



## REPUBLIC OF KENYA

### MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND GENDER

#### **OPENING REMARKS BY PROF. MARGARET KOBIA, PH.D, MGH, CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND GENDER DURING THE OPEN VIRTUAL EVENT ORGANIZED BY OECD DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION DIRECTORATE TO CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY ON 11<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2021**

#### **Distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen.**

1. Thank you for inviting me to speak at this open event to discuss pertinent gender issues on effective strategies on financing for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.
2. The focus of this meeting **"From recovery to sustainable development: where is the money for gender equality and women's empowerment?"** is timely given the situation we are faced with as a global family.
3. The **Global Gender Index of 2020**, attests to the situation of women's economic empowerment. The report indicates that gender gap is widest globally in the economic participation and opportunity sub index which stood at only **58 percent**.
4. This clearly indicates that economically, women are more vulnerable to economic shocks brought about by crises including Covid 19 pandemic. COVID-19 pandemic has intensified the feminization of poverty, hampering female participation in the labour market and exacerbating inequality in terms of access to and use of resources.

5. The Government of Kenya recognizes the critical role played by women and has ensured that women are at the center of the decision-making platforms in the management and recovery from of the pandemic. For example, at the national level, women are represented at the key committees that are coordinating the management and recovery of COVID- 19 pandemic.
6. We are committed to ensure that **that the recovery from this crisis does not entrench or re-establish long standing inequalities. As such, an assessment study** was carried out to understand Gendered Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Women and Girls for informed programme and recovery measures.
7. Kenya developed a blue print '*Building Back Stronger: Transforming the Kenyan Economy Post-COVID-19*', which among other strategies, addresses the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, including:
  - i. Targeted women's economic strategies and cash transfer programming;
  - ii. Ensuring containment and mitigation measures also address the burden of care work, particularly those that affect women and girls, including supporting them to recover and build resilience for future shocks;
  - iii. Ensuring that programmes, policies or legislation aimed at providing economic relief are based on needs and vulnerabilities.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

8. Building resilience for developing economies in particular and ensuring no one is left behind requires the inclusion of gender programmes, addressing the vulnerabilities of women as a result of COVID-19.

**Therefore, to address gender inequalities that the pandemic has exposed countries to and to create meaningful change, development partners need to:**

- i. Embrace and scale up their investment support to gender responsive policies and programmes across key sectors and ensure effective and full participation of women including grassroots women in all response and recovery from COVID mechanisms established;
- ii. Compliment government efforts by increasing their focus on social protection; support women's economic empowerment through skills development, access to technology, grants and widening their market opportunities to increase their livelihood and increase efforts to recognize, reduce, and redistribute unpaid care work;
- iii. Invest in programmes and interventions that seek to end violence against women; ensuring access to healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health services going beyond immediate COVID crisis concerns and addressing structural issues related to gender equality;
- iv. Strengthen partnerships to accelerate implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment in line with Beijing platform for action and to accelerate overall recovery of women from the pandemic.

### **Ladies and gentlemen,**

9. In conclusion, this global public health crisis has direct implications for gender equality and women's empowerment. Kenya stands in solidarity with the rest of the world and we will continue to advocate for effective response and recovery for the gendered dimension of COVID 19, leaving no one behind and towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

10. I wish to thank OECD Development Co-Operation Directorate for this informative event. I therefore look forward to greater partnerships as we continue to invest in women in the COVID 19 recovery journey and beyond.

**I THANK YOU**