



NATIONAL GENDER AND EQUALITY COMMISSION (NGEC)

PROPOSALS FOR SITUATING MECHANISMS FOR ADDRESSING THE CONSTITUTIONAL GAINS OF SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS IN THE EXECUTIVE

Pursuant to Executive Order No. 1 issued by H.E. Hon. Uhuru Kenyatta CGH., the National Gender and Equality Commission and its partners wish to commend the Office of the President for the proposed structure of government which clearly seeks to deliver on the promise of a lean, service-delivery oriented Executive in line with the Constitution of Kenya.

We applaud the President and Deputy President for striving to ensure the realization of the two-thirds gender principle in the Cabinet by nominating six (6) highly accomplished women as Cabinet Secretaries to key ministries i.e. Devolution and Planning, Defense, Foreign Affairs, Lands, Housing and Urban Development, Environment, Water and Natural Resources and Tourism.

We take this earliest opportunity to commend the President for considerations and efforts to ensure issues of equity are core to the development agenda of this country. This commitment adheres to the Constitution of Kenya which articulates a number of rights and obligations on the part of all three arms of government, in order to ensure the realization of the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination for certain disadvantaged groups such as women, children, youth, persons with disabilities (PWDs), the elderly and other marginalized and minority groups.

We are grateful that the President indicated that gender equality is a key concern of his government and that these issues will be addressed through the Office of the President. Since 2008, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development, has played a key role in ensuring both technical and financial resources are directed towards providing capacity building on the mainstreaming of gender issues into Government policies and programmes. In addition, the Ministry has developed interventions to tackle the needs and priorities of other vulnerable groups (ie Persons with disabilities, the elderly and children), in addition to being a focal point for certain international and regional reporting obligations of the state. The Ministry has been the parent ministry for the National Council of Persons With Disabilities (NCPWD), and the National Council of Children's Services (NCCS). The Ministry has also been responsible for the Youth empowerment fund and Women empowerment fund.

It is very clear that the government is fully committed to invest in substantive equity, gender balance and inclusiveness by hosting a State Department in charge of Special Interest Groups in the Office of the President. It is our hope that the proposed State department will wholly encompass the crucial functions undertaken by the Ministry of Gender Children and Social development since 2008. For full and effective entrenchment of principles of equity, gender, and inclusiveness in social, economic and political sector, we share with you three critical proposals to be considered in the constituting and operationalizing of the proposed state department.

- a) That you consider a full State Department with a Principal Secretary, with a specified state budget and extrapolated budget for the next five years and with clear mandate and authority to inform planning, budgeting and the coordination of programmes and interventions on matters of substantive equity, gender balance, and inclusiveness of interest of all Special Interest Groups at the national and county levels. Such considerations will ensure the state department remain focused, effective and relevant in the midst of pressing demands and needs of priority to the state;
- b) That the State department be charged with the responsibility of implementing the gender and equality agenda and in mainstreaming of issues of gender, equity and inclusiveness in government business; management and administration of the ministries, and in the private sector in collaboration with the constitutional commissions particularly the National Gender and Equality Commission;
- c) The state department would ensure that counties are fast tracking implementation of principles of Special Interest Groups as envisioned in the Constitution and be the focal point for international and regional commitments in this regard, with oversight by the National Gender and Equality Commission.

Again, the National Gender and Equality Commission and its partners wish to thank you for elevating issues of gender balance, equity and inclusiveness to mandatory status. We are certain that this government will produce tangible evidence of added value to investing in equity and inclusion in the social and economic development, and political landscape of Kenya.

Yours

Winfred Lichuma
Chairperson

CC. Insert Partners' names and logos