



# EQUALITY BULLETIN

## A NATION AT A CROSSROADS:

### Why Kenya Must Unite to End the Escalating Crisis of Violence Against Women and Children

Kenya is facing a troubling reality that demands urgent national attention. Across the country, reports of femicide, gender-based violence, child killings, disappearances, sexual exploitation and online abuse continue to emerge with alarming frequency, raising concerns about the safety of women, girls and children and prompting renewed calls for coordinated action.

These concerns dominated discussions during the Second Bi-Annual National Gender Sector Working Group Meeting, which brought together key government officials, development partners, independent commissions, civil society organisations, community leaders and other stakeholders to deliberate on emerging issues affecting women, children and vulnerable populations. Speaking during the meeting, Commission Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa expressed deep concern over the escalating cases of femicide, gender-based violence, killings of children and the increasing culture of toxic and degrading public discourse targeting women in leadership and public life. She warned that violence should not be viewed merely as a criminal justice issue but as a broader threat to equality, social cohesion and national development. Page 11, 12



Picture: AI-generated



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## A Message from the Chief Executive Officer

This edition is published at a moment of profound national reflection. The rising cases of femicide, gender-based violence, and the disappearance and killing of children have shaken families, communities, and institutions across the country. Beyond the statistics are lives cut short, families left grieving, and a growing demand for stronger protection, accountability, and collective action.

The stories featured in this edition reaffirm that safeguarding human dignity requires more than response—it requires prevention, inclusion, and resilient institutions. From strengthening child protection systems in schools and communities to advancing access to justice through social justice centres, promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, supporting indigenous communities, and developing practical solutions to reduce inequality, the Commission continues to champion a society where no one is left behind.



A common thread runs through these engagements: equality, inclusion, and protection are inseparable. Communities are strongest when children are safe, women live free from violence, vulnerable groups can access justice, and public institutions are responsive to the people they serve.

The Commission remains committed to working with all stakeholders to strengthen accountability, promote equality and freedom from discrimination, and advance a Kenya where dignity, safety, and opportunity are realities for all.

**Purity Ngina, PhD, MBS**

Chief Executive Officer

**National Gender and Equality Commission**

## THE COMMISSION



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## “From Tokens to Decision-Makers”: Kisumu Youth Challenge Exclusion in Governance as NGEC Hosts Civic Dialogue

*Young people cite unemployment, political violence, online abuse and shrinking civic space as barriers to meaningful participation in leadership and decision-making*



NGEC Kisumu Regional Office convenes over 20 young people from universities, colleges, human rights institutions and community social justice centres.

A growing call for meaningful youth inclusion in governance took centre stage in Kisumu when the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) Regional Office convened more than 20 young people drawn from universities, colleges, human rights institutions and community social justice centres. The engagement provided a forum for frank discussions on youth participation in politics, leadership and civic processes, with participants questioning continued exclusion from decision-making spaces despite their active role in shaping public discourse and democratic engagement.

Participants noted that young people remain highly visible in civic conversations, advocacy movements and digital platforms, yet continue to experience limited representation in formal governance structures. The dialogue examined the gap between symbolic participation and actual decision-making power, with youth calling for structured pathways that allow them to influence policy, leadership and governance outcomes in a more direct and sustained manner. Speakers argued that treating young people as future leaders alone fails to ~

reflect their current contribution to civic life and democratic processes. Unemployment was identified as one of the most pressing challenges influencing youth participation in governance and civic activities. Participants observed that limited access to economic opportunities continues to constrain meaningful engagement in leadership and public life, while increasing vulnerability to social and political manipulation.

The discussions linked economic exclusion to broader frustrations among young people, particularly in relation to access to opportunities and representation in leadership structures. The forum also highlighted concerns over political violence, including the reported use of organised groups commonly referred to as goons during political activities. Participants said such practices discourage peaceful participation and create an environment of fear that undermines democratic engagement. They stressed that violence and intimidation during political processes disproportionately affect young people, many of whom are often at the forefront of civic and electoral participation.

The need for stronger enforcement of laws protecting peaceful participation in political and civic processes was emphasised. Participants expressed concern over shrinking civic spaces and increasing restrictions on freedom of expression and association.

They noted that limited access to decision-making platforms and inadequate consultation processes continue to exclude youth voices from governance systems. This exclusion, they said, has contributed to growing frustration among young people, particularly those actively engaged in civic education, advocacy and community organising.

A key focus of the engagement was the increasing prevalence of Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV), particularly targeting young women in leadership and civic spaces. Participants reported rising cases of online harassment, cyberbullying and intimidation aimed at silencing young women participating in public discourse and leadership. The discussions noted that digital platforms, while expanding opportunities for civic engagement, have also become spaces where abuse and exclusion occur, particularly against women and other vulnerable groups.

Stakeholders emphasised that such violence undermines democratic participation and discourages young women from pursuing leadership roles. The engagement observed a notable shift in youth participation trends, with more young people moving from online activism and protest movements towards structured civic engagement. Participants highlighted increased interest in voter registration, leadership development and policy discussions ahead of the 2027 electoral period. This shift was described as a transition towards more formal engagement with governance systems and democratic institutions.

Stakeholders encouraged young people to take advantage of existing institutional frameworks to strengthen their participation in decision-making processes. The Commission reaffirmed its commitment to promoting inclusive participation, equality and non-discrimination, with particular focus on youth, women and other vulnerable groups. The Commission emphasised the importance of strengthening civic awareness, expanding participation opportunities and supporting safer engagement in governance processes. Through regional dialogues, NGEC continues to support efforts aimed at ensuring that young people are not only participants in civic life but also active contributors to leadership and decision-making systems.

## “Justice Starts at the Doorstep”: Kisumu Opens New Community Hubs to Strengthen Rights Protection and Accountability

*NGEC joins stakeholders in launching Kondele and Manyatta B Social Justice Centres amid renewed focus on access to justice, police accountability and inclusion*



NGEC Kisumu Regional Office joins stakeholders at the launch of the Kondele and Manyatta B Social Justice Centres.

Community-driven justice systems took centre stage in Kisumu as the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) joined stakeholders in the official launch of the Kondele Social Justice Centre and Manyatta B Social Justice Centre. Held under the theme “Justice Thrives When Communities Lead,” the initiative brings together oversight institutions, security agencies, civil society organisations and grassroots actors in a coordinated push to strengthen access to justice, human rights protection and accountability for vulnerable and marginalised communities living in informal settlements. The newly launched centres are located within informal settlements where residents continue to face significant social and economic challenges, including limited access to justice services and public institutions.

The centres are expected to serve as accessible community-based platforms for documenting complaints, supporting referrals, promoting civic awareness and strengthening responses to cases of injustice. Stakeholders noted that such grassroots structures play a critical role in bridging the gap between communities and formal justice systems.

The engagement brought together a wide range of actors, including oversight bodies, security agencies, civil society organisations, faith-based institutions and community representatives from across the country. Participants emphasised the importance of coordinated action between institutions and communities in promoting accountability and improving access to justice. The discussions highlighted that effective justice systems require trust-building, information sharing and sustained collaboration across all levels of governance.

The social justice centres are expected to support documentation of complaints, strengthen referral pathways, promote civic education and provide community-based support for survivors of rights violations. Stakeholders noted that these functions are critical in enhancing early response to violations and improving accountability at community level. The centres are also expected to foster civic participation and strengthen awareness of rights and responsibilities among residents.

The National Gender and Equality Commission reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening partnerships with social justice centres and community structures. The Commission noted that collaboration with grassroots institutions is key to advancing equality, inclusion and access to justice for all. Through such engagements, NGEN continues to support efforts aimed at strengthening accountability systems and promoting human dignity, particularly for vulnerable populations.

The launch of the Kondele and Manyatta B Social Justice Centres marks a step toward strengthening community-led approaches to justice and human rights protection in Kisumu. Stakeholders emphasised that sustainable accountability requires strong collaboration between communities, institutions and local leadership.

## “From Coordination to Protection: Kilifi Pushes for Stronger Child Safeguarding and Inclusion Systems”

*NGEC Malindi Regional Office leads coordinated meetings with county leadership, Parliament Committee and partners to improve safeguarding, equality and service delivery for vulnerable groups*

Efforts to strengthen child protection, gender equality and inclusive service delivery were reinforced in Kilifi County through a series of engagements led by the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), Malindi Regional Office. The discussions brought together county leadership, Members of the National Assembly Departmental Committee on Social Protection and key stakeholders to enhance coordination in addressing the needs of children, women, persons with disabilities, older persons and other vulnerable groups.

A courtesy visit to the Kilifi County Commissioner set the tone for discussions focused on improving inter-agency collaboration, referral systems and inclusive service delivery across the region. Stakeholders emphasised that coordinated action is essential for effective protection of Special Interest Groups.

Stakeholders also visited the Malindi Children Remand Home to assess rehabilitation and reintegration mechanisms for children in conflict with the law. The visit highlighted the need to strengthen rights-based approaches that safeguard dignity and support successful reintegration.



NGEC Malindi Regional Office's Ms. Beatrice Zighe addresses the media during an Equality and Inclusion Partners Meeting

In a separate engagement, NGEN convened partners to review ongoing interventions and gather feedback on emerging challenges affecting vulnerable groups, including survivors of violence.

## NGEC Marks International Day of Families in Nakuru with Renewed Focus on Inclusion, Social Cohesion and Care for Older Persons

*Stakeholders call for stronger family support systems, intergenerational solidarity, and coordinated action to address challenges facing older persons, including neglect, loneliness and social exclusion*



Nakuru Regional Office staff join state and non-state actors to mark the International Day of Families in Nakuru

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), through its Nakuru Regional Office, joined State and non-State actors in commemorating the International Day of Families in Nakuru, in a coordinated event aimed at strengthening inclusion, social cohesion and support for vulnerable members of society, particularly older persons.

The commemoration brought together community members, institutions and service providers in activities designed to highlight the role of families in promoting care, protection and well-being across all stages of life. The commemoration began with a procession from Nakuru Railways, drawing participants from different sectors in a public display of solidarity in support of family welfare and community resilience.

The walk served as a symbolic expression of collective responsibility in strengthening family structures and reinforcing social systems that support vulnerable populations. Stakeholders noted that the visibility of the event reflected growing recognition of families as a foundational institution in promoting social stability and cohesion.

The International Day of Families, observed annually on 15 May, was established by the United Nations to raise awareness of issues affecting families and to promote actions that strengthen family well-being and social development. The observance emphasises the role of families in nurturing individuals and supporting social and economic development across communities.

Participants in the Nakuru event noted that families remain central to care systems, especially in contexts where formal social protection structures may be limited or overstretched. Discussions during the commemoration highlighted a range of challenges currently affecting families, including economic pressures, shifting social dynamics and growing concerns related to mental health and overall well-being.

Stakeholders observed that these pressures are influencing caregiving structures and increasing vulnerability among certain population groups, particularly older persons and children. The need for strengthened community support systems and responsive social policies was identified as key to addressing these emerging challenges.

As part of the commemorative activities, NGEK and partners visited Alms Home for the Elderly, where residents participated in grooming and beauty services facilitated by Vera Beauty and Fashion College. Psychosocial support sessions were also conducted by MIDRIFT HURINET to address emotional well-being and encourage social interaction among residents. The engagement provided an opportunity for interaction between community members and older persons residing at the facility, promoting inclusion and intergenerational connection. Stakeholders noted that such initiatives help strengthen dignity, reduce isolation and promote a sense of belonging among older persons. The commemoration also brought attention to challenges affecting older persons, including loneliness, neglect, abuse, inadequate care and social isolation. Participants underscored the need for coordinated responses involving families, communities, institutions and government agencies to address these issues effectively.

Stakeholders emphasised that older persons remain an important part of society and continue to contribute to family and community life, requiring respect, care and protection. Speakers at the event called for stronger family-centred policies and community-based support systems to enhance care and protection for vulnerable groups. The discussions reflected global policy priorities that emphasise social protection systems, caregiving support and community-based interventions as essential components of family resilience. Participants noted that effective policy responses must address both economic and social factors affecting family stability and well-being. The National Gender and Equality Commission expressed appreciation to all State and non-State actors who participated in the commemoration. The Commission reaffirmed that partnerships and collaborative action remain essential in advancing social inclusion, strengthening family support systems and protecting vulnerable groups.

Through its engagement in such initiatives, NGEK continues to promote equality, dignity and inclusion for all members of society, with particular attention to older persons and other special interest groups.

The Nakuru commemoration of the International Day of Families highlighted the central role of families in promoting social cohesion, care and protection within communities.

## “From Exclusion to Prevention: Kitui Strengthens Inclusive Action Against Violent Extremism”

*NGEC joins over 40 stakeholders to align County Action Plan with Kenya’s NSPCVE 2025–2030, embedding inclusion, youth participation and equality in peacebuilding efforts*

Efforts to strengthen community resilience against violent extremism took a significant step forward in Kitui County, where the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) participated in a three-day County Engagement Forum bringing together more than 40 stakeholders. The forum reviewed and remodelled the County Action Plan in alignment with Kenya’s National Strategy for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (NSPCVE) 2025–2030, with a strong focus on inclusion, equality and community-centred prevention approaches targeting social vulnerability and emerging threats to cohesion.

The engagement underscored the role of exclusion, marginalisation, inequality, unemployment, hate speech and limited access to opportunities as key drivers of vulnerability to exploitation and radicalisation. Stakeholders noted that addressing these structural challenges is central to preventing violent extremism and strengthening long-term social cohesion within communities. The discussions emphasised that sustainable prevention requires approaches that go beyond security responses to include social and economic inclusion. The Commission’s participation ensured that equality and inclusion priorities were integrated into the revised County Action Plan.

The forum strengthened representation of minority and marginalised communities, including pastoralist and Muslim groups, in peacebuilding and prevention processes. Participants emphasised that inclusive engagement is essential in addressing grievances and strengthening trust between communities and institutions. The discussions reinforced the need for development and security strategies that reflect Kenya’s social and cultural diversity. Gender-responsive strategies were highlighted through the Kina Mama and Male Mentors Working Groups, which focused on addressing the distinct ~

vulnerabilities faced by women, girls, boys and men. Stakeholders noted that gender-sensitive approaches are critical in understanding how different groups experience risk and resilience within communities. The engagement also reinforced the importance of community-based prevention mechanisms in advancing sustainable peace.



Nakuru Regional Office Head Dr. Moses Saranta during a forum to align the County Action Plan with Kenya’s NSPCVE 2025–2030.

Youth participation was prioritised through the Youth Working Group and the Youth PCVE Network, reflecting the central role of young people in peacebuilding and social cohesion. Participants noted that young people are key actors in preventing radicalisation and promoting resilience through civic engagement, dialogue and community leadership. The discussions emphasised the need to expand opportunities for youth inclusion in governance and prevention frameworks.

Stakeholders also responded to growing concerns over hate speech, polarisation and divisive narratives within communities. Measures were adopted to promote responsible communication, social accountability and peaceful coexistence. These included the development of a code of conduct for vernacular radio presenters and the establishment of local monitoring mechanisms to curb the spread of harmful messaging. The Kitui County Engagement Forum marked a key step in aligning local strategies with Kenya’s national framework for preventing and countering violent extremism. Stakeholders emphasised that addressing inequality, exclusion and marginalisation is essential to reducing vulnerability and strengthening resilience.

## Kenya Unveils New Push to Tackle Inequality

*NGEC and partners develop national action plan targeting disparities in income, services and opportunity*



Commissioner Caroline N. Lentupuru during a meeting with MDAs, development partners and technical experts on the Kenya Action Plan on Inequality Reduction (KAPIR)

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), with support from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), has convened Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), development partners and technical experts to develop the first draft of the Kenya Action Plan on Inequality Reduction (KAPIR). The initiative seeks to translate constitutional and policy commitments into practical interventions aimed at reducing structural inequalities in income, access to essential services and social protection across the country.

The Action Plan is grounded in the Constitution of Kenya 2010, Kenya Vision 2030 and the National Policy on Gender and Development. It is designed to address long-standing disparities in labour markets, wage structures, taxation systems and social protection coverage, while also improving equitable access to essential services such as education, healthcare, housing, water, sanitation, energy and digital inclusion. The development process brings together government institutions, county governments, civil society organisations, academia, the private sector and development partners. Stakeholders noted that this inclusive approach is intended to ensure the framework reflects diverse realities and builds shared ownership in addressing inequality at all levels of governance.

Once finalised, KAPIR will outline strategic objectives, priority interventions, implementation timelines, financing approaches and measurable indicators. The framework is expected to enhance coordination across sectors and strengthen alignment between national and county-level planning in addressing inequality.

## From Grassroots to Governance: NGENC Kisumu Mobilises Youth and Social Justice Actors in Push for Equality and Protection

*Winam and Kondele Social Justice Centres join students and young volunteers in dialogue on insecurity, SGBV, unemployment and emerging protection risks in Kisumu region*

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) Kisumu Regional Office has convened members of the Winam Community Social Justice Centre and Kondele Social Justice Centre, alongside university students, interns and young volunteers, in a structured engagement aimed at strengthening awareness on equality, inclusion, access to justice and community participation. The forum brought together grassroots actors and young people to deepen understanding of rights protection systems while examining emerging social challenges affecting vulnerable groups in Kisumu County and surrounding regions.



Kisumu Regional Office staff with members of Winam and Kondele Social Justice Centres, university students and young volunteers during a community engagement.

The engagement provided a structured platform for dialogue between institutional actors and community-based social justice groups on issues of equality and access to justice. Participants exchanged experiences on community advocacy work, including documentation of rights violations and engagement with relevant institutions responsible for justice and protection services. The discussions emphasised the importance of linking grassroots structures with formal governance and justice systems to improve responsiveness and strengthen accountability in service delivery.

Young participants, including university students and interns, highlighted the need for continuous civic education to strengthen understanding of rights and institutional processes. A key focus of the engagement was the role of young people in advancing equality, inclusion and community accountability. Participants discussed the importance of building advocacy skills among youth, particularly in documenting cases, engaging institutions and raising awareness on rights and responsibilities within communities.

The session underscored the growing role of youth-led initiatives in addressing social challenges and strengthening access to justice at the community level.

Stakeholders noted that empowering young people with knowledge and practical tools enhances their ability to participate meaningfully in governance and protection systems. Participants raised concerns over insecurity and rising incidents of organised violence in some areas, commonly referred to as goonism. These security challenges were linked to broader social and economic pressures affecting communities, particularly young people. Youth unemployment was identified as a significant contributing factor, with participants noting its role in increasing vulnerability to crime and social instability.

The discussions called for strengthened multi-sectoral responses to address both the social and economic drivers of insecurity. The engagement also highlighted increasing cases of sexual and gender-based violence within the region. Participants noted that survivors often face challenges in reporting incidents and accessing timely support services, including justice, medical care and psychosocial assistance. The discussions emphasised the need for stronger prevention strategies, improved reporting mechanisms and enhanced coordination among institutions involved in GBV response. Stakeholders stressed that effective protection systems must prioritise survivor safety, dignity and access to comprehensive support services. The session further addressed concerns over the growing number of street-connected children, highlighting the need for strengthened child protection systems and social support interventions.

Participants also raised issues related to reported sexual exploitation in gold mining areas within Siaya County, describing it as an urgent protection concern requiring coordinated institutional attention.

These discussions underscored the importance of targeted interventions in high-risk environments, particularly where informal economic activities increase vulnerability to exploitation. Stakeholders also expressed concern over the potential social impact of the proposed nuclear power project, particularly on vulnerable communities. Participants emphasised the importance of inclusive public participation processes in major development projects to ensure that communities are adequately informed and meaningfully engaged.

The engagement reaffirmed the importance of strengthening partnerships between community-based organisations, youth groups, civil society actors and government institutions. The Commission reiterated its commitment to promoting equality, inclusion and non-discrimination, with a focus on special interest groups including women, youth, persons with disabilities and marginalised communities.

Through regional engagements such as this, the Commission continues to strengthen community-based approaches to rights awareness, advocacy and protection. The engagement reflects ongoing efforts to ensure that vulnerable groups are informed, protected and meaningfully included in governance and development processes.

## Kenya Reaffirms Push to End Gender-Based Violence at Post-CSW70 National Stakeholders' Forum

*Senior leaders, judiciary, government agencies and partners renew commitment to survivor-centred justice, prevention and coordinated action on GBV*



Chief Justice Her Ladyship Martha Koome, Cabinet Secretary Hon. Hanna Cheptumo, Principal Secretary Anne Wangombe and NGEN Vice Chairperson Thomas Koyier, alongside stakeholders, during a group photo.

Kenya has renewed its commitment to ending Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and strengthening access to justice for women and girls during the Post-CSW70 National Stakeholders' Forum, where leaders and partners called for urgent, coordinated action in response to rising cases of violence. The forum brought together senior government officials, the Judiciary, Parliament, county governments, civil society, development partners, academia, the private sector and the media to reinforce national strategies on prevention, accountability and survivor support.

The forum was attended by Chief Justice Martha Koome, Cabinet Secretary for Gender, Culture and Children Services Hon. Hanna Cheptumo, Principal Secretary for Gender Affairs and Affirmative Action Anne Wangombe, and Antonia Sodonon, alongside representatives from Parliament, county governments, civil society organisations, development partners, academia and the private sector. Discussions focused on strengthening coordination across institutions to improve prevention, response and accountability mechanisms addressing GBV.

Participants noted the continued increase in reported cases of violence against women and girls, describing it as a persistent national concern requiring urgent and sustained intervention.

The forum was held against a backdrop of growing concern over increasing cases of violence affecting women and girls across the country. Participants noted that these trends highlight the urgent need for stronger prevention mechanisms, improved reporting systems and more effective survivor-centred responses within justice and support structures. The discussions underscored that GBV remains a structural and social challenge requiring sustained and coordinated action at all levels. Stakeholders reaffirmed the importance of strengthening justice systems to ensure they are accessible, responsive and centred on the needs of survivors.

Key priorities discussed included improving reporting mechanisms, enhancing protection services, and ensuring timely accountability processes within the justice system. The role of coordinated institutional frameworks was highlighted as essential in ensuring that survivors are not only protected but also supported through recovery and justice processes. The engagement also examined underlying social and structural factors that continue to expose women and girls to violence and exclusion. Participants noted that inequality, discrimination and harmful social norms remain key drivers of vulnerability, requiring long-term interventions that go beyond immediate response measures.

Speaking during the forum, NGEN Vice Chairperson Thomas Koyier called for stronger institutional coordination to translate commitments into measurable impact.

“We must move from commitments on paper to coordinated action that is visible in the lives of women and girls,” he said.

“Ending gender-based violence requires institutions to work together, not in isolation, if we are to close the gaps that continue to expose survivors to harm.”

He further emphasised the importance of strengthening prevention systems and ensuring accountability at all levels.

“Prevention must remain at the centre of our response. We cannot continue to respond after harm has already occurred while the root causes remain unaddressed,” Koyier noted.

The National Gender and Equality Commission reaffirmed its commitment to advancing equality, protecting human dignity and ensuring access to justice for survivors of GBV. Koyier reiterated the Commission's role in supporting coordinated institutional frameworks.

“Our collective responsibility is to ensure that every woman and girl lives free from violence, fear and discrimination. This is not optional; it is a constitutional imperative,” he stated.

## NGEC CEO Dr Purity Ngina Calls for Inclusive Research Systems to Drive Evidence-Based National Development

*Panel at Science, Research and Innovation Week highlights need to embed Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in research financing, data systems and innovation policy frameworks*

The Chief Executive Officer of the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), Dr Purity Ngina, has called for the deliberate integration of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) principles into Kenya's research, innovation and policy development systems. Speaking during the 2026 Science, Research and Innovation Week for Society, Dr Ngina participated in a panel discussion themed "Establishing Inclusive and Impact-Oriented National Research and Innovation Systems," where she underscored the need to reform research financing, data collection and governance structures to ensure equitable participation and representation of all population groups.

Dr Ngina emphasised that national research and innovation systems must be designed to reflect the diversity of society and address long-standing structural exclusions. She noted that women, youth, persons with disabilities, and individuals from minority and marginalised communities continue to face systemic barriers in accessing research opportunities, funding and representation within knowledge production systems. The CEO stressed that embedding GESI principles within research frameworks is essential to ensuring that innovation outcomes are inclusive and responsive to the needs of all citizens. A key highlight of the discussion was the need to strengthen accountability within research governance and financing systems. Dr Ngina pointed out that equitable allocation of research funding remains critical in addressing disparities that affect underserved populations.

She called for transparent and accountable mechanisms that ensure research resources are distributed fairly and support studies that reflect diverse social realities and development needs. The discussion also underscored the importance of strengthening oversight structures to ensure that research investments translate into meaningful and inclusive policy outcomes.

Dr Ngina further emphasised the need for consistent collection and use of disaggregated data in research and policy formulation processes.

She noted that data broken down by gender, age, disability status and other social characteristics is essential for identifying gaps and informing targeted interventions. The absence of such data, she observed, continues to limit the ability of policymakers to design inclusive programmes and effectively monitor progress on equality and inclusion. Stakeholders at the forum acknowledged that data-driven decision-making is central to achieving equitable national development outcomes.

The panel discussion highlighted persistent systemic gaps within research and innovation ecosystems that contribute to exclusion. These gaps include limited access to funding opportunities, inadequate representation in research leadership, and insufficient integration of inclusion principles in innovation frameworks. Dr Ngina noted that addressing these challenges requires deliberate policy action to mainstream inclusion across all stages of research and innovation development. She stressed that inclusive systems not only promote equity but also enhance the quality and relevance of research outputs.

She noted that strengthening the link between research outputs and policy implementation is essential for ensuring that development interventions respond effectively to population needs. Participants agreed that robust research systems contribute to improved governance, accountability and sustainable development outcomes. Through its participation in the Science, Research and Innovation Week, the National Gender and Equality Commission reaffirmed its commitment to promoting inclusive research systems that support equality and social justice.

The Commission continues to advocate for data systems and research frameworks that ensure no group is left behind in national development processes. Its engagement reflects an ongoing effort to strengthen institutional capacity for evidence-based policymaking that is grounded in inclusion and equity principles. The remarks by NGEC Chief Executive Officer Dr Purity Ngina at the 2026 Science, Research and Innovation Week highlighted the central role of inclusive research systems in shaping equitable national development. Her call for stronger integration of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion ~



NGEC CEO Dr Purity Ngina during a panel discussion at the 2026 Science, Research and Innovation Week for Society.

The engagement also focused on the role of research in informing national development planning and policy formulation. Dr Ngina underscored that inclusive and reliable data systems are critical for evidence-based decision-making across government institutions.

in research financing, governance and data systems underscored the need for reforms that address systemic exclusion. The engagement reaffirmed the importance of building evidence-based policy frameworks that reflect the realities of all population groups and support sustainable, inclusive national growth.

## Inside Kenya's Schools: NGEC Moves to Close Gaps in Reporting Gender-Based Violence as New Nairobi Model Takes Shape

*State and non-state actors review evidence on School-Related Gender-Based Violence, flagging critical weaknesses in reporting, response systems and learner protection*

Efforts to strengthen the prevention and response to violence in schools have gained momentum in Nairobi following a technical working group meeting convened by the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), in collaboration with Population Council Kenya and with support from Rise Up Together. The forum brought together state and non-state actors to deliberate on the development of a School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) Reporting and Response Model for Nairobi County schools, amid growing concern over the persistence of violence within the basic education system and gaps in protection mechanisms for learners.

The engagement was anchored on three key evidence synthesis reports that guided discussions on the scope and nature of School-Related Gender-Based Violence in Kenya. The first presentation examined the prevalence and forms of SRGBV within the education sector, highlighting that learners continue to face multiple forms of violence that affect their safety, dignity and access to education. The second report reviewed existing legal and policy frameworks, outlining provisions designed to protect children and address violence in school settings while also identifying challenges in implementation.

The third presentation focused on current reporting and response mechanisms, assessing how cases of violence are reported, managed and escalated within education and protection systems. Together, the findings provided a comprehensive evidence base for identifying systemic weaknesses and informing the proposed reporting and response model. Stakeholders reaffirmed that gender-based violence and violence against children remain significant challenges within Kenya's basic education system. Participants noted that incidents of violence within schools take multiple forms, affecting learners' wellbeing, ~



NGEC Vice Chairperson Thomas Koyier and CEO Dr Purity Ngina with stakeholders during a forum on the SRGBV reporting and response model for Nairobi County schools.

participation and academic performance. The discussions highlighted the urgency of strengthening institutional safeguards to ensure that schools remain safe and protective environments for all learners. A key concern raised during the meeting was the existence of gaps in current reporting and response mechanisms for School-Related Gender-Based Violence. Participants noted inconsistencies in how cases are reported across institutions, alongside coordination challenges between key actors responsible for child protection and education oversight.

The discussions also highlighted delays in response processes and limited standardisation of reporting procedures, which were identified as barriers to effective case management. Stakeholders emphasised the need for a unified and structured reporting model to improve efficiency, accountability and survivor support. The review of legal and policy frameworks revealed that while Kenya has established provisions to address violence in schools, implementation gaps remain a major challenge.

Participants observed that existing frameworks require stronger operationalisation at institutional level to ensure effective protection of learners. The discussions underscored the importance of aligning policy provisions with practical mechanisms within schools, including reporting channels, response protocols and safeguarding procedures. The technical working group focused on the development of an inclusive School-Related Gender-Based Violence Reporting and Response Model tailored for Nairobi County schools.

The proposed model aims to streamline reporting pathways, strengthen coordination among stakeholders and improve response systems for survivors of school-related violence. Participants emphasised the importance of ensuring that the ~

model is accessible, practical and responsive to the needs of all learners, including vulnerable groups. The model is also expected to enhance accountability by clearly defining roles and responsibilities for institutions involved in prevention and response.

The engagement brought together actors from government institutions, development partners and civil society organisations working in child protection, education and gender equality. Stakeholders noted that addressing School-Related Gender-Based Violence requires coordinated action across multiple sectors, including education, justice, health and social services.

The discussions highlighted the importance of sustained partnerships in strengthening prevention, reporting and response systems. The Commission reaffirmed its commitment to promoting equality, protecting children's rights and strengthening safeguarding systems within education settings.

Through its collaboration with Population Council Kenya and other partners, the Commission continues to support initiatives aimed at improving protection mechanisms and ensuring safe learning environments.

The initiative aligns with broader national efforts to eliminate violence in schools and strengthen child protection systems across the country. The Nairobi technical working group meeting marked a significant step toward the development of a structured and inclusive School-Related Gender-Based Violence Reporting and Response Model. The evidence-based discussions highlighted persistent gaps in reporting and response systems, underscoring the need for coordinated reform within the education sector.

Stakeholders agreed that strengthening reporting mechanisms, improving policy implementation and enhancing institutional coordination are critical to ensuring safer and more protective learning environments for all learners in Kenya.

## “Nothing About Us Without Us”: NGEC and Nakuru Deaf Women Push for Real Inclusion Beyond Policy Promises

*Deaf women and persons with disabilities highlight persistent barriers in jobs, healthcare, education, justice and communication access in Nakuru engagement*



NGEC Nakuru's Nancy Mwangi with Nakuru Queen Deaf Organisation during a dialogue on the rights of deaf women, girls and persons with disabilities.

Calls for practical inclusion and removal of systemic barriers took centre stage in Nakuru as the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) engaged the Nakuru Queen Deaf Organisation in a focused dialogue on advancing the rights of deaf women, girls and persons with disabilities. The engagement examined the gap between constitutional guarantees and everyday lived realities, with participants citing continued exclusion from essential services, economic opportunities and justice systems due to communication, institutional and social barriers.

The discussions highlighted multiple challenges affecting the deaf community and persons with disabilities in Nakuru County, particularly in accessing employment, education and healthcare services. Participants noted that limited availability of sign language interpretation services in public institutions remains a major barrier to effective communication and service delivery. The absence of accessible communication channels was identified as a key factor contributing to exclusion from public participation processes and essential government services.

Stakeholders raised concerns over continued discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment and economic participation.

Despite existing legal and constitutional protections promoting equality and non-discrimination, participants observed that many persons with disabilities remain excluded from job opportunities and income-generating activities. Despite existing legal and constitutional protections promoting equality and non-discrimination, participants observed that many persons with disabilities remain excluded from job opportunities and income-generating activities.

The engagement also highlighted broader exclusion from development programmes and public services, limiting participation in economic and social life. Participants further raised concerns regarding access to justice, particularly in relation to property ownership and inheritance rights. Communication barriers within legal systems were identified as a significant challenge, limiting the ability of deaf persons and other persons with disabilities to fully engage in legal processes.

The discussions emphasised the need for strengthened legal aid support, accessible court services and improved interpretation services within justice institutions. A key focus of the engagement was the heightened vulnerability of women and girls with disabilities to violence, discrimination and social exclusion.

Participants noted that intersecting forms of discrimination based on gender and disability

increase exposure to abuse while reducing access to protection and reporting mechanisms. The discussions called for stronger safeguarding systems, improved reporting pathways and targeted protection measures for women and girls with disabilities. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of strengthening accessibility across public systems to ensure meaningful participation of persons with disabilities. This includes improvements in communication access, infrastructure and service delivery within government institutions, health facilities, education systems and public programmes.

Participants noted that inclusion requires deliberate system design that accommodates diverse needs rather than ad hoc adjustments. The engagement reflected broader national conversations on disability inclusion, accessibility and equal opportunity in Kenya. Stakeholders noted increased attention to the need for inclusive public systems that enable persons with disabilities to participate fully in governance, development and community life. The discussions reinforced the importance of translating policy commitments into practical, measurable changes in service delivery and institutional practice.

The Commission reaffirmed its commitment to promoting equality, accessibility and non-discrimination for persons with disabilities. The Commission noted its continued efforts to support initiatives that remove structural barriers and strengthen inclusion of special interest groups in all sectors of society. Through engagements such as this, NGEC continues to promote systems that uphold dignity, participation and equal opportunity for persons with disabilities.

The dialogue between NGEC and the Nakuru Queen Deaf Organisation highlighted persistent gaps between policy and practice in the inclusion of persons with disabilities. While legal frameworks exist to support equality and non-discrimination, participants noted that implementation challenges continue to limit full participation in social, economic and civic life. The engagement concluded with renewed calls for strengthened accessibility measures, improved communication systems and coordinated action to ensure meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities across all sectors of society.

» CONTINUATION

## When Silence Kills: Why Kenya Must Unite to End the Escalating Violence Against Women and Children

*NGEC calls for urgent national action as rising cases of femicide, gender-based violence and killings of children expose deep social and institutional failures*

The growing number of women killed, children harmed, and families devastated by violence is forcing Kenya to confront a painful national reality. What was once viewed as isolated criminal incidents is increasingly being recognised as a broader crisis demanding urgent, coordinated and sustained action.

This concern dominated discussions during the Second Bi-Annual National Gender Sector Working Group Meeting, convened to deliberate on emerging national issues affecting women, children and other vulnerable populations.

The meeting brought together key stakeholders, including the Cabinet Secretary for Gender, Culture, the Arts and Heritage, Hon. Hanna Wendot Cheptumo, Principal Secretary for Gender Affairs and Affirmative Action Anne Wang'ombe, development partners, State agencies, civil society organisations, community leaders and other actors working to advance equality, protection and social justice.

At the centre of the deliberations was the alarming rise in femicide, gender-based violence, killings of children, and the growing normalisation of toxic and degrading public discourse directed at women in leadership and public life. Speaking during the meeting, National Gender and Equality Commission Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa warned that Kenya is facing a defining moment in its efforts to protect human dignity, equality and the rights of its citizens.

“We are confronting painful national realities that demand institutional honesty, collective responsibility and decisive action. Every woman killed, every child harmed and every survivor left without justice represents a failure that should concern us all as a nation,” she said.



National Gender and Equality Commission Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa.



Cabinet Secretary for Gender, Culture, the Arts and Heritage, Hon. Hanna Wendot Cheptumo

Her remarks come amid growing public concern over violence against women and children across the country. In recent days, thousands of Kenyans, largely women, marched through Nairobi demanding stronger government action against femicide and child disappearances, with organisers calling for the crisis to be treated as a national emergency. Protesters highlighted rising fears among families and communities over the safety of women and children and called for stronger prevention, accountability and protection mechanisms.



Kenyans march through central Nairobi

The demonstrations reflect a broader national conversation that has moved beyond statistics to the lived experiences of families mourning loved ones, communities seeking answers and survivors demanding justice. For the National Gender and Equality Commission, the crisis extends beyond individual acts of violence. It is rooted in deeper structural inequalities, harmful social norms, discrimination and systems that too often fail to protect those at greatest risk.

The Commission noted that violence against women and children does not occur in isolation. It is frequently linked to unequal power relations, economic vulnerability, social exclusion, harmful cultural practices and environments where perpetrators believe they can act with impunity.

Equally concerning is the rise of hostile and degrading public discourse targeting women in leadership, politics and public life. Increasingly, women who participate in governance, advocacy and public debate are subjected to intimidation, harassment and abuse, both online and offline.

Experts have warned that technology-facilitated gender-based violence is becoming an emerging threat, with online spaces increasingly being used to spread harassment, misinformation, victim-blaming and attacks targeting women and girls. Reports have highlighted the growing need for stronger safeguards, digital ethics and accountability measures to address online abuse and prevent the normalisation of violence. Hon. Jaldesa stressed that public discourse matters because harmful rhetoric often creates environments where discrimination and violence become normalised.

“Words matter. Language that demeans, humiliates or dehumanises women does not exist in a vacuum. It contributes to a culture where violence is tolerated, excused or ignored. We must challenge harmful narratives wherever they occur.”

» CONTINUATION



Picture: AI-generated

The Chairperson reaffirmed that NGEK will continue to exercise its constitutional mandate by monitoring emerging threats to equality, calling out discriminatory rhetoric, advocating for accountability in cases involving violence against women and children and engaging relevant institutions whenever rights violations occur.

“Our responsibility is not only to respond when violations occur but to identify emerging threats, hold institutions accountable and advocate for corrective action before more lives are lost,” she said.

As discussions turned to solutions, stakeholders acknowledged that enforcement of existing laws alone will not be sufficient. While Kenya has established legal and policy frameworks aimed at preventing and responding to gender-based violence, implementation gaps continue to undermine progress. Stakeholders noted the need for stronger survivor support systems, faster investigations, improved prosecution of offenders, expanded psychosocial services and better coordination among institutions responsible for prevention and response.

The meeting also explored the growing role of technology in addressing violence. Recent government and county initiatives have demonstrated how digital platforms can strengthen reporting, documentation and management of gender-based violence cases

while improving access to justice for survivors. Digital campaigns have also been deployed to raise awareness and promote behaviour change in communities affected by GBV and femicide. However, stakeholders emphasised that technology is only a tool. Sustainable change requires institutions, communities, families and citizens to work together.

The Commission stressed that ending violence against women and children cannot be left to government agencies alone. Religious leaders, parents, teachers, media practitioners, civil society organisations, community leaders and the private sector all have a role to play in building safer communities and challenging harmful norms. The discussions further highlighted the need to invest in prevention by addressing the root causes of violence. This includes promoting respectful relationships, supporting positive masculinity, empowering women and girls, strengthening child protection systems and ensuring that vulnerable populations have access to opportunities and services.

For NGEK, the worsening crisis also raises important questions about equality and national development. Violence against women and children undermines education, health, economic productivity, social cohesion and public trust in institutions. It weakens families, destabilises communities and hinders the country's ability to achieve inclusive and sustainable development.

“A nation cannot prosper while women live in fear and children remain unsafe. Protecting life, dignity and equality is not a sectoral issue; it is a national development imperative,” Hon. Jaldesa stated. The meeting renewed commitment from stakeholders to strengthen collaboration, enhance accountability and accelerate implementation of measures aimed at preventing violence and protecting vulnerable populations. Yet participants acknowledged that the true measure of success will not be found in policies, reports or declarations. It will be reflected in fewer families mourning loved ones, fewer children exposed to harm, more survivors receiving justice and communities where every individual can live free from fear.

The message emerging from the forum was unequivocal: Kenya cannot afford to normalise the killing of women, the abuse of children or the spread of hate and discrimination. The crisis demands collective responsibility, sustained action and unwavering commitment from every institution and every citizen. The call to action is clear: government institutions, county governments, law enforcement agencies, civil society organisations, faith-based groups, media, communities and citizens must work together to prevent violence, support survivors, hold perpetrators accountable and build a society founded on dignity, equality and respect for all.

## “Land, Identity and Justice: Ogiek Community Presents Grievances in High-Level Rights Dialogue with NGENC”

*NGEC consultative meeting with OPDP highlights eviction, marginalisation and livelihood disruption affecting indigenous forest community*

Questions of land, identity and historical justice took centre stage during a consultative meeting between the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) and representatives of the Ogiek Peoples Development Program (OPDP). The engagement provided a platform for the Ogiek community to present long-standing grievances linked to displacement from the Mau Forest Complex, including eviction, marginalisation, loss of livelihood and concerns over recognition as an indigenous group. The discussions also explored possible pathways toward strengthened accountability, inclusion and protection of their rights.

occupied by the community has, in some instances, been allocated to third parties following evictions, further complicating land tenure issues. The discussions highlighted the impact of displacement on the community’s traditional livelihood systems. The Ogiek, whose way of life has historically been closely linked to forest ecosystems through hunting and gathering, noted that restricted access to forest resources has significantly undermined their economic survival systems. Stakeholders observed that these disruptions have contributed to increased socio-economic vulnerability within the community.

The Ogiek community’s concerns speak to deeper questions of justice, inclusion and historical redress that must be addressed with urgency and fairness,” she said.

She further underscored the need for sustained institutional engagement.

“We must move beyond acknowledgement to action. Protecting the rights of indigenous communities requires coordinated efforts, accountability and respect for their lived realities,” Hon. Jaldesa added. The meeting also explored recommendations aimed at addressing the grievances raised, including strengthening accountability mechanisms, improving



National Gender and Equality Commission Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa with representatives of the Ogiek Peoples Development Program (OPDP) during a consultative meeting

The Ogiek community, widely regarded as one of Kenya’s last remaining forest-dwelling indigenous groups, traditionally inhabits the Mau Forest Complex. During the meeting, representatives raised concerns over continued challenges in being formally recognised as a distinct indigenous community. They noted that limited recognition has contributed to exclusion from key decision-making processes and development interventions affecting their ancestral territories and cultural identity.

Community representatives detailed grievances relating to repeated evictions and displacement from forest land they consider ancestral. They stated that these actions have disrupted long-standing cultural ties to the land and altered traditional settlement patterns. Participants also raised concerns that land previously ~

Participants further raised concerns regarding continued marginalisation and limited participation in governance and development processes affecting their ancestral lands. Community representatives noted that exclusion from planning and decision-making structures has contributed to unresolved grievances over time. The engagement underscored the need for more inclusive processes that ensure indigenous voices are reflected in policy and development decisions.

NGEC Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa reaffirmed the Commission’s commitment to addressing structural inequalities affecting indigenous communities, emphasizing the importance of dignity, justice and recognition. “No community should be erased from its land or identity.

institutional coordination and enhancing engagement with relevant stakeholders. Participants emphasised the importance of continued dialogue in resolving historical and structural injustices affecting the community.

The Commission reaffirmed its commitment to promoting and protecting the rights of indigenous and marginalised communities, including the Ogiek. The Commission noted that addressing structural inequality requires sustained collaboration between state institutions, partners and community actors.

The consultative engagement between NGENC and OPDP highlighted long-standing concerns relating to displacement, identity recognition, livelihood disruption and marginalisation of the Ogiek community. Stakeholders agreed on the need for continued engagement and coordinated action to address these grievances.

## NGEC and GIZ Strengthen Cooperation on Inclusive Development

*Courtesy visit focuses on inequality reduction, KAPIR process and future partnership on equality and social justice*

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) has hosted a courtesy visit from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) to strengthen collaboration on addressing structural inequalities and advancing inclusive development in Kenya. The engagement provided a platform for strategic discussions on global perspectives on inequality, the ongoing Kenya Action Plan on Inequality Reduction (KAPIR), and opportunities for enhanced partnership in promoting equality and social justice.

The meeting focused on enhancing technical collaboration on approaches to reducing inequality and reinforcing inclusive governance systems. The two underscored the importance of evidence-based policymaking and coordinated interventions in addressing persistent disparities across sectors and population groups.



NGEC Vice Chairperson Thomas Koyier and CEO Dr Purity Ngina with GIZ representatives during a courtesy visit

Attention was drawn to the Kenya Action Plan on Inequality Reduction (KAPIR), which is being developed as a national framework to address structural inequality. The two highlighted the importance of aligning interventions that target disparities in income, access to essential services and social protection to achieve more equitable development outcomes. The engagement also explored global approaches to inequality, with emphasis on lessons that can inform Kenya's inclusive development agenda.

The two noted that shared learning remains central to strengthening policy design, implementation and monitoring systems that respond to diverse societal needs. NGEN and GIZ identified opportunities for sustained cooperation in advancing equality, inclusion and social justice. The discussions reaffirmed that strategic partnerships remain critical in supporting national development priorities and enhancing institutional capacity.

## “Forensic Bill Review Pushes Evidence-Based Justice Reforms”

*Stakeholders call for independent forensic framework, clearer governance and data-driven reforms in National Forensic Science Bill, 2026*

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) participated in a stakeholder review meeting on the National Forensic Science Bill, 2026, focused on strengthening an independent, structured and responsive forensic science framework to enhance access to justice and accountability in Kenya. The engagement brought together forensic science practitioners and policy stakeholders who undertook a technical review of the proposed legislation, identifying key areas requiring refinement to improve institutional clarity, operational effectiveness and alignment with constitutional principles.

The review process examined the proposed legal and institutional arrangements governing forensic science services. Forensic science practitioners presented a detailed technical analysis of the Bill, unpacking key provisions and assessing their practical implications within the justice system. Their input highlighted the need for a coherent governance structure that clearly defines institutional roles and responsibilities. Stakeholders underscored that an independent and well-structured forensic system is critical to strengthening credibility, reliability and public confidence in scientific evidence used in legal processes.



Participants during deliberations on the National Forensic Science Bill, 2026, aimed at strengthening an independent and responsive forensic science framework.

The discussions highlighted the central role of data systems and evidence-based policymaking in the development of an effective forensic science framework. It was noted that strengthened access to disaggregated and reliable data is essential for informing legislative design, implementation and monitoring processes. The review meeting called for continued technical consultations to refine the proposed provisions of the Bill and strengthen its institutional coherence.

The National Gender and Equality Commission reaffirmed its commitment to supporting legal and institutional reforms that advance equality, accountability and access to justice. Through its participation, NGEN emphasized the importance of ensuring that legislative processes are inclusive, evidence-driven and responsive to the needs of all populations, including vulnerable and marginalised groups.

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