority communities altered the project, rather than confirming that those groups were present when it was explained to them.

The Commission maintains a regional presence in the frontier counties for this reason. Inclusion in infrastructure is decided in technical rooms, at the stage when documents are still drafts, and an institution that arrives after commissioning arrives to comment rather than to shape.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MUST MOVE FROM COMMITMENT TO PRACTICE, REGIONAL CONFERENCE TOLD

Enrolment is the easy part. East African systems are being judged on whether the learners who get through the gate are able to stay, learn and progress.



Commission Secretary and CEO Purity Ngina (right) with Cabinet Secretary for East African Community Affairs Hon. Beatrice Askul Moe (centre) and Dr Beatrice Inyangala (left) Principal Secretary, State Department for Higher Education and Research during the 2nd East African Community Regional Education Conference.

Commission Secretary and Chief Executive Officer Purity Ngina joined regional leaders, policymakers and education stakeholders as a panellist at the 2nd East African Community Regional Education Conference, where discussion turned to what it will take to convert regional commitments on inclusive education into changes learners can see in their own classrooms.

The gap under examination is familiar to any parent of a learner with a disability. A place on the register is not a place in the lesson. A ramp that stops at a doorway, a teacher with no training in sign language, a textbook available only in print, a laboratory on an upper floor of a building without a lift: each of these turns admission into a formality and leaves the learner to fail quietly.

The panel examined what inclusion requires in practice. Accessible infrastructure. Teachers trained and supported to teach diverse classes. Inclusive curricula and learning materials. Reasonable accommodation, assistive technologies,

and financing sufficient to sustain all of them. Where reasonable accommodation is not budgeted, inclusion policy stops at the level of intention.

Delegates also considered the barriers that fall on particular groups of learners: children and young people with disabilities, girls and young women, learners from minority and marginalised communities, learners living in poverty, and those in remote or underserved areas.

These barriers compound. A girl with a disability in an underserved area meets all three at once, and support designed for only one of them will not reach her. Hon. Beatrice Askul Moe, Cabinet Secretary for East African Community Affairs, attended as chief guest, accompanied by Dr Beatrice Inyangala, Principal Secretary, State Department for Higher Education and Research.

For the Commission, the regional platform matters because exclusion in education is not confined by borders and neither are the remedies. Harmonised

standards on accessibility, teacher preparation and disaggregated reporting allow member states to compare performance and to identify which approaches hold. Without common measures, each system reports its own success against its own definition.

As the East African Community pursues deeper integration, inclusive and equitable education remains a test of what integration is for. No learner should be left behind because of disability, gender, economic circumstance, location or identity. The measure of an education system is not how many learners it enrolls, but whether every learner is welcomed, supported, respected and equipped to succeed.

DISABILITY INCLUSION

FROM LEGISLATION TO ACTION: STAKEHOLDERS MAP THE ROUTE TO OPERATIONALISING THE DISABILITY LAW

The Persons with Disabilities Act, 2025 is on the statute book. What determines whether it changes daily life is the regulations now to be drafted, and who is in the room while they are written.



Stakeholders follow proceedings during the consultative forum on operationalising the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2025.



Participants at the forum, convened under the theme "From Legislation to Action".

The Commission convened Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) and other stakeholders for a consultative meeting on operationalising the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2025, held under the theme "From Legislation to Action: Operationalising the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2025".

The enactment of the Act marked a milestone in Kenya's progress towards equality, dignity and full inclusion. It also opened the harder phase. A law changes nothing on the day it is assented to. What changes lives are the regulations, budget lines, standards and institutional procedures that follow, and the decisions taken while drafting them about who must comply, by when, and with what consequence for failing to do so.

The meeting set out to strengthen stakeholders' understanding of the Act, clarify the steps involved in developing the regulations required for implementation, and identify how persons with disabilities can take an active part in the regulatory process.

Persons with disabilities and their rep-

resentative organisations are not beneficiaries of the law. They are rights holders, and their experience, knowledge and judgement should shape the regulations, policies and institutional mechanisms intended to advance disability inclusion. The principle is settled in law. The practice is decided meeting by meeting, in decisions about who is invited, how early, and whether what they say survives into the next draft.

Participation on equal terms requires more than an invitation. It requires information in accessible formats, reasonable accommodation, consultation early enough to influence the outcome, and deliberate attention to the range of experience among persons with physical, sensory, intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. Women, children, young people and older persons with disabilities face intersecting barriers that a single consultation format will not capture.

Operationalising the Act is an opportunity to address barriers that have persisted across education, employment, healthcare, political participation, access to justice, social protection, infor-

mation and communication, transport and the built environment. It also requires stronger accountability from public and private institutions, so that disability inclusion is built into planning, budgeting, service delivery and decision-making rather than added once those decisions are made.

The Commission's role in the process follows from its mandate under the Constitution and the National Gender and Equality Commission Act, 2011 to monitor compliance with the principle of equality and freedom from discrimination. Regulations drafted without the involvement of those they govern are difficult to enforce and easy to disregard, and the record of consultation becomes part of the evidence by which implementation is later judged.

The route from legislation to action runs through sustained collaboration among government institutions, OPDs, civil society, the private sector and communities. A strong law is an important beginning. Its value will be determined by how far it changes lives.

INEQUALITY PLAN ACQUIRES THE MACHINERY TO PROVE WHETHER IT WORKS

The KAPIR MEAL framework sets out how progress will be measured, who reports it, and what disaggregated evidence must show before a programme can be called a success.



Members of the technical working group during the review of the draft KAPIR Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning framework.

The Commission has convened the technical working group developing the Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) framework for the Kenya National Action Plan for Inequality Reduction (KAPIR), taking the draft through detailed review and refinement ahead of validation and launch.

National plans on inequality rarely fail at the drafting stage. They fail afterwards, when no institution can say what changed, for whom, or whether public spending reached the households it was appropriated for. The MEAL framework is the instrument built to close that gap, converting the Action Plan's theory of change into measurable results with named reporting responsibilities attached.

The draft framework translates KAPIR's outcomes and outputs into indicators and annual targets, and assigns to each indicator the institution responsible for reporting it and the cost of collecting it. That last provision matters. Indicators without an owner and without a budget line are the standard point of failure in national monitoring systems.

Disaggregation is treated as a minimum standard rather than a refinement. Data collection tools are to capture information broken down by sex, age and disability at minimum, with further disaggregation where context requires it, and analysis is to be conducted by population group, geography and disadvantage. The reasoning is stated plainly in the draft: national averages make the most marginalised populations invisible, and a plan that reports only averages can record progress while the groups it was written for stand still.

Quality assurance runs in four stages, from validation of indicators and pre-testing of tools before any data is gathered, through field supervision and automated validation during collection, to documented cleaning, cross-validation against national survey and administrative data, and scheduled audits afterwards. A periodic independent assessment reviews the system itself and reports to the governance level above the technical one.

The framework also sets out who answers for what. The Commission is the strategic custodian, responsible for direction, resource mobilisation, quality

assurance and dissemination. A steering committee provides governance oversight, the technical working group manages tools, data quality, capacity building and the risk register, priority area coordinators and implementing partners collect and report at operational level, and county structures localise collection and community feedback. Reporting products run from quarterly and annual progress reports to a mid-term review and an end-term evaluation.

Data protection is built in rather than added. The framework applies tiered access controls governed by the Constitution, the Data Protection Act, 2019 and the Access to Information Act, 2016, and it treats those who supply data as rights holders rather than as sources. The distinction carries practical weight where information concerns survivors of gender-based violence, persons with disabilities, children and households in extreme poverty, and where a breach is not an administrative lapse but an exposure to harm.

..... Continued on page 31

INEQUALITY PLAN ACQUIRES THE MACHINERY TO PROVE WHETHER IT WORKS

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..... *Continued from page 30*

For the Commission the framework has direct operational consequence. Its mandate under the National Gender and Equality Commission Act, 2011 includes monitoring and auditing compliance with the principle of equality and freedom from discrimination across the public sector. That oversight depends on evidence generated by other institutions. Where implementing agencies do not collect disaggregated data, the Commission's audit is confined to what can be inferred, and inference is not a basis on which to hold a duty bearer to account.

The framework's own test comes after launch. Its value will rest on whether the evidence it produces reaches planning and budgeting decisions rather than circulating within reporting cycles. The draft anticipates this by linking findings to governance agendas and to budget calendars. Whether that link holds is what the first full reporting cycle will reveal.



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We cannot all succeed when half of us are held back.

— **Malala Yousafzai**

Thank You For Reading

NGEC has been recognised as the Best Constitutional Commission in the 2026 Awards for Top Communicators and Partners by the Office of the Government Spokesperson. We appreciate this recognition of our commitment to effective public communication in advancing equality and inclusion. We dedicate this achievement to our staff, partners and stakeholders who continue to support the Commission in delivering its constitutional mandate.

Let's continue the conversation and drive meaningful change.

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About NGEK

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) is a Constitutional Commission established under Article 59 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010. Our mandate is to promote gender equality and freedom from discrimination for all.

Contact Us

1st Floor, Solution Tech Place,
Longonot Road, Upper Hill
P.O. Box 27512 - 00506, Nairobi, Kenya

info@ngeckenya.org

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+254 020 271 7900



www.NGECKenya.org