



# EQUALITY BULLETIN

## 16Days END TECH VIOLENCE

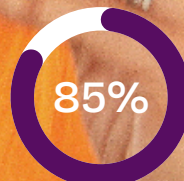
As the nation marks the 2025 International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, calls grow for concrete action to protect women and girls offline and online.

Across Kenya, smartphones and social media — once heralded as tools of empowerment — have increasingly become conduits of abuse. Reports of women and girls facing threats, harassment, blackmail, stalking, impersonation, and non-consensual circulation of images have surged in recent years.

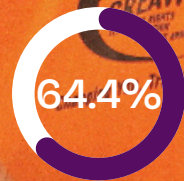
A 2024 study of students in Nairobi's tertiary institutions revealed that nearly 90 per cent had witnessed technology-facilitated gender-based violence, and 39 pc had experienced it personally. Female students were disproportionately targeted: 64.4 pc of them reported at least one form of online violence, compared with 35.5 pc of male students. **Page 6,7**



38% of women have experienced online violence



85% have witnessed digital violence against others



Female students were disproportionately targeted: 64.4 pc of them reported at least one form of online violence



Advancing Inclusion in Kisumu: Commission Strengthens Key Partnerships **Page 3**



Youth Empowered: Commission, HSF Kenya Roll Out National Coordination Forum **Page 4**



SDGs With People at the Centre: Commission Pushes Inclusion at the 2025 Race to 2030 Conference **Page 8**

## A Message from the Chief Executive Officer

### On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women | 16 Days of Activism 2025

As we observe the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, we recognize the urgent need to address all forms of violence that continue to threaten women’s safety, dignity, and participation in society. This year, the 16 Days of Activism campaign shines a critical spotlight on the digital realm, where violence against women has emerged as a serious and rapidly growing threat. Online harassment, intimidation, and abuse seek to silence women—particularly those with public or digital profiles in politics, activism, journalism, and other leadership spaces—thereby undermining their ability to contribute fully to society.



The 2025 National SDGs Multi-Stakeholder Conference reminded us: “Development is only as strong as it is inclusive. Where inequality exists, national progress slows.” Rural women remain disproportionately disempowered, reflecting persistent data gaps and systemic exclusion.

At the same time, Artificial Intelligence offers new opportunities to amplify women’s voices, expand access to resources, and promote empowerment—if applied responsibly and inclusively.

During these 16 Days of Activism, the Commission urges all stakeholders to protect women online, close inequality gaps, and leverage technology to empower every woman. Violence—online or offline—has no place in our society. Together, we can ensure that every woman can speak, lead, and thrive safely.

**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**

## Kitui Charts New Path for Inclusion: County Revises Disability Bill to Match Landmark National Law

*As Kenya's new disability law takes effect, Kitui moves swiftly to update local legislation to guarantee rights, dignity and access for all persons with disabilities*



Kitui: Participants contribute proposed changes to the Kitui County Disability Bill at Thome wa Aklist

At the pastoral grounds of Thome wa Aklisto Pastoral Centre, officials, advocates and community leaders gathered recently in a demonstration of purpose: shaping a county law that reflects Kenya's most ambitious disability-rights legislation yet. In a forum supported by the CARITAS Sisters, the Kitui Regional Office unveiled proposed amendments and additions to the existing Kitui County Disability Bill. The objective: align local policy with the newly enacted Persons with Disabilities Act, 2025 and ensure that no resident is left behind because of disability.

The national law, assented on 8 May 2025 and effective from 27 May, represents a historic overhaul. It enshrines broad protections for persons with disabilities (PWDs), including equality before the law, access to health, education, employment, public buildings, and social services — and mandates reasonable accommodation,

accessibility standards, and social protection measures.

Under the 2025 Act, both national and county governments are required to take active measures to implement disability rights — from accessible infrastructure and inclusive education to employment quotas and social support services.

For Kitui, revising the county bill is not merely a procedural formality. It is a necessary step to guarantee that the law's promise translates into reality on the ground. Without county-level alignment, many provisions — such as accessible public buildings, inclusive transport, disability-responsive health services or social protection schemes — risk remaining aspirational rather than enforceable.

During the engagement at Thome wa Aklisto, NGEC-affiliated experts and local stakeholders examined gaps in the existing Bill. They emphasised that the revised version must reflect expanded definitions of disability, ensure barrier-free access, guarantee inclusion in employment and education, protect PWDs from discrimination or harmful practices, and grant access to assistive devices and support services.

Central to the proposed amendments is the expansion of rights and protections now guaranteed under the national law.

These include but are not limited to:

Equal access to public services and social amenities, including health, education and mobility.

Legal protection from discrimination, abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Mandated reasonable accommodation in employment, including modified work arrangements, assistive devices, and access to supportive measures.

Inclusive education policies, ensuring children and youth with disabilities are not excluded from mainstream or specialized learning opportunities.

Social protection and assistance — including free habilitation and rehabilitation services, provision of assistive devices, and support for caregivers.

During the meeting, participants also stressed the duty of public and private institutions — including county departments — to comply with accessibility and inclusion standards, strengthening accountability and reducing bureaucratic barriers.

The engagement reflects the broader mandate of the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) — to monitor, review and ensure compliance of all laws, policies, and practices with the constitutional principles of equality, non-discrimination and inclusion.

## The Commission Deepens Regional Cooperation as JICA South Sudan Learns from Kenya's GBV Response Model

*Knowledge exchange highlights Kenya's survivor-centred approach as a practical blueprint for strengthening protection systems across the region*

The Commission hosted a delegation from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) South Sudan for a focused learning exchange on Kenya's evolving model for preventing and responding to Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

The visit provided an opportunity to share progress from the NGEC-JICA GBV Elimination Project Phase 1, which has played a key role in improving coordination, institutional capacity, and survivor-centred practices within Kenya's protection systems.

Central to the discussions was Kenya's growing emphasis on equipping frontline responders with the skills needed to handle cases sensitively, confidentially, and efficiently.

Through targeted training, police officers, healthcare workers, social service personnel, and other duty bearers have gained deeper understanding of GBV's far-reaching impact and the importance of timely,

trauma-informed support.



NGEC and JICA South Sudan delegation during a group photo session

Many institutions have already begun integrating these lessons into daily operations, resulting in better case management and more consistent referral pathways.

## Championing Inclusion and Justice: NGEC Deepens Partnerships in Kisumu

*Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa leads engagements reinforcing equality, political participation, and survivor-centred responses across the county*

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), led by Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa, undertook a series of high-level engagements in Kisumu County this week, reaffirming its commitment to equality, justice, and inclusive governance.



Hon. Rehema Jaldesa joins Dr. Ida Odinga in paying respects to the family

The visit began with a solemn homage to Kenya's late political stalwart, Rt. Hon. Raila Odinga. Joined by fellow Heads of Constitutional Commissions and Independent Offices (CCIOs), the delegation laid a wreath at Kang'o Ka Jaramogi, recognising his enduring legacy as a champion of democratic governance, inclusive development, and the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms for all Kenyans.

"Rt. Hon. Raila Odinga's vision reminds us that true leadership must be accountable, inclusive, and committed to the welfare of all citizens," Jaldesa reflected during the visit.

### Strengthening County Leadership on Inclusion and GBV

The following day, the Chairperson met with Ms. Beatrice Odongo, County CEC Member for Sports, Culture, Gender, and Youth, alongside other county officials. The discussions focused on the collective responsibility to address Gender-Based Violence (GBV), eliminate retrogressive cultural practices, promote youth empowerment, and advance political tolerance — particularly for women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

The engagement reinforced the importance of inclusive public services, ensuring that national and county offices are accessible and responsive to all Kenyans, including persons with disabilities.

At the Registrar of Political Parties' Kisumu Office, Chairperson Jaldesa emphasised the need to expand political space for Special Interest Groups (SIGs) in elective processes across Nyanza. She highlighted the critical role political parties play in identifying, resourcing, and elevating women, youth, and persons with disabilities to ensure inclusive governance.

"Inclusive political participation is the cornerstone of a truly representative democracy," the Chairperson noted.



Hon. Rehema Jaldesa and Thomas Koyier engage with County CEC Member Beatrice Odongo on sports, culture, gender, and youth in Kisumu

Further engagements with FIDA Kenya and the Electoral Law and Governance Institute for Africa (ELGIA) deepened collaborative efforts to strengthen justice, accountability, and inclusive governance mechanisms across the county.

The Commission also convened civil society organisations, justice actors, and multi-sectoral partners at the Kisumu Regional Office to advance the Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Data Management Protocol. Reliable and coordinated data is essential for effective prevention, timely response, and survivor-centred care.

Engagements focused on harmonising case management systems, strengthening referral pathways, and safeguarding survivor confidentiality.

Participants explored ways to enhance the tracking of outcomes and resource allocation, thereby improving the efficiency of health, justice, and psychosocial support services.

International research underscores the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration in GBV response. Studies by UN Women and UNFPA show that survivor-centred approaches significantly improve reporting rates, reduce secondary victimisation, and foster community trust in justice systems. By aligning local practices with these principles, Kisumu County can serve as a model for integrated SGBV response nationwide.



Kisumu: Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa and Vice Chairperson Thomas Koyier with CSOs, justice actors, and partners at the Kisumu Regional Office.

The engagement with these partners is particularly critical in Kisumu, where young people and marginalized communities often face structural barriers to participation. Civil society interventions provide mentorship, advocacy, and capacity-building opportunities that complement government initiatives, ensuring a holistic approach to empowerment.

Throughout the visits, the Commission underscored the importance of inclusive design and accessibility in public offices at both national and county levels. Persons with disabilities, women, youth, and other marginalized groups must be able to access government services with dignity and ease. The integration of accessibility measures and inclusive policies in office infrastructure, digital platforms, and service delivery mechanisms remains a strategic priority for the Commission.

Chairperson Jaldesa's Kisumu visit highlights NGEC's strategic focus on fostering systemic inclusion, enhancing youth participation, and strengthening survivor-centred GBV mechanisms. By engaging with government leaders, civil society, and justice actors, the Commission aims to translate the principles of equality and non-discrimination into tangible, sustainable outcomes for all Kenyans.

## Turning Tides: How Tana River staff are being re-trained to fight GBV in the workplace

*GBV capacity-building by Malindi Office seeks to build safer, equitable working environments in Tana Delta*



County office staff and partners pose for a group photo during a GBV capacity-building training

Staff at county offices in Tana River are stepping into a new era of awareness and accountability following a capacity-building training on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) organised by the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) – Malindi Regional Office, with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) under the Advancing Food Systems Resilience in Kenya Project. The training, held at YMCA Minjila in Tana Delta Sub-County, brought together a cross-section of county personnel to strengthen prevention and response mechanisms, with attention to safe, inclusive workplaces and socio-economic empowerment.

Gender-based violence is often seen through the lens of the home or community, yet workplaces – both public and private – are not immune to harassment, discrimination, or abuse. Institutions such as universities in Kenya have documented widespread under-reporting of GBV due to fear of retaliation, stigma, or professional disadvantages.

Participants explored the many forms GBV can take – physical, emotional, sexual, economic, and institutional – and discussed how to recognise and respond appropriately. The sessions covered legal and policy frameworks, obligations under national GBV laws, referral pathways for survivors, survivor-centred support, and the importance of confidentiality and institutional accountability.

Practical workshops helped staff understand their responsibility not only as duty-bearers but also as guardians of safe workplace environments; this included establishing clear reporting channels, promoting equal participation in leadership regardless of gender, and supporting socio-economic empowerment through inclusive employment practices.

The training takes on added significance given its link to the broader UNDP food-systems resilience project. In counties like Tana River – hard hit by climate change, displacement, and economic instability – gender-sensitive governance, inclusive employment, and protection from violence are vital to social cohesion and development.

Research shows that addressing GBV is not merely a matter of human rights or justice; it affects productivity, retention, community trust, and economic participation. By empowering county staff to recognise and respond to GBV, the training contributes to building institutions that can withstand social stressors and deliver services equitably.

Participants committed to reviewing and reinforcing workplace policies on GBV, ensuring reporting and referral systems, promoting gender-balanced leadership, and fostering safe, inclusive working environments.

By investing in capacity building for county staff, NGEC is setting a standard for accountability and safe working environments that can ripple across Kenya's public service and beyond.

## Nurturing Kenya's Next Generation of Leaders: Commission Launches Youth Coordination Forum Backed by HSF Kenya

The Commission—supported by the Hanns Seidel Foundation Kenya (HSF Kenya)—convened a one-day coordination meeting designed to strengthen youth participation in Kenya's governance and development agenda.

Against a backdrop of growing demand for accountability, civic engagement, and inclusive leadership, the gathering served as more than a meeting point; it became a space for mentorship, political awakening, and intergenerational exchange.



Nairobi: Dr. Margaret Karungaru with youth participants at a coordination meeting

Sessions focused on leadership ethics, policy advocacy, constitutional rights, community organising, and the structures of county and national governance. Facilitators—drawn from civil society, governance experts, and seasoned leaders—guided participants through the real mechanics of leadership: navigating institutions, mobilising communities, and sustaining impact.

One of the most striking features of the meeting was its emphasis on intergenerational dialogue. Leaders shared their experiences navigating Kenya's changing political environment, while young participants raised concerns about exclusion, tokenism, and structural barriers that hinder their participation.

The Commission underscored that genuine inclusion requires structured mentorship networks—linking youth to experienced practitioners who can guide them through political processes, ethical decision-making, and policy implementation.

## Garissa Strengthens Frontline Response to Gender-Based Violence

*POLICARE training equips SGBV actors with skills to deliver timely, survivor-centred services*

In a significant step toward strengthening Kenya’s response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), the Garissa Regional Office, in partnership with the National Police Service and Reinvent Kenya, conducted an intensive POLICARE capacity-building training for frontline SGBV actors. The programme, led by AIG Dolly Onyango and Reinvent Kenya’s Jaki Mbogo, brought together officers, health practitioners, social workers, and community service providers to sharpen their skills in delivering coordinated, survivor-focused care.



Garissa: Abdiwahab Mohamed presents on POLICARE at the SGBV actors’ capacity-building training

survivors to access legal redress, medical care, and counselling from a single, coordinated platform.

The training in Garissa focused on reinforcing case coordination, strengthening referral pathways, and promoting survivor-centred standards that uphold confidentiality, dignity, and human rights.

Participants engaged in practical simulations, interactive discussions, and scenario-based exercises to deepen understanding of multidisciplinary collaboration in handling complex SGBV cases.

The Garissa POLICARE training directly addresses these gaps by fostering collaboration among police, healthcare providers, social workers, and community leaders. By unifying roles and clarifying responsibilities, the programme aims to reduce delays in case management, improve survivor experience, and ensure timely access to justice and support.

A central theme of the training was embedding survivor-centred standards into every stage of the response process. This includes immediate and compassionate response, thorough documentation, rapid referrals to medical and psychosocial support, and consistent follow-up to ensure recovery and justice.

By building a well-equipped, cohesive network of SGBV actors, the collaboration between NGECK Garissa, the National Police Service, and Reinvent Kenya accelerates the full operationalisation of the POLICARE model in the county.

POLICARE – the Police-Community Assisted Response model – is designed to centralize SGBV services under a one-stop system. This approach integrates justice, health, and psychosocial support, enabling ~

## Nakuru Champions Child Justice in National Observance

*Multi-agency engagement underscores the importance of protecting every child’s rights and enhancing access to justice*

The Nakuru Regional Office, in partnership with key justice actors and community stakeholders, joined the nationwide commemoration of National Child Justice Day, highlighting the critical role of multi-agency collaboration in safeguarding children’s rights and well-being. Guided by the theme, “**Securing Justice for Every Child,**” the event underscored the imperative of ensuring that Kenya’s justice systems remain accessible, child-friendly, and responsive to the unique needs of young people.



Nakuru: Regional Office staff Nancy Mwangi joins partners for the National Child Justice Day nationwide event

The event convened representatives from the judiciary, law enforcement, child protection agencies, government departments, and civil society, offering a platform to deliberate on strategies to prevent sexual abuse, exploitation, and other forms of violence against children. Discussions emphasized the need for robust coordination across institutions to enhance case management, streamline referrals, and ensure timely interventions.

Court Users Committees (CUCs) were highlighted as pivotal actors in this ecosystem. These committees play a crucial role in bridging gaps between the community and the justice system, ensuring that courts operate in a manner that is sensitive to children’s needs and experiences.

Central to the discussions was the Children Act, which provides the legal framework for protecting children’s rights, welfare, and access to justice in Kenya.

Participants examined the challenges in implementing child justice laws, including inadequate resources for child protection units, limited access to legal aid, and the need for specialized training for judicial and law enforcement personnel dealing with children.

The launch also emphasized the importance of public awareness and community involvement in child protection. By equipping parents, teachers, and local leaders with knowledge of children’s rights and reporting mechanisms, communities can play a proactive role in preventing abuse and advocating for swift justice.

“Protecting children is a societal obligation. Communities, families, and institutions must work together to ensure that every child grows up in safety, dignity, and opportunity,” remarked a participant from the judiciary.

»» CONTINUATION

## When a Click Becomes a Cry: Kenya’s Fight to End Digital and Gender-Based Violence

At the heart of a packed commemoration at Godoma Technical Training Institute, where county and national leaders joined women’s rights advocates, the message was clear: violence against women has not gone away — it has evolved. This year’s theme, “*UNiTE to End Digital Violence Against All Women and Girls,*” shone a spotlight on the growing danger of online abuse, harassment, stalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images, cyber-bullying, and other forms of Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TF-GBV).



Kilifi: Chairperson Rehema Jaldesa delivers remarks at the 16Days commemoration at Godoma Technical Training Institute

Presiding over the ceremony, Hon. Rehema Jaldesa reaffirmed the commitment of the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) to protect the rights, dignity, and safety of every woman and girl. Alongside H.E. Flora M. Chibule, Deputy Governor of Kilifi County, she issued a call to duty bearers and citizens alike to safeguard women’s digital and physical spaces, and to ensure that survivors receive support, justice, and opportunities to thrive.

“When a woman’s voice is silenced online, an entire community loses a voice,” she declared. For too long, digital violence has remained invisible; today, Kenya resolves to bring it into light.



Hon. Rehema Jaldesa and Kilifi Deputy Governor H.E. Flora M. Chibule energise participants during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence commemoration

Across Kenya, smartphones and social media — once heralded as tools of empowerment — have increasingly become conduits of abuse. Reports of women and girls facing threats, harassment, blackmail, stalking, impersonation, and non-consensual circulation of images have surged in recent years.

A 2024 study of students in Nairobi’s tertiary institutions revealed that nearly 90 per cent had witnessed technology-facilitated gender-based violence, and 39 pc had experienced it personally. Female students were disproportionately targeted: 64.4 pc of them reported at least one form of online violence, compared with 35.5 pc of male students.

These digital assaults are more than fleeting insults. Women who endure them often suffer lasting psychological trauma, withdraw from social or academic life, and face risks of offline violence, social exclusion or economic loss. Cyberbullying, doxxing, online sexual exploitation and non-consensual pornography are among the most common forms reported.



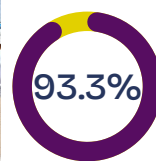
Kilifi: Regional office staff during the 16 Days of Activism commemoration

Globally, digital violence remains a critical challenge. According to UN Women, studies suggest that between 16 and 58 per cent of women and girls have experienced technology-facilitated violence at some point.

In Kenya, a recent report titled Technology-Facilitated Violence Against Women and Girls (TFVAWG) estimated that as many as 99.3 pc of women and girls accessing the internet have endured some form of online abuse — from threats and harassment to emotional mistreatment.



Garissa: Regional office staff join partners on the march during the 16 Days of Activism commemoration.



These figures confirm a painful truth: the digital revolution has opened new opportunities, but also new fronts in the struggle for women’s safety and rights.

Digital violence has not replaced physical violence — it compounds it. Kenya continues to report alarming levels of sexual, physical, and intimate partner violence. According to the most recent national surveys, a significant proportion of women between the ages of 15 and 49 have experienced physical or sexual violence at some point.



Mathare: Community leaders and partners join the 16 Days of Activism event at Huruma Day Secondary School

Moreover, in many documented cases of femicide or fatal violence against women, the perpetrators are known to the victims — intimate partners, relatives, or acquaintances. These acts of brutality are often preceded or accompanied by emotional, economic, or digital abuse, illustrating how different forms of violence intersect and escalate.

»» CONTINUATION

## Old Wounds, New Tools: The Persistent Reality of GBV

Despite advances — including stronger laws, specialized GBV courts, recovery centres, and public awareness campaigns — systemic challenges remain. Enforcement is often uneven, investigations are slow or inconclusive, and many survivors do not report abuse out of fear, stigma, or lack of trust in authorities.

For women and girls, these failures are not abstract. They translate into lost jobs, interrupted education, trauma, and lives cut short.

### *Why Digital Violence Must Be Tackled With Urgency*

Digital harm is often dismissed as “just online.” But for survivors, the consequences are very real and sometimes life-changing. Psychological distress, social isolation, ruined reputations, blackmail, job loss — the impact can ripple far beyond a phone screen.

Research shows that women are more likely than men to avoid expressing opinions, participating in online debates, or sharing content out of fear of harassment, trolling, or reputational damage.



Participants follow proceedings at the 16 Days of Activism commemoration

Online spaces have become essential arenas for education, work, community engagement, and expression. When women and girls are denied safe access, the loss is not just personal but societal. The country loses talent, voices, ideas, and potential leaders. As one young activist phrased it during the Kilifi commemoration: “When girls retreat from digital spaces, Kenya loses ideas, creativity, and possibility.”

The commemoration in Kilifi was part of a broader national effort. Regional offices of NGEK, in counties including Isiolo, Kitui, Garissa, and Nakuru, launched coordinated campaigns under the 2025 theme. Activities ranged from public processions, courthouse dialogues, student forums, to partnerships with boda-boda associations and community organisations.

In Kitui, a flag-off ceremony brought together county officials, judicial officers, and youth advocates.



Nakuru: Boda-boda riders undergo training on GBV reporting, equipping transport operators to become frontline advocates for women's safety.

In Nakuru, boda-boda riders were trained on GBV reporting mechanisms, transforming transport operators into frontline advocates for women’s safety.

In Garissa and Isiolo, outreach to remote communities underscored that digital violence and GBV are not only urban problems — they affect women and girls everywhere.

These varied actions reflect a growing recognition that preventing violence requires a society-wide response. It demands cooperation across government, civil society, communities, technology platforms, and families.

Voices at the commemoration and across civil society emphasise that raising awareness is only the first step. To match the scale of the problem, Kenya needs measurable, sustained interventions.

Digital platforms must be held accountable. Social media companies and telecom operators need to embed “safety-by-design” principles — robust reporting channels, moderation protocols, faster takedowns, and support systems for victims. Governments must update legal frameworks to reflect modern forms of abuse and strengthen enforcement capacity.



Isiolo: Regional staff with partners during the 16 Days of Activism commemoration

Counties and national agencies should invest in survivor-centred services: safe shelters, legal aid, psychosocial support, and hotlines. Justice sector institutions must fast-track GBV and digital violence cases, improve evidence management, and ensure perpetrators face consequences.

Communities must reject harmful norms. Families, religious groups, cultural leaders, and youth associations have a role to play in challenging attitudes that normalise violence — and in supporting survivors without stigma.

Finally, men and boys must be active allies. Transforming gender-based violence isn’t a women’s cause alone. Men taking responsibility, modelling respectful behaviour, and supporting survivors can shift power dynamics and challenge entrenched patriarchy.

## SDG Pursuit Gets a Human Face: Commission Pushes Inclusive Agenda at 2025 Race to 2030 Conference

*At the National Multi-Stakeholders SDG gathering, NGEN calls for care economy recognition, gender-responsive budgets and technology that empowers, not excludes*



Mombasa: Chairperson Rehema Jaldesa with PS Bonface Makokha and other leaders at the Annual National SDGs Multi-Stakeholder Conference

As Kenya charts its course toward the global Sustainable Development Goals, the 2025 National Multi-Stakeholders SDGs Conference under the banner “Race to 2030: Partnership, Collaboration and Innovative Financing” offered more than ambition — it provided a moment of accountability. Representing the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), Chairperson Rehema Jaldesa stood before a gathering of policymakers, development partners and civil society to reaffirm that Kenya’s progress depends on one fundamental principle: no one must be left behind.

Jaldesa emphasised that achieving the SDGs in Kenya demands an inclusive and equitable development agenda — one built on constitutional values of equality, non-discrimination and meaningful participation for all, including women, persons with disabilities, youth, older persons, minorities, and marginalised communities.

A central concern in NGEN’s intervention was the disproportionate burden of unpaid domestic and care work carried by women — a vital yet underrated component of Kenya’s economy and social fabric.

Recent data show women spend on average nearly five times more time than men on unpaid care and domestic duties.

Across the country, women’s unpaid labour has been valued at an estimated KSh 2.24 trillion annually, roughly 23.1 percent of Kenya’s GDP.



Mombasa: Chairperson Rehema Jaldesa delivers remarks at the Annual National SDGs Multi-Stakeholder Conference

At the conference, Jaldesa urged stakeholders to acknowledge this “hidden engine” — and to respond with concrete policies. She called for gender-responsive budgeting that would channel public resources into care infrastructure, social protection, and services that reduce time burdens and create opportunities for women to engage more fully in economic and public life. “When care work counts, so do women,” she asserted — a reminder that justice, growth and equality are interlinked.

The Commission’s remit, Jaldesa noted, extends to all Special Interest Groups. She underscored the urgency of advancing accessibility and inclusive programming for persons with disabilities — ensuring that as Kenya modernises, no citizen is left out of development gains.

The SDGs conference, she argued, must not only measure progress in broad indicators, but also track equity: how services reach persons with disabilities, how youth and marginalised communities access opportunities, and how older persons are engaged in inclusive growth strategies. This multi-layered approach, she highlighted, reflects Kenya’s constitutional commitment to dignity, equality and the right to participate for every citizen.

As digital transformation accelerates, NGEN raised a cautionary note: innovation must be ethical, inclusive, and human-centred. Jaldesa called on partners to design and deploy artificial intelligence (AI) and other technologies in ways that expand access — not reinforce exclusion.

“Technology should widen opportunity, not deepen inequality,” she urged. She argued that AI strategies must be evaluated for fairness, data bias, accessibility, and equal benefit — especially for women, persons with disabilities, and historically marginalised communities. Such a call resonates globally, as nations grapple with the promise and peril of technological change. For Kenya, it is a reminder that development must remain anchored in human dignity and inclusion.

The timing of the SDG conference converged with the global 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence — a period when the fight for equality and human rights gains renewed urgency.

Hon. Jaldesa framed the two as inseparable: sustainable development cannot be realised without eliminating inequalities, safeguarding human dignity, and ensuring safety, accessibility, and opportunity for all.

## AI for Equality: How Technology is Shaping the Future of Women’s Empowerment

*Commission Secretary Joins Global Leaders in Beijing to Explore Artificial Intelligence as a Tool for Gender Equity and Inclusive Development*

In a world rapidly transformed by technology, artificial intelligence has emerged as a potent instrument not just for innovation but for social change. The question is no longer whether AI can drive economic growth—it is how it can be leveraged to promote equity, justice, and empowerment for those historically left behind.

At the heart of this discourse, Dr. Purity Ngina, Commission Secretary and CEO of the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), attended the AI for Promoting Women’s Empowerment in Developing Countries seminar, hosted by China Women’s University in Beijing from 16 to 25 November 2025. The gathering brought together female leaders, policymakers, and technologists from across Africa, Asia, and Latin America, all united by a shared goal: exploring how technology can dismantle barriers, close gender gaps, and strengthen inclusive governance.

The seminar offered an intensive exploration of AI’s potential to transform governance, public service delivery, and social policy. Presenters shared China’s experience in deploying AI to improve access to healthcare, optimize education delivery in rural communities, and strengthen mechanisms for social accountability. These initiatives illustrated how technology could serve both efficiency and equity, providing lessons that developing countries could adapt to local contexts.

Comparative studies from other nations further enriched discussions. In India, AI-enabled microfinance platforms have allowed women in marginalized communities to access credit, manage finances, and participate more fully in economic life. In Brazil, AI systems are employed to monitor patterns of gender-based violence, enabling authorities to respond quickly to risks and protect vulnerable populations.

Such global examples highlighted the transformative power of AI when coupled with thoughtful policy and ethical oversight.

Despite the promise of AI, women remain underrepresented in its creation and governance. Studies from UNESCO and the World Economic Forum show that fewer than one-third of AI professionals worldwide are women, a disparity that risks embedding gender bias into systems and applications. The Beijing forum emphasized the urgent need to promote women’s participation in AI design, governance, and policy development. Without such measures, technological innovation may unintentionally perpetuate exclusion.

The seminar also examined the ethical dimensions of AI deployment, particularly in relation to data privacy, algorithmic bias, and digital safety. Participants debated strategies to ensure that AI-driven solutions advance women’s rights, protect vulnerable communities, and foster transparency and accountability.



AI-generated image

Beyond theory, the seminar provided practical engagement with AI applications relevant to gender equality. Interactive workshops demonstrated AI tools capable of monitoring access to education, predicting service gaps, and delivering legal or health information to underserved populations.

Participants explored ways to integrate AI into national strategies for women’s empowerment, emphasizing that technology must complement, not replace, human-centred policy interventions.



Commission Secretary Dr. Purity Ngina participates in the AI for Promoting Women’s Empowerment in Developing Countries seminar.

For NGEC, these lessons resonate deeply. AI offers a pathway to strengthen monitoring of gender equity, enhance data collection on gender-based violence, and support evidence-based policymaking. By harnessing such tools, the Commission can more effectively advocate for women, track progress in inclusion, and ensure that no woman or girl is left behind in Kenya’s development agenda.

The seminar underscored that technology is a tool whose impact is determined by the vision and values guiding its use. Dr. Ngina’s participation highlights NGEC’s commitment to embracing innovation as part of a broader strategy for equity and empowerment.

As AI continues to reshape societies, the imperative is clear: women must not only benefit from technological progress—they must be at the table where it is designed, regulated, and implemented. For Kenya, this engagement signals a forward-looking approach to embedding gender equality into the digital transformation of governance, education, and public service delivery.

“AI can be a bridge — not a barrier. If developed inclusively, it can amplify voices that have long been silenced,” she said.

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