



EQUALITY BULLETIN

BEYOND THE BALLOT

Why Preventing Electoral Violence Is Kenya's Greatest Democratic Test Ahead of 2027

As Kenya prepares for the 2027 General Election, rising concerns over organised goons, political intolerance and an estimated 84.1 per cent risk of election-related violence underscore the urgent need for preventive action. Electoral violence disproportionately affects women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons and other vulnerable groups, threatening their safety, participation and constitutional rights. The National Gender and Equality Commission calls on political leaders, institutions, communities and citizens to reject violence, uphold the rule of law, protect civic space and ensure that every Kenyan can participate in a peaceful, inclusive and credible electoral process free from fear, intimidation and discrimination.

Page 12, 13 & 14

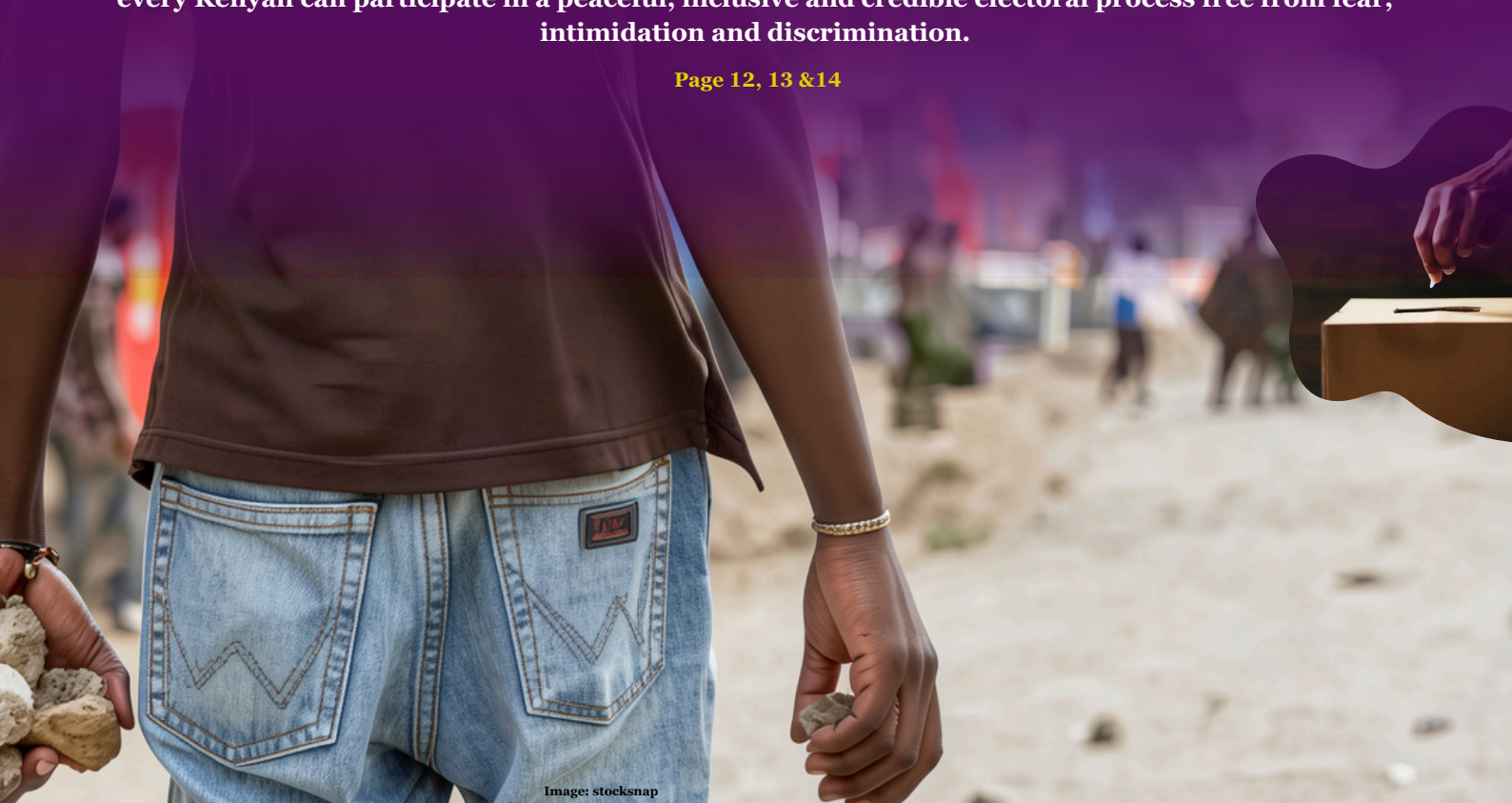


Image: stocksnap



Counting Every Voice
Page 3



When Rights Meet
Reality
Page 8



Turning the Tide
Page 9

A Message from the Chief Executive Officer

As Kenya prepares for the 2027 General Election, this edition reminds us that democracy is measured not only by the act of voting, but by every citizen's ability to participate freely, safely, and without discrimination. Electoral violence, political intolerance, intimidation, and hate speech threaten constitutional rights, weaken public trust, and disproportionately affect women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, and other vulnerable groups.

Equally concerning is the rise of technology-facilitated violence against women in public life. Increasingly, women leaders are targeted with sexist abuse, coordinated online harassment, disinformation, manipulated images, and threats designed to silence their voices rather than challenge their ideas. Such attacks diminish civic participation, discourage women from seeking leadership, and undermine the inclusive democracy envisioned by the Constitution. These trends mirror growing global concerns over the impact of technology-facilitated violence on women's participation in public and political life.

The stories in this edition reflect the Commission's continued commitment to promoting peaceful and inclusive elections, protecting civic space, advancing equality and freedom from discrimination, and strengthening the rights and participation of all Kenyans. As the country moves closer to the next electoral cycle, the Commission calls on all stakeholders to reject violence in every form—physical, verbal, and digital—and to work together towards an electoral environment where every Kenyan can participate with dignity, confidence, and without fear.



Purity Ngina, PhD, MBS
Chief Executive Officer
National Gender and Equality Commission

THE COMMISSION



Hon. Rehema Jaldesa
Chairperson



Thomas Okoth Koyier, EBS
Vice Chairperson



Caroline N. Lentupuru, MBS, HSC
Commissioner



Michael Nzomo
Commissioner



Dr. Margaret Karungaru, MBS
Commissioner

Beyond the Classroom: Women in STEM Forum Calls for Stronger Action to Close Kenya's Gender Gap in Science and Innovation

Expanding opportunities for women and girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) requires more than increasing enrolment in technical courses. It demands coordinated policies, sustained mentorship, inclusive institutions and strategic partnerships that enable women to progress from education into leadership, innovation and employment.

This was the central message during the Women in STEM Forum, hosted by the University of Nairobi in partnership with Africa Forward, where policymakers, students, researchers, industry leaders and development partners convened to examine practical solutions for advancing gender equality in STEM disciplines. The forum formed part of a broader national conversation on strengthening Africa's innovation ecosystem by investing in young talent, research and technology-driven development.

Representing the National Gender and Equality Commission, Director of Programmes and Research, Mr Paul Kuria, joined a panel discussion that examined the structural barriers limiting the participation of women and girls in STEM and the policy interventions required to address them.

Mr Kuria underscored the importance of creating an enabling environment through inclusive public policies, equitable access to education and employment opportunities, mentorship programmes and stronger collaboration between government, universities, industry and development partners. He noted that increasing women's participation in STEM is essential to strengthening innovation, enhancing economic competitiveness and supporting Kenya's long-term development agenda.

The discussions reflected growing recognition that although Kenya has made significant progress in expanding access to education, women remain underrepresented in many STEM professions, particularly in engineering, technology, research and innovation leadership. Stakeholders observed that barriers including gender stereotypes, limited mentorship opportunities, unequal access to professional networks and workplace biases continue to ~



NGEC Director of Programmes and Research Paul Kuria speaks at the Women in STEM Forum

expand women's progression from education into technical careers. The forum also explored the role of higher learning institutions in nurturing future innovators. Universities were encouraged to strengthen mentorship initiatives, research opportunities and industry partnerships that expose female students to practical experience and career pathways in science and technology.

Recent initiatives by the University of Nairobi, including the launch of the Women in STEM Association and mentorship programmes targeting young girls, reflect growing efforts to encourage greater female participation in scientific fields.

Industry leaders highlighted the importance of creating workplaces that support equal opportunities for recruitment, career advancement and leadership, while development partners emphasised the value of sustained investment in programmes that equip girls with digital, scientific and technological skills from an early age.

The dialogue further recognised that strengthening women's participation in STEM contributes directly to national development priorities. As Kenya continues investing in digital transformation, industrialisation, research and innovation,

expanding the participation of women in these sectors is increasingly viewed as critical to building a competitive knowledge economy capable of addressing emerging social, environmental and economic challenges.

The engagement reinforced the importance of multi-sector collaboration in addressing persistent gender disparities within STEM fields.

Sustainable progress, speakers observed, will depend on coordinated action that removes structural barriers, promotes equal opportunities and creates supportive environments where women and girls can excel as researchers, innovators, entrepreneurs and industry leaders.

The Commission continues to advocate for policies and programmes that advance equality of opportunity across all sectors, recognising that inclusive participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics strengthens innovation, broadens economic participation and contributes to more equitable and sustainable national development.

The Women in STEM Forum underscored a shared commitment to creating an enabling environment where talent, innovation and leadership are determined by ability rather than gender.

Kenya, Germany Deepen Cooperation on Equality and Inclusive Governance Ahead of 2027 Elections

High-level talks focus on political inclusion, youth empowerment, climate resilience and access to justice for vulnerable groups.

NAIROBI, Kenya — Efforts to strengthen equality, inclusive governance and democratic participation ahead of Kenya's 2027 General Election received renewed momentum following high-level discussions between the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) and the German Embassy in Nairobi on expanding bilateral cooperation in key development sectors.

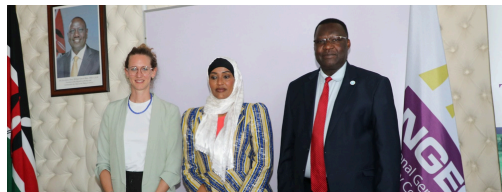
The discussions took place during a courtesy visit by a German Embassy delegation led by Deputy Head of Development Cooperation Ms. Friederike Hemke, who met Commission leadership to review the long-standing partnership between the two institutions and identify priority areas for future collaboration.

The engagement comes as Kenya continues implementing constitutional commitments on equality, inclusion and freedom from discrimination while preparing for the next electoral cycle. It also reflects growing recognition that achieving inclusive development requires stronger partnerships between constitutional commissions, government institutions and international development partners.

Central to the discussions was the need to strengthen the participation of women, youth, persons with disabilities, minorities and other Special Interest Groups in governance and public life.

The two institutions examined opportunities to support inclusive political participation ahead of the 2027 General Election by addressing systemic barriers that continue to limit equitable representation and participation in democratic processes.

The dialogue also focused on youth empowerment, recognising that expanding access to skills development, employment opportunities and leadership platforms remains critical to Kenya's long-term social and economic development. Particular attention was given to strengthening gender mainstreaming within the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector to ensure that education and skills programmes respond to the diverse needs of learners while promoting equal opportunities for women and young people.



NGEK Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa and Vice Chairperson Thomas Koyier with German Embassy Kenya Deputy Head of Development Cooperation Friederike Hemke.

Climate resilience emerged as another priority area for cooperation as the effects of climate change continue to disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, particularly women, persons with disabilities and communities living in arid and semi-arid regions.

The discussions underscored the importance of integrating equality and inclusion into climate adaptation programmes to ensure that no community is excluded from national and local resilience initiatives.

The meeting further explored strategies for expanding access to justice and strengthening institutional capacity to respond more effectively to discrimination and inequality. The Commission and the German Embassy discussed opportunities to enhance evidence-based policymaking, promote coordinated interventions and strengthen institutional systems that support inclusive governance and equitable service delivery.

The engagement builds on Germany's long-standing development cooperation with Kenya, which has supported programmes in democratic governance, education, climate action, sustainable development and institutional strengthening. As one of Kenya's key development partners, Germany continues to support initiatives aimed at promoting accountable governance, social inclusion and sustainable economic growth.

For the Commission, the discussions align with its constitutional mandate to promote equality and freedom from discrimination, monitor compliance with constitutional principles and advise State institutions on measures that advance inclusive governance.

NGEC, Kajiado Paralegal Chapter Strengthen Partnership to Expand Access to Justice

The Kajiado Paralegal Chapter paid a courtesy visit to the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) to strengthen collaboration aimed at bringing legal services closer to communities and expanding access to justice, particularly for vulnerable and marginalised groups.

During the engagement, the Chapter presented the Commission with a Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of its contribution to the Kiserian Legal Aid Clinic, where legal aid, human rights information and referral services were provided to members of the public. The recognition highlighted the Commission's continued efforts to promote legal empowerment and strengthen community access to justice.



NGEK CEO Dr. Purity Ngina and Director of Programmes and Research Paul Kuria with the Kajiado Paralegal Chapter delegation

The discussions also explored opportunities for deeper collaboration in legal awareness, civic education and community outreach. Both institutions underscored the importance of equipping citizens with knowledge of their constitutional rights and strengthening referral pathways that enable individuals to access legal and human rights services more effectively.

The engagement reflects a shared commitment to promoting equality, protecting human rights and ensuring that justice is accessible to all.

By strengthening partnerships and expanding community-based legal empowerment initiatives, the Commission continues to support responsive justice systems that uphold dignity, inclusion and freedom from discrimination across Kenya. The collaboration also reflects the growing importance of bringing justice closer to communities.

Children Face Growing Risks on Kenya's Roads as New Community Safety Initiative Targets Parents, Drivers and Boda Boda Riders

NGEC, JICA, Police and Government Agencies Launch Community-Based Road Safety Programme Amid Rising Concern Over Child Pedestrian Safety.



NGEC, JICA, the National Police Service and collaborating agencies during a joint during a community road safety education programme in Mukuru

NAIROBI, Kenya — Every school day, thousands of children navigate busy roads, informal settlements and congested neighbourhoods to reach classrooms, often sharing narrow streets with speeding vehicles, motorcycles and heavy traffic. For many families, the journey to school has become one of the most dangerous parts of a child's day.

It is against this backdrop that the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), working with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the National Police Service (NPS) and other government agencies, has initiated a community-based road safety education programme in Mukuru aimed at reducing preventable road traffic injuries involving children.

The programme, whose planning commenced at the Mukuru Community Centre, seeks to strengthen road safety awareness among children, parents, caregivers, teachers and community stakeholders while promoting greater accountability among motorists, motorcycle operators and institutions responsible for road safety. The initiative comes as road safety continues to emerge as one of Kenya's most pressing public health and child protection challenges. According to data released by the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA), pedestrians remain the most affected category of road users in fatal crashes.

Between January and March 2025 alone, 420 pedestrians lost their lives, the highest number among all road user groups, while 301 motorcyclists also died during the same period.

National data further indicates that pedestrian fatalities continue to outnumber those of motorists, passengers and cyclists. In 2025, 1,889 pedestrians were killed on Kenyan roads, underscoring the disproportionate risks faced by people travelling on foot, including school-going children.

While infrastructure improvements such as sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and speed-calming measures have expanded in many urban areas, stakeholders increasingly argue that infrastructure alone cannot guarantee children's safety.

One of the growing concerns discussed during the planning engagement is the increasing misuse of pedestrian walkways by motorcycles, commonly known as boda bodas. Across many urban centres, motorcycles routinely ride on pavements, use pedestrian walkways as alternative routes during traffic congestion and travel against the flow of traffic, exposing children, older persons and persons with disabilities to unnecessary danger.

The National Transport and Safety Authority has repeatedly cautioned motorcycle operators

against using pedestrian walkways, emphasising that these facilities are reserved exclusively for people on foot.

The Authority has warned that the growing encroachment of walkways by motorcycles is undermining pedestrian safety and eroding one of the most important protective features of urban road infrastructure. The issue has also attracted increasing policy attention. Recent traffic enforcement measures classify driving on pavements and pedestrian walkways as a traffic offence, attracting penalties intended to discourage behaviour that places vulnerable road users at risk.

Road safety experts note that children are particularly vulnerable because they have limited ability to accurately judge vehicle speed, distance and driver behaviour. Younger pedestrians may act impulsively, have restricted visibility in busy traffic environments and depend heavily on adults and motorists to anticipate and reduce potential hazards.

The Mukuru initiative therefore adopts a broader approach to child safety by recognising that preventing road traffic injuries requires behavioural change alongside infrastructure development.

Children participating in the programme will receive practical road safety education, including how to safely cross roads, identify potential hazards, interpret traffic signs and navigate busy junctions. Parents and caregivers will be sensitised on supervising children during school journeys and reinforcing safe road practices at home, while teachers and community leaders will be supported to integrate road safety awareness into everyday interactions with learners.

The collaboration between NGEC, JICA, the National Police Service and other government agencies also reflects a growing shift towards preventive approaches in child protection.

Recovery Beyond the Courtroom: Kajiado Initiative Connects GBV Survivors to Justice, Skills and New Opportunities

KAJIADO, Kenya — Survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) require more than legal protection to rebuild their lives. Access to justice, economic empowerment and coordinated institutional support are increasingly recognised as essential components of long-term recovery. It is against this backdrop that the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), in partnership with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), intensified engagements in Kajiado County to strengthen survivor-centred support systems.

The Commission and JICA held separate strategic meetings with leaders from the education and justice sectors to explore practical interventions that improve access to vocational training, strengthen referral mechanisms and enhance survivors' access to justice. The engagements form part of ongoing efforts to build a coordinated response that places survivors at the centre of service delivery while promoting dignity, protection and sustainable empowerment.

A key engagement was held with the management of Maasai National Polytechnic, where discussions focused on strengthening collaboration between survivor support services and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions. The dialogue examined how vocational education can provide survivors with practical skills, improve employability and expand opportunities for entrepreneurship and financial independence.

Economic empowerment has become an increasingly important element of Kenya's response to Gender-Based Violence. While legal interventions remain essential, evidence shows that many survivors face significant economic challenges after leaving abusive situations. Limited income, unemployment and financial dependence often make it difficult for survivors to rebuild their lives and maintain long-term stability.

By strengthening pathways into vocational training, the Commission and JICA aim to ensure that survivors have greater access to education and skills that support self-reliance and reduce vulnerability to further abuse. Integrating survivor support with existing training institutions also offers opportunities to connect beneficiaries with employment, enterprise development and other socio-economic opportunities available through the TVET sector.



NGEC and JICA with participants during a community engagement in Kajiado County.

The delegation also met Lady Justice Christine Wanjiku Meoli, Presiding Judge at the Kajiado Law Courts, to strengthen collaboration between the justice system and institutions supporting survivors of Gender-Based Violence. The discussions centred on improving referral pathways, enhancing institutional coordination and ensuring survivors receive timely, accessible and survivor-centred justice services.

The engagement recognised that effective justice extends beyond court proceedings. Survivors often require legal assistance, psychosocial support, healthcare, shelter and economic opportunities delivered through coordinated institutions that minimise delays and reduce the risk of retraumatisation.

Strengthening partnerships between the judiciary, public institutions and service providers is therefore critical to ensuring that survivors can access comprehensive support throughout the justice process.

Kenya has made notable progress in strengthening laws, policies and institutional mechanisms to address Gender-Based Violence. However, gaps remain in ensuring that survivors can easily navigate available services and access coordinated support across sectors.

Fragmented referral systems and limited linkages between protection, justice and economic empowerment programmes continue to affect service delivery in many parts of the country.

The Kajiado engagements reflected a growing recognition that effective GBV prevention and response must extend beyond emergency interventions. Linking vocational education with justice and protection services represents an integrated approach that addresses both the immediate consequences of violence and the long-term socio-economic challenges that many survivors face.

The discussions underscored an emerging policy shift towards comprehensive survivor support, recognising that justice is most effective when accompanied by education, economic opportunity and coordinated public services that enable survivors to regain independence and rebuild their futures. Strengthening collaboration between public institutions, the judiciary, educational institutions and development partners is increasingly viewed as essential to delivering services that respond to the diverse needs of survivors.

The partnership between NGEK and JICA continues to demonstrate the value of multi-sectoral collaboration in addressing Gender-Based Violence. By connecting justice, education and economic empowerment within a coordinated framework, the initiative seeks to strengthen protection systems while creating opportunities for survivors to participate fully.

Garissa Initiative Strengthens Community Mediation to Promote Peaceful Coexistence in Refugee and Host Communities

Capacity-building programme equips local leaders and community representatives with alternative dispute resolution skills to prevent conflict and strengthen social cohesion

GARISSA, Kenya — Community leaders, refugees and representatives of host communities are strengthening their capacity to resolve disputes peacefully through a collaborative initiative aimed at enhancing social cohesion and promoting community-led conflict resolution in Garissa County.

The Commission's Garissa Regional Office, in partnership with the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), conducted a capacity-building training on Peace Building and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms. The programme seeks to equip community actors with practical skills to prevent conflicts, strengthen dialogue and promote peaceful coexistence within refugee and host communities.



Community leaders, refugees and host community representatives during a peacebuilding and dispute resolution forum.

The training brought together traditional and clan leaders, religious leaders, paralegals, local administration officials, refugees and representatives of host communities, recognising the critical role these groups play in resolving disputes and maintaining stability at the community level.

The initiative comes at a time when humanitarian settings continue to face complex social, economic and environmental pressures that can increase tensions over access to resources, livelihoods and public services. In such contexts, strengthening local peace structures is increasingly recognised as an essential component of sustainable development, protection and social inclusion.

During the training, participants enhanced their knowledge and practical skills in mediation, negotiation, arbitration and other Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms designed to resolve conflicts before they escalate. The sessions also examined approaches to fostering dialogue, building trust between communities and encouraging inclusive participation in local peace processes.

Alternative Dispute Resolution has become an important complement to formal justice systems, particularly in communities where traditional leadership structures continue to play a significant role in resolving local disputes. When applied in a manner that respects constitutional principles, human rights and equality, ADR can provide accessible, timely and culturally responsive mechanisms for addressing conflicts while strengthening community ownership of peacebuilding initiatives.

The engagement also highlighted the importance of ensuring that peacebuilding processes remain inclusive and responsive to the needs of women, persons with disabilities, older persons, young people and other groups that may face heightened risks during periods of conflict or displacement. Strengthening local dispute resolution mechanisms helps reduce vulnerability, improve protection and create safer environments where all members of the community can participate equally.

The collaboration between NGEC and the Lutheran World Federation reflects a shared commitment to strengthening community resilience through preventive approaches that prioritise dialogue over confrontation. By investing in local leadership and equipping communities with practical conflict management skills, the initiative aims to reduce the incidence of disputes while fostering mutual understanding between refugee and host populations.

The training further recognised that sustainable peace depends on strong community institutions capable of resolving disagreements fairly, protecting human dignity and promoting accountability.

Nakuru Strengthens Partnership to Combat GBV and Promote Inclusive Governance

As Kenya intensifies efforts to tackle Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and prepare for the 2027 General Election, B(NGEC) and the Nakuru County Government have reaffirmed the importance of coordinated action to strengthen protection systems and promote inclusive democratic participation.



Nakuru Regional Head Lewis Mwaniki during a courtesy call on County Commissioner Dr. Loyford Kibaara.

The Commission's Nakuru Regional Office paid a courtesy call on Nakuru County Commissioner Dr. Loyford E. Kibaara, MBS, to strengthen collaboration on addressing Gender-Based Violence and femicide while advancing equality and inclusive governance across the county.

The engagement focused on enhancing multi-agency efforts to strengthen GBV prevention, improve survivor support and referral systems, expand public awareness, and reinforce accountability to ensure timely access to protection and justice.

Discussions also highlighted the need to safeguard the participation of women, youth, persons with disabilities, minorities and other Special Interest Groups as preparations for the 2027 General Election gather momentum.

The engagement reaffirmed that sustained collaboration between national and county institutions is essential to strengthening community safety, promoting inclusive governance, and advancing equality and freedom from discrimination in line with the Constitution.

NGEC Backs Survivor-Led Approach to End FGM as Kenya Strengthens Drive Towards 2030 Target

Learning Forum Calls for Greater Survivor Participation in Policy, Accountability and Community Action to Eliminate Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting



Stakeholders during the Kitui County Youth Stakeholders' Forum

KITUI, Kenya — Government institutions, development partners, faith-based organisations, civil society, the private sector and youth leaders have renewed calls for a more coordinated and inclusive approach to youth development, emphasising that young people must play a central role in governance, economic transformation and sustainable development.

The call emerged during the Kitui County Youth Stakeholders' Forum, convened by the County Ministry of Culture, Gender, Youth, ICT, Sports and Social Services in partnership with the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK). The National Gender and Equality Commission's (NGEC) Kitui Regional Office joined national and county stakeholders in discussions aimed at strengthening collaboration and developing a more responsive youth agenda for the county.

The forum comes at a time when Kenya has one of the youngest populations in Africa, with young people constituting the majority of the country's population. This demographic reality continues to shape national conversations around employment, education, innovation, civic participation and governance, underscoring the need for policies that respond to the aspirations and challenges facing young people.

Discussions during the forum highlighted that youth empowerment can no longer be viewed solely through the lens of employment creation. Stakeholders observed that meaningful investment in young people must also include expanding opportunities for participation in public decision-making, entrepreneurship, digital innovation, climate action, peacebuilding, leadership development and civic engagement.

The dialogue reflected growing recognition that young people are not merely beneficiaries of development programmes but essential partners in shaping public policy and driving social and economic progress.

Strengthening youth participation in governance, stakeholders noted, contributes to more responsive institutions, stronger democratic processes and greater public confidence in decision-making.

County leaders, including the County Executive Committee Members responsible for Gender and Agriculture, Chief Officers and senior county officials, underscored the importance of coordinated action among government agencies, development partners, educational institutions, civil society organisations and the private sector

in creating opportunities that enable young people to realise their full potential.

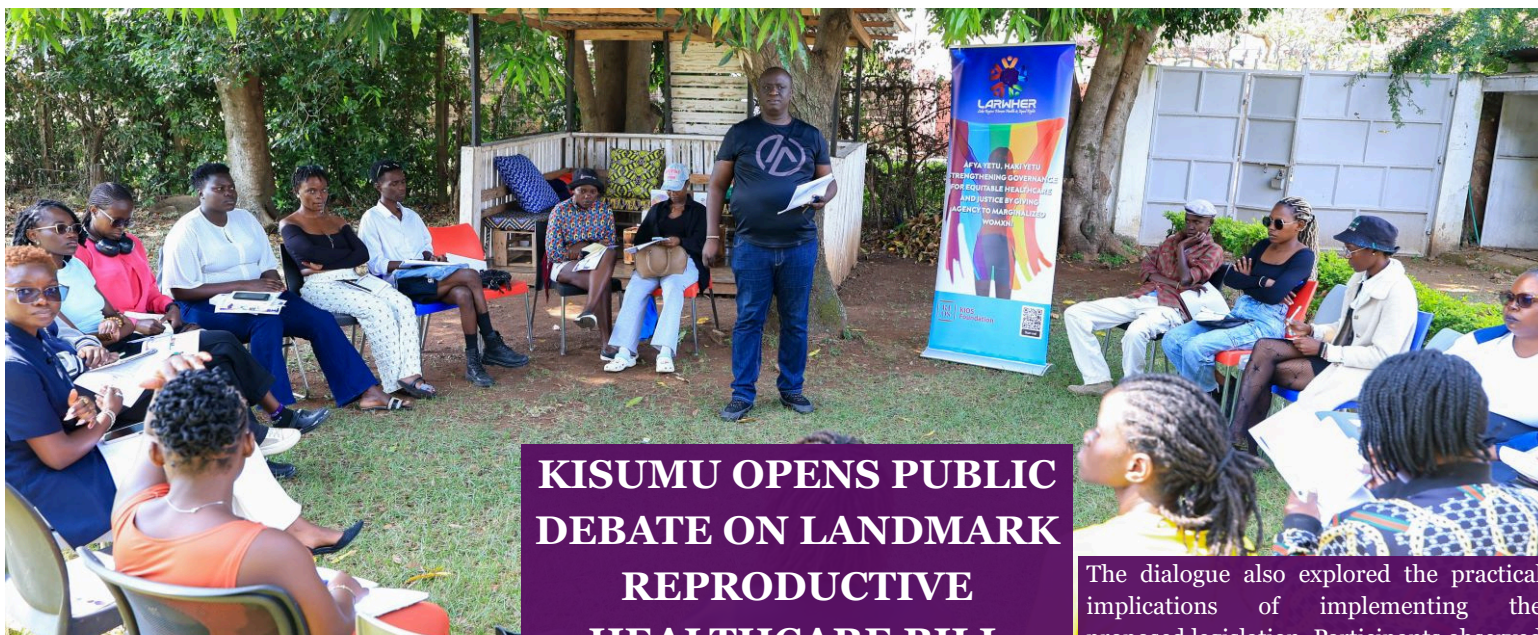
The discussions further emphasised that youth policies and programmes should be intentionally inclusive, recognising that opportunities are not always accessed equally. Young women, young persons with disabilities and youth from marginalised communities continue to face structural barriers that limit their participation in education, employment, leadership and entrepreneurship.

Addressing these disparities requires targeted interventions that promote equality of opportunity and remove barriers to participation. The forum also explored the role of strategic partnerships in strengthening youth development programmes.

Participants acknowledged that effective youth empowerment depends on collaboration across sectors, combining public investment, technical expertise, innovation and community engagement to create sustainable pathways for economic and social inclusion.

For the National Gender and Equality Commission, the engagement aligns with its constitutional mandate to promote equality and freedom from discrimination by ensuring that development policies and public institutions respond to the needs of all Special Interest Groups, including young people. The Commission continues to advocate for policies that promote equal access to opportunities while advancing inclusive governance and equitable participation in national development.

The Kitui County Youth Stakeholders' Forum concluded with a shared commitment to strengthen collaboration, deepen stakeholder partnerships and promote coordinated investments that respond to the evolving needs of young people.



NGEC Kisumu Regional Head Davis Okeyo during a public participation forum in Kisumu

KISUMU, Kenya — A proposed law seeking to strengthen access to equitable, affordable and rights-based sexual and reproductive healthcare in Kisumu County has entered a critical stage of public scrutiny, with stakeholders calling for sustained public participation to ensure the legislation reflects the needs and realities of the communities it is intended to serve.

The National Gender and Equality Commission's (NGEC) Kisumu Regional Office joined Lake Region Women Health and Rights (LARWHER), with support from the KIOS Foundation, in facilitating a public participation and dissemination forum on the Kisumu County Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare Bill, 2026. The engagement brought together young women drawn from the county's sub-counties to examine the proposed legislation, enhance public understanding of its provisions and contribute recommendations before the Bill proceeds through the legislative process.



Participants during a public participation forum in Kisumu.

The forum reflects the growing recognition that public participation is a cornerstone of democratic governance and legislative development.

KISUMU OPENS PUBLIC DEBATE ON LANDMARK REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE BILL

Young women, health advocates and public institutions examine proposed law aimed at expanding equitable access to sexual and reproductive healthcare

Kenya's Constitution requires citizens to be meaningfully involved in the formulation of laws and policies that affect their lives, particularly on issues relating to health, equality and fundamental rights. At the centre of the discussions was the proposed Bill's objective of strengthening access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive healthcare services while promoting dignity, equality and freedom from discrimination. If enacted, the legislation is expected to provide a clearer legal framework for the delivery of integrated sexual and reproductive health services within Kisumu County, with particular attention to women, adolescents, persons with disabilities and other groups that continue to experience barriers in accessing healthcare.

The Commission guided participants through the Bill's legal and policy framework, explaining how the proposed legislation aligns with the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, national health policies and Kenya's regional and international human rights obligations. The discussions examined key provisions relating to maternal and newborn healthcare, family planning services, prevention and management of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, informed consent, confidentiality, disability inclusion, reproductive technologies, comprehensive sexuality education, institutional oversight and accountability mechanisms.

The dialogue also explored the practical implications of implementing the proposed legislation. Participants observed that while legal reforms are essential in strengthening access to healthcare, effective implementation will require sustained public investment, institutional capacity and continuous public awareness to ensure communities understand their rights and available services.

The engagement also reaffirmed the importance of evidence-informed policymaking. By creating space for citizens to interrogate proposed legislation and contribute lived experiences, public participation strengthens both the quality and legitimacy of laws while enhancing public ownership of development processes. Supporting inclusive legislative processes remains central to the Commission's work of promoting equality and freedom from discrimination.

Through civic engagement, policy advocacy and technical support, the Commission continues to encourage governance processes that amplify the voices of women, young people, persons with disabilities, minorities and other Special Interest Groups whose perspectives are often underrepresented in public decision-making. As deliberations on the Kisumu County Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare Bill, 2026 continue, the forum highlighted the importance of ensuring that legal reforms are matched by adequate financing, institutional readiness and sustained public engagement.

Kenya Moves to Accelerate Ratification of Landmark African Union Treaty on Violence Against Women and Girls

High-level engagement brings together NGEK, the African Union Commission and KEWOPA to advance ratification of the AU Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, a landmark legal instrument aimed at strengthening prevention, survivor protection, accountability and access to justice across Africa.

As African countries intensify efforts to address the persistent challenge of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Kenya is taking steps towards ratifying the African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (AU-CEVAWG), a landmark continental treaty adopted by African Heads of State and Government in February 2025. The Convention establishes Africa's first dedicated legal framework specifically designed to prevent, eliminate and respond to all forms of violence against women and girls, while strengthening accountability, survivor protection and coordinated institutional action across Member States.



NGEK Commissioner Caroline N. Lentupuru with Hon. Janet Ramatoulie Sallah-Njie and fellow women leaders

Kenya's ratification process was the focus of a high-level briefing involving the National Gender and Equality Commission, the African Union Commission and the Kenya Women Parliamentary Association. Representing the Commission, Caroline N. Lentupuru engaged Hon. Janet R. Sallah-Njie, African Union Commissioner, AU Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa and Vice-Chairperson of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), in discussions aimed at strengthening advocacy and accelerating the country's treaty approval process.

The engagement comes at a time when governments across Africa are reviewing legal and policy responses to violence against women and girls amid growing concern over rising cases of domestic violence, sexual violence, femicide, harmful traditional practices and technology-facilitated abuse.

These forms of violence continue to undermine women's health, safety, education, economic participation and leadership, while imposing significant social and economic costs on families, communities and national development. The AU Convention was developed following a decision by African Union Heads of State to establish a comprehensive continental legal instrument capable of responding to both longstanding and emerging forms of violence affecting women and girls.

Building upon the Maputo Protocol, the Convention provides more detailed obligations on prevention, survivor-centred services, access to justice, reparations, institutional accountability, data collection and multi-sectoral coordination. It also addresses contemporary challenges, including violence facilitated through digital technologies and online platforms.

During the briefing, Hon. Janet R. Sallah-Njie described the Convention as a landmark addition to Africa's human rights architecture, noting that it strengthens the continent's legal response by providing a dedicated framework to prevent violence, protect survivors, prosecute perpetrators and improve national coordination. She observed that Kenya's timely ratification would reinforce the country's longstanding commitment to promoting gender equality, protecting women's rights and strengthening regional leadership on human rights issues.

The discussions recognised that while many African countries, including Kenya, have enacted laws addressing Gender-Based Violence, implementation gaps continue to affect survivors' access to justice and protection.

Delayed investigations, inadequate survivor support services, underreporting, social stigma, limited legal awareness and resource constraints remain among the challenges that continue to undermine effective responses.

Strengthening legal frameworks must therefore be accompanied by sustained investment in institutions, survivor services, public awareness and prevention programmes.

Kenya has progressively strengthened its legislative framework through laws such as the Sexual Offences Act, the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act, the Victim Protection Act and related policy frameworks. The country is also undertaking broader legal reforms to address emerging threats, including technology-facilitated Gender-Based Violence and image-based sexual abuse. Ratification of the AU Convention would complement these existing laws by providing a harmonised continental framework to support national implementation while reinforcing constitutional guarantees of equality, dignity and freedom from violence.

The engagement highlighted the importance of coordinated action among constitutional commissions, Parliament, relevant government ministries, county governments, civil society organisations, development partners and regional institutions. Effective implementation of international commitments requires strong partnerships capable of translating treaty obligations into practical programmes, strengthened institutions and improved access to services for survivors. The engagement reaffirmed a shared commitment by the NGEK, the African Union Commission and KEWOPA to advance advocacy, strengthen collaboration and support the timely ratification of the AU Convention.

Bridging the Justice Gap: Lawmakers and Institutions Push for Stronger Protection Against Gender-Based Violence

High-level legislative advocacy dialogue convened by KEWOPA brings together Parliament, constitutional commissions, justice sector institutions and development partners to strengthen Kenya's legal and policy response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, with renewed focus on implementation, survivor protection and refugee-hosting communities.



Participants at a high-level legislative advocacy dialogue convened by KEWOPA.

Despite significant progress in strengthening Kenya's legal framework on Gender-Based Violence (GBV), survivors continue to encounter barriers that delay justice, limit access to essential support services and undermine effective protection. These implementation challenges formed the focus of a high-level legislative advocacy dialogue convened by the Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA), bringing together women legislators, constitutional commissions, justice sector institutions, refugee protection agencies and development partners to examine reforms needed to strengthen the country's response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV).

The dialogue comes at a critical moment as Kenya continues to intensify efforts to combat Gender-Based Violence and femicide while strengthening institutional accountability across the justice, health, security and social protection sectors. Increasing attention is also being directed towards ensuring that national protection systems adequately respond to the unique vulnerabilities experienced by refugees, asylum seekers and host communities, where displacement, economic hardship and limited access to services can heighten protection risks.

Representing the National Gender and Equality Commission, Nancy Mwangi led discussions on Kenya's legislative and policy architecture governing the prevention and response to SGBV.

The presentation examined key legal instruments, including the Sexual Offences Act, 2006, the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act, 2011, the Refugees Act, 2021, and the National Policy on Gender and Development, highlighting their role in protecting survivors, promoting equality and strengthening institutional accountability.

The engagement recognised that Kenya has established one of the region's most comprehensive legal frameworks for addressing Gender-Based Violence. Over the past two decades, Parliament has enacted legislation aimed at criminalising sexual offences, prohibiting harmful cultural practices, strengthening victim protection and safeguarding the rights of vulnerable populations. Complemented by constitutional guarantees under the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, these laws provide a strong legal foundation for advancing equality, human dignity and freedom from discrimination.

However, the dialogue emphasised that legislation alone cannot guarantee protection unless it is matched by effective implementation, adequate resources and coordinated institutional action. Participants observed that many survivors continue to face practical barriers when seeking justice, including delays in investigations and prosecution, limited forensic capacity, inadequate psychosocial and legal support services, insufficient survivor shelters, documentation challenges affecting ~

refugees and other vulnerable populations, and lengthy judicial processes that may discourage reporting or prolong trauma.

The discussions also examined the specific protection challenges affecting refugee-hosting areas, where humanitarian needs often intersect with broader development and governance issues. Participants noted that effective SGBV responses must recognise the shared realities of both refugee and host communities by promoting inclusive protection systems, strengthening social cohesion and ensuring equitable access to justice and essential services.

Beyond examining existing legislation, the dialogue explored opportunities to strengthen institutional coordination across government agencies, Parliament, constitutional commissions, humanitarian organisations and development partners. Particular emphasis was placed on improving referral systems, enhancing evidence collection, strengthening survivor-centred approaches within the criminal justice system and expanding community awareness on prevention, reporting and available protection mechanisms.

The forum further recognised the growing importance of adopting integrated approaches that link legal protection with healthcare, psychosocial support, economic empowerment and community-based prevention initiatives.

The dialogue also reinforced the importance of evidence-based policymaking and continuous review of existing legislation to ensure that laws remain responsive to emerging trends, evolving forms of violence and the changing needs of survivors.

Strengthening data collection, research and monitoring was identified as critical for measuring progress and informing future reforms.

Strengthening Community Protection: NGEK and World Vision Kenya Deepen Partnership to Combat Gender-Based Violence in Isiolo

Courtesy visit to the Commission's Isiolo Regional Office reviews progress of the Purpose II Project and reinforces collaboration to strengthen community-based systems for preventing Gender-Based Violence and protecting vulnerable populations.

While Kenya has made significant progress in strengthening laws and policies to address Gender-Based Violence (GBV), sustainable progress depends on effective prevention at the community level, where violence often occurs and where survivors first seek support. Recognising this, the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) hosted World Vision Kenya for a courtesy visit to its Isiolo Regional Office to review ongoing collaboration under the Purpose II Project and strengthen joint efforts to build safer, more inclusive communities through coordinated, community-driven responses to Gender-Based Violence.

The engagement comes at a time when the country continues to prioritise the prevention of Gender-Based Violence and femicide through stronger institutional collaboration, public awareness, survivor-centred services and community-based interventions. As national and county governments intensify efforts to strengthen protection systems, partnerships with development organisations remain critical in translating policy commitments into practical action that reaches vulnerable communities.

Discussions focused on the implementation of the **Purpose II Project**, currently being undertaken in Isiolo, Burat and Oldonyiro Wards, where the Commission and World Vision Kenya are working alongside county structures and community actors to reinforce local mechanisms for preventing and responding to Gender-Based Violence. The initiative seeks to strengthen coordination among institutions, improve referral pathways, enhance public awareness and ensure that survivors can access timely, appropriate and coordinated support services.

The partners reviewed progress made in strengthening county GBV response structures and empowering communities to take an active role in preventing violence before it occurs.

Particular attention was given to reinforcing referral systems that connect survivors with health care, psychosocial support, legal assistance and protection services while strengthening collaboration among government institutions, community leaders and frontline service providers.



NGEC Isiolo Regional Office hosts World Vision Kenya during a courtesy visit

The Commission commended World Vision Kenya for its continued partnership in supporting community-led protection initiatives that contribute to safer and more inclusive environments. Through sustained collaboration, the partnership has enhanced community awareness on Gender-Based Violence, strengthened institutional linkages and supported interventions that protect the rights and dignity of women, children, persons with disabilities, older persons, minorities and other Special Interest Groups.

The engagement also recognised that preventing Gender-Based Violence requires addressing its underlying drivers, including gender inequality, harmful social norms, discrimination and limited access to information and support services. Community-based prevention programmes remain essential in promoting behavioural change, strengthening accountability and encouraging early intervention before violence escalates.

County-level partnerships provide an opportunity to ensure that national commitments are reflected in practical ~

interventions that respond to the realities experienced by communities while improving access to justice and essential support services.

The discussions further explored opportunities to expand collaboration through civic education, capacity building, community dialogues and stronger engagement with local leadership to reinforce prevention efforts and improve coordination among institutions responsible for safeguarding vulnerable populations. For NGEK, strengthening partnerships with development organisations is central to advancing its constitutional mandate of promoting equality and freedom from discrimination. Collaborative initiatives such as the Purpose II Project contribute to more responsive protection systems by bringing together institutions, communities and development partners to address Gender-Based Violence through coordinated, evidence-informed and survivor-centred approaches.

The engagement reaffirmed the shared commitment of the Commission and World Vision Kenya to strengthening community resilience, enhancing survivor protection and promoting inclusive development.

» CONTINUATION

Beyond the Ballot: Why Kenya Must Confront Electoral Violence Before the 2027 General Election

As Kenya prepares for the 2027 General Election, rising political tensions, organised violence, online disinformation and the exploitation of vulnerable groups present growing risks to peaceful democratic participation. Protecting women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, children and other Special Interest Groups is no longer only an electoral obligation—it is a constitutional imperative.



Image: stocksnap

Kenya's next General Election remains more than a year away, yet the warning signs that have historically preceded electoral unrest are already becoming increasingly visible. Political mobilisation is gathering pace. Public discourse is becoming more polarised. Social media platforms are increasingly saturated with misinformation, coordinated disinformation campaigns and hate speech. At the same time, concerns continue to grow over the emergence of organised criminal groups—commonly referred to as goons—who have increasingly been associated with political intimidation, disruption of peaceful assemblies, attacks on opponents and the suppression of civic participation.

These developments come against the backdrop of findings by the Kofi Annan Foundation's Electoral Vulnerability Index (EVI), which estimates an 84.1 per cent probability of election-related violence if existing vulnerabilities are not adequately addressed. The figure is not a prediction of inevitable conflict, nor should it be interpreted as an unavoidable outcome. Rather, it serves as an evidence-based early warning that underscores the urgency of strengthening institutions, reducing political tensions and investing in preventive action before campaigns intensify.

Kenya's democratic progress has been marked by important constitutional reforms, stronger electoral institutions and expanded civic participation since the promulgation of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010.

Yet experience from previous electoral cycles demonstrates that violence rarely begins on polling day. It often develops gradually through inflammatory political rhetoric, organised intimidation, economic frustrations, weak accountability, online incitement and the mobilisation of vulnerable young people by political actors.

The challenge therefore is no longer simply how the country responds after violence occurs. The greater test of democratic maturity is whether Kenya can prevent violence before it begins.

Election-related violence affects entire communities, but its consequences are rarely experienced equally.

Women frequently encounter political intimidation, targeted harassment, threats of sexual violence and gender-based attacks intended to discourage them from seeking elective office or participating in political campaigns.

Female aspirants continue to report coordinated online abuse, character assassination, manipulated images, false allegations and sustained trolling on social media platforms.

These attacks are often designed not to challenge policy positions but to silence women from public life altogether.

Technology has amplified these threats. The rapid spread of artificial intelligence has made it easier to create manipulated videos, fabricated photographs and digitally altered content capable of damaging reputations within hours. Disinformation campaigns targeting women candidates increasingly exploit gender stereotypes, cultural biases and misinformation to undermine credibility before campaigns even begin.

For many women, the greatest barrier to political participation is no longer the absence of constitutional rights. It is the hostile political environment in which exercising those rights has become increasingly difficult.

Children also bear lasting consequences whenever political violence erupts. Schools close. Learning is interrupted. Families are displaced. Access to healthcare becomes uncertain. Exposure to violence often leaves long-term psychological effects that extend well beyond election periods. Young people remain among those most affected by electoral instability.

Despite representing the largest demographic segment of Kenya's population, many unemployed youth continue to face economic vulnerabilities that increase the risk of exploitation by political actors. Across previous electoral cycles, criminal groups have recruited unemployed young people to intimidate opponents, disrupt rallies, attack communities or create fear during campaigns.

The growing phenomenon of politically mobilised goons represents one of the most significant threats to peaceful elections.

These organised groups do not merely threaten politicians; they threaten democracy itself.

» CONTINUATION

Beyond the Ballot: Why Preventing Electoral Violence Is Kenya's Greatest Democratic Test Ahead of 2027



Image: stocksnap

Their presence discourages peaceful assembly, intimidates voters, silences communities and weakens public confidence in democratic institutions. They create environments where citizens participate not because they feel free, but because they feel afraid.

Kenya cannot afford to normalise political violence carried out through criminal gangs or organised intimidation. Political competition must never depend on fear. Electoral violence creates additional barriers for persons with disabilities that are often overlooked during political discourse.

Insecurity limits mobility. Accessible transport becomes disrupted. Emergency information is not always available in accessible formats. Persons with hearing, visual or intellectual disabilities frequently encounter additional challenges when accessing polling stations, evacuation routes or emergency assistance during periods of unrest.

The Constitution guarantees every Kenyan equal political participation. That guarantee must remain meaningful before, during and after elections. Older persons similarly face heightened vulnerability during periods of instability. Limited mobility, chronic health conditions and dependence on regular medical care make displacement particularly dangerous. Election-related disruptions can interrupt access to medication, healthcare services and essential social support systems.

Minority and marginalised communities also remain disproportionately exposed whenever political tensions become linked to ethnicity, geography or historical inequalities.

The costs of violence therefore extend well beyond immediate physical harm. They weaken livelihoods, discourage investment, disrupt education, damage public infrastructure and undermine social cohesion long after elections have ended.

Within this framework, the National Gender and Equality Commission plays a critical constitutional role in monitoring elections from the perspective of equality and inclusion. Unlike election management bodies whose ~

primary focus is administering elections, the Commission monitors whether Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are able to participate meaningfully throughout the electoral process. Its monitoring focuses on three critical areas.

First, candidate representation, including whether political parties comply with constitutional obligations such as the two-thirds gender principle during nominations.

Second, voter accessibility, assessing whether polling stations, election materials and electoral processes remain accessible to persons with disabilities, older persons and other vulnerable groups.

Third, fair participation, ensuring that women, youth, persons with disabilities, minorities and other Special Interest Groups can campaign, vote, observe elections and serve as electoral officials without intimidation, violence or discrimination. These responsibilities become increasingly significant as political activity intensifies ahead of 2027. The Commission has already begun monitoring electoral preparedness in areas preparing for upcoming electoral processes. Commission Secretary and Chief Executive Officer Dr. Purity Ngina recently conducted a monitoring exercise in Passenga Ward, Ol Kalou Constituency, to assess the preparedness of Special Interest Groups—particularly older persons—to participate effectively in the forthcoming by-election.

The exercise examined accessibility, voter preparedness and the practical barriers that may affect inclusive electoral participation. Such assessments provide valuable evidence for strengthening electoral preparedness before larger national campaigns commence.

In many pastoralist counties, political influence extends beyond formal institutions. Traditional councils of elders continue to shape leadership decisions, community dialogue and political consensus. Recognising this reality, the Commission, in partnership with the Horn of Africa Institute and supported by the Urgent Action Fund–Africa, has initiated dialogue aimed at expanding women's participation within these influential governance spaces.

» CONTINUATION



Courtesy visits with Assistant County Commissioner Stephen Muye and the Borana Council of Elders sought to strengthen collaboration around inclusive decision-making and women's constitutional right to participate fully in governance.

The discussions acknowledged that traditional leadership continues to play an important role in community governance across northern Kenya. Promoting women's leadership is therefore not about replacing cultural institutions.

It is about ensuring that constitutional values of equality, inclusion and participation are reflected within those institutions.

Inclusive governance becomes stronger when cultural leadership and constitutional principles reinforce one another rather than compete.

Perhaps no previous election has entered the campaign period under the influence of digital technologies as powerful as those now available.

Social media has expanded civic engagement. It has also accelerated misinformation. False election results can circulate within minutes. Manipulated videos can inflame tensions before verification occurs. Artificial intelligence now enables the creation of convincing fabricated content capable of misleading millions.

Women candidates remain particularly vulnerable to coordinated digital harassment. Technology-facilitated Gender-Based Violence—including cyberstalking, impersonation, deepfake pornography, hate campaigns and coordinated trolling—has emerged as one of the fastest-growing barriers to women's political participation globally. Strengthening women's participation within these structures contributes to more representative governance while reinforcing social cohesion.

The media also carries significant responsibility. Responsible journalism can reduce tensions through accurate reporting, verification of information and balanced coverage that avoids inflaming divisions. Equally, digital platforms, political parties and citizens must actively challenge misinformation and disinformation before false narratives escalate into violence. Electoral integrity increasingly depends not only on secure polling stations but also on credible information environments.

Political leaders bear perhaps the greatest responsibility. Campaign rhetoric that exploits ethnic divisions, spreads false information or incites hostility undermines democratic legitimacy regardless of electoral outcomes. Leadership committed to peaceful competition strengthens public confidence and reinforces constitutional governance. Kenya's democratic progress should not be measured by its capacity to recover after violence has occurred. It should be measured by its ability to prevent violence altogether. Protecting elections means protecting every citizen's constitutional right to participate freely, safely and equally. As preparations for the 2027 General Election continue, strengthening inclusive institutions, safeguarding civic space, promoting responsible leadership, countering misinformation, expanding opportunities for youth, protecting women from political violence and ensuring accessible participation for persons with disabilities, older persons and marginalised communities will remain essential to credible elections.

Democracy is strongest when every citizen can engage without fear. Safeguarding that principle is not solely the responsibility of electoral institutions or security agencies. It is a shared national obligation that demands accountability, vigilance and sustained commitment from government, political actors, civil society, communities and citizens alike. The choices made before the 2027 General Election will determine not only how Kenya votes, but how effectively it protects the constitutional values of equality, inclusion, human dignity and peaceful democratic participation for generations to come.

Kenya Moves to Close Digital Justice Gaps as Sexual Offences Bill Targets AI Abuse, Voyeurism and Image-Based Exploitation

Kenya has taken a significant step towards modernising its response to sexual offences following the validation of the draft Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill, 2026, a proposed law that seeks to strengthen legal protection against emerging forms of sexual exploitation driven by rapid technological change and evolving patterns of abuse.

The validation of the Bill by the National Council on the Administration of Justice (NCAJ) Committee on the Review of Sexual Offences on 10 July 2026 marks a key milestone in the country's ongoing legal reform process. The draft legislation is scheduled for submission to the full NCAJ on 28 July 2026 before advancing through the remaining legislative processes.

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) is among the institutions participating in the review through Mr Desire Njamwea, Assistant Director, who serves as the Vice Chairperson of the NCAJ Committee on the Review of Sexual Offences. The Commission's participation reflects its continued role in supporting legal reforms that strengthen equality, protect vulnerable groups and improve access to justice for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

The proposed amendments come nearly two decades after the enactment of Kenya's Sexual Offences Act, a landmark law that significantly strengthened the country's response to sexual violence. However, the rapid growth of digital technologies, social media platforms and artificial intelligence has introduced new forms of abuse that existing legislation was not originally designed to address.

One of the most significant reforms contained in the Bill is the proposed criminalisation of voyeurism, making it an offence to record, observe or capture images of a person engaged in a private act without their knowledge or consent. While advances in mobile technology have made image and video recording widely accessible, they have also increased opportunities for serious violations of privacy that can result in lasting psychological, social and economic harm to victims.

The Bill also proposes new offences targeting the misuse of artificial intelligence to generate or manipulate sexually explicit images and videos without an individual's consent.



NGEC Assistant Director Mr. Desire Njamwea

Commonly referred to as deepfakes, these AI-generated images and videos are becoming an emerging global challenge, enabling perpetrators to fabricate realistic intimate content that can be used to humiliate, harass, blackmail or extort victims. International studies indicate that the overwhelming majority of sexually explicit deepfake content circulating online disproportionately targets women, highlighting the growing gender dimension of technology-facilitated abuse.

Another key proposal addresses image-based sexual exploitation, including the non-consensual sharing of intimate images and the growing use of such material for coercion, intimidation and extortion. The increasing prevalence of smartphones, encrypted messaging platforms and social media has expanded opportunities for offenders to exploit victims through threats to publish intimate content, often causing profound emotional distress and discouraging survivors from reporting offences.

Justice sector stakeholders have increasingly recognised that many existing criminal laws were enacted before these technologies became widespread, creating legal gaps that make it more difficult to investigate and prosecute emerging forms of online sexual abuse. The proposed amendments therefore seek to ensure that Kenya's legal framework ~

keeps pace with technological developments while strengthening protection for victims in both physical and digital spaces.

Beyond introducing new criminal offences, the review process has also focused on strengthening survivor protection and improving the effectiveness of the justice system. Previous consultations by the NCAJ Committee identified persistent challenges in the investigation and prosecution of sexual offences, including evidentiary gaps, delays in case determination, barriers to reporting and low conviction rates. Addressing these systemic challenges remains central to improving access to justice for survivors.

The reforms also reflect Kenya's constitutional commitment to protecting human dignity, equality, privacy and freedom from violence. The Constitution guarantees every person the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law, while requiring public institutions to safeguard vulnerable groups from discrimination and abuse. Strengthening the Sexual Offences Act therefore represents not only a legal reform but also an important step towards fulfilling these constitutional obligations.

For the Commission, the validation of the draft Bill reinforces the importance of responsive legislation that evolves alongside emerging risks facing society. As technology continues to reshape communication, relationships and access to information, legal frameworks must equally adapt to protect individuals from new forms of exploitation that increasingly occur online rather than solely in physical spaces.

As the draft Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill advances through the legislative process, it represents an opportunity to strengthen Kenya's legal response to contemporary forms of sexual exploitation while reinforcing public confidence in the justice system. Modernising the law to address technology-facilitated sexual offences is increasingly recognised as essential to protecting privacy, safeguarding human dignity and ensuring that survivors can access timely, effective and meaningful justice in an increasingly digital society.

NGEC, National Council for Persons with Disabilities Deepen Partnership to Advance Disability Inclusion



NGEC CEO Dr. Purity Ngina during a courtesy visit to NCPWD CEO Dr. Michael Munene

Strengthening collaboration between public institutions remains central to Kenya's efforts to advance the rights, inclusion and equal participation of persons with disabilities.

Against this backdrop, the Chief Executive Officer of the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), Dr Purity Ngina, paid a courtesy visit to Dr Michael Munene, Chief Executive Officer of the National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD), to deepen institutional cooperation on disability inclusion and accessible public service delivery.

The high-level engagement provided an opportunity for the two institutions to review shared priorities, align strategic interventions and identify practical areas for partnership aimed at eliminating barriers that continue to limit the full participation of persons with disabilities in social, economic and public life.

The discussions focused on strengthening collaboration in promoting accessibility, advancing equality and supporting the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities across governance, education, employment, justice and public service delivery.

The two leaders also explored opportunities to reinforce disability mainstreaming within public institutions, recognising that inclusive policies must be matched by effective implementation and coordinated institutional action.

The engagement comes at a time when Kenya continues to strengthen its disability inclusion agenda through legislative, policy and institutional reforms. The National Council for Persons with Disabilities, established to promote and safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities, plays a central role in coordinating disability mainstreaming, promoting accessibility and supporting the implementation of disability-related laws and policies across government.

Under the leadership of Dr Michael Munene, whose expertise is grounded in universal design and inclusive public policy, the Council continues to champion accessible and inclusive development. The leaders acknowledged that while Kenya has made significant progress in advancing disability rights, many persons with disabilities continue to encounter barriers in accessing education, healthcare, employment, transport, justice and other essential public services. Addressing these challenges requires stronger institutional collaboration, evidence-based policymaking and sustained engagement ~

with organisations of persons with disabilities and other stakeholders. The discussions also underscored the importance of ensuring that disability inclusion is integrated across national and county development planning. Accessible infrastructure, inclusive digital services, reasonable accommodation, equal employment opportunities and meaningful public participation remain critical components of an inclusive society where every person can contribute and benefit equally. For NGECEO, promoting disability inclusion forms part of its constitutional mandate to champion equality and freedom from discrimination for all Special Interest Groups. Through policy advocacy, monitoring, public education and strategic partnerships, the Commission continues to support initiatives that advance equal opportunities and strengthen accountability in the implementation of disability rights.

The engagement reaffirmed a shared commitment to building stronger institutional partnerships that translate constitutional guarantees into practical outcomes for persons with disabilities.

By aligning expertise, coordinating interventions and strengthening collaboration, NGECEO and the National Council for Persons with Disabilities aim to accelerate progress towards a Kenya where accessibility, inclusion and equal opportunity are embedded across every sector of society. As the country continues to implement its disability inclusion agenda, partnerships between key public institutions will remain essential to removing systemic barriers, improving service delivery, and ensuring that persons with disabilities participate fully in national development.

Strengthening coordinated action today lays the foundation for a more inclusive, equitable and accessible Kenya where no one is left behind.

NGEC Bulletin Editorial Team

Produced by the Public Communications Division under the Executive Office of the Commission Secretary/CEO

Daniel Waitere - Head of Public Communications

Eric Muchiri - Editorial Designer, Photographer and Writer

Alice Njeri- Writer



CONTACT US

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

Toll Free : 0800 720 187
HQ Reception : +254 709 375 100

Kisumu Regional Office
Reinsurance Plaza, 3rd Floor, Wing B,
Oginga Odinga Street,
Kisumu Town.

Nakuru Regional Office
Tamoh Plaza, 1st Floor, Kijabe Street,
Nakuru Town.

Garissa Regional Office
KRA Route off Lamu Road, Province
Garissa Town.

Kilifi Regional Office
Malindi Complex, off Lamu-Malindi Road,
Malindi Town.

Kitui Regional Office
Nzambani Park, off Kitui Referral Hospital Road,
Kitui Town.

Isiolo Regional Office
Barsalinga Towers, 2nd Floor RM 2004
Along Isiolo Girls Road