



**REPUBLIC OF KENYA
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND GENDER**

REMARKS BY PROF. MARGARET KOBIA, Ph.D, MGH, CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND GENDER DURING THE WORLD POPULATION DAY (WPD) COMMEMORATION AND LAUNCH OF THE STATE OF THE WORLD POPULATION REPORT 2020 ON 11TH JULY 2020 AT KRA AUDITORIUM, TIMES TOWER, NAIROBI

Cabinet Secretary Colleagues of: The National Treasury, Education, Health and Labour

Gov. Wycliffe Oparanya, Chairman, Council of Governors

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am pleased to join you in today's celebrations to commemorate the World Population Day themed; **"Putting the Brakes on Covid-19: How to Safeguard the Health and Rights of Women and Girls Now"** and launch of 'State of the World Population Report 2020' whose theme is; **'Against my will: Defying the practices that harm women and girls and undermine equality'**.
2. Celebrating World Population day matters as it highlights problems associated with high population which stand at 7.8 Billion. Some of the problems are effects of environment, right to health including reproductive health, family planning, gender equality and human rights. To tackle these challenges a multi-agency stakeholder and partnerships are necessary. Therefore, I commend the partners and other agencies who have dedicated their resources, time and energy to tackle the challenges.

GENDERED IMPACT OF COVID 19

3. The COVID 19 Pandemic has drastically affected the socio-economic landscape of women, girls and other vulnerable groups. The crisis threaten social economic gains realized over the years. Since the outbreak, there has been a sharp increase in the risk of domestic violence and intimate partner violence. In Kenya, teenage pregnancy had remained unchanged since 2008 with a National prevalence of 18% with one in every five teenage girls is either pregnant or already has a baby. The situation has worsened as a result of the Pandemic. Many school-going girls have also been subjected to Female Genital Mutilation and child marriage due to closure of the schools and restrictions of movement.
4. Since the outbreak of the Pandemic, we have registered worrying trends through the **National GBV helpline 1195** that my Ministry operates on a 24/7 basis with the Health Care Assistance Kenya. By end of March alone, GBV cases increased by 33.7% and by June the increase was by 50%.
5. Regarding increased GBV, I wish to applaud the H.E the President for directing action on GBV and the rising cases of teenage pregnancies. This will strengthen the institution of family and ensure a safe space for women and girls. More importantly, His Excellency's Directive for the National Crime Research Centre to investigate underlying causes and provide advisory that will initiate prosecution of all violators is indeed, an energizer to all those working towards an equal and inclusive **society.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

6. Faced with such a dire situation of Gender Based Violence that has been compounded by the COVID 19, collective efforts of stakeholders through multi-sectoral initiatives that include **Women and girls protection** from the criminals, **empowerment** with knowledge, skills and resources, **involvement** and engagement in decision making. I am happy to inform you that Government programs and policies take the mentioned path.
7. It is our strong conviction that such an intervention will provide a multipronged response, create synergies and unity of purpose, bring different agencies comparative advantage, and contribute to achievements that are greater than the sum of the individual efforts of stakeholders.
8. Men, Women, girls and all members of society are further encouraged to exercise their agency in reporting and shining spotlight on those amongst us who endanger the safety, health rights and dignity of women and girls.

CONCLUSION

9. The challenges posed by the COVID-19 offers us a great opportunity to get to Zero new cases of GBV through enhanced multi-sectoral coordination and partnerships for better quality of life of the world population. A commitment we made during ICPD25.

Finally, I declare we have the will, the commitment, the inspiration and good will from our National Leadership to make it happen. Let us do well by doing good to our population.

I THANK YOU.