



*Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya to the United Nations*  
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STATEMENT

BY

**HON. DR. NAOMI SHADAN-ECHIMBU**  
**MINISTER FOR GENDER, CHILDREN AND**  
**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**  
**AND HEAD OF KENYA DELEGATION**

TO

THE

**56<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE**  
**COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW)**

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2012  
UN HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK

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Government of Kenya  
Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development  
P.O. Box 30000, Nairobi, Kenya

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HON. DR. NAOMI SHABAN, BSN, MP,  
MINISTER FOR GENDER, CHILDREN AND  
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AND HEAD OF KENYA DELEGATION

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**Chairperson,  
Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as Chairpersons of the 56<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women and to assure you of our support during this Session.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement by the distinguished representative of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China as well as the statement by the distinguished representative of Tunisia on behalf of the African Group.

**Chairperson,**

Allow me to highlight some of the significant achievements as well as challenges faced in our efforts to transform the lives of rural women and resort to the priority themes:

Gender equality, non-discrimination, protection of the marginalized including persons living with disabilities and persons with disabilities are key principles of the Kenya Constitution 2010. The Constitution has enshrined a new era of the empowerment of women and the fight against poverty and hunger. The Bill of Rights provides for the right to equal treatment of women and men in economic, social and political spheres. The development strategy enshrined in our Constitution aims at promoting socio-economic development and the provision of proximate, easy access to financial services to promote equitable sharing of resources throughout Kenya.

**Chairperson,**

Kenya has progressively enacted and is enforcing relevant laws which protect the rights of women and contribute to their empowerment. The Employment Act, of 2007 prohibits discrimination and harassment of employees on the basis of sex. Further, Kenya is formulating new laws that will significantly transform women's access to land control over land use. In addition, reform bills; The Marriage Bill, 2012; Matrimonial Proceedings Bill, 2012. In order to address the intersection of HIV/AIDS and gender based violence and its devastating impact on rural women's health, Kenya has enacted the HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act, 2006 and is currently reviewing the Protection Bill 2012.

**Chairperson,**

The legal and policy frameworks have been further strengthened with the establishment of new and independent constitutional institutions. These are:

- The **Commission for the Implementation of the Constitution**; to oversee the implementation of the new constitution
- The **National Gender and Equality Commission**; the oversight body monitoring gender mainstreaming in the country,
- The **National Human Rights Commission**; the entity addressing all areas of human rights and;
- The **Commission on Maladministration**; whose mandate is to investigate maladministration.

The Government is also implementing a number of policies which include:

- **Vision 2030, Kenya's Development Blueprint** which aims at transforming Kenya into a middle income country with equitable distribution of resources by 2030 at the rate of 10 per cent per annum.
- **Maternal and Child Health Policy 2009** which protects women's land rights
- **National Reproductive Health Policy 2007**

**Maternal and New Born Health Roadmap 2010** to accelerate the reduction of maternal and new born morbidity and mortality

- **State Strategy for Revitalising Agriculture 2014-2017** to contribute to improved agricultural productivity and food security at household level for the poor

**Chairperson,**

Kenya's constitution provides for a minimum threshold of not more than 2/3 of standing gender in all decision-making organs, thus ensuring sustainable development. The Political Parties Act 2011 and the Elections Act 2011 ensure conformity with this principle.

The Government has created **umbrellas and funds** to address the needs of women, the youth, persons with disabilities, orphans and other vulnerable groups. Further women have access to devolved funds such as the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and the Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF). More importantly, the Constitution provides that at least 15 per cent of the national budget will be allocated to the county government when the participation of women in the management of affairs is addressed.

The Government has created an enabling environment that has led to an increase in women within the financial sector. This has tremendously increased the productivity of rural women in business enterprise. Further, women in the

rural areas are enjoying the benefits of efficient and logical educational advancements in Kenya particularly in the communication sector, mobile phone sector, money transfer and e-banking.

**Chairperson,**

In 2010/2011 financial year, the Government increased allocation to the education sector by 87.0 per cent. This has led to an increase in the number of educational institutions, improved facilities in the rural areas and enhanced enrolment of girls and boys. Furthermore, the Government allocated US\$2.2 million in the current financial year 2011/2012 for the provision of sanitary towers and latrines in the vicinity of girls' and boys' schools, especially those in the rural areas. We expect this to be a first.

**Chairperson,**

The National Agriculture and Livestock Extension Programme (NALEP) where we have reached 46 per cent of the beneficiaries has significantly contributed to improvement of food security and increased household incomes. The Government has also been supporting women small scale holder farmers through the provision of subsidized fertilizer and agricultural tools as well as reviving irrigation schemes and other agricultural projects to ensure a secure food security, to boost agricultural productivity, the Government had in the last two years increased its budgetary allocation to the sector in order to scale up irrigation in dry areas and marshy underutilised lands.

**Chairperson,**

Despite the gains and efforts made, climate change is one of the greatest challenges to food security in Kenya. Unpredictable and variable weather patterns compromise production, on distribution and accessibility, thereby creating poverty and poor health. Despite the Constitutional bar against aggressive chemical practices these practices are still a challenge to women's economic productive resources, employment and property ownership, thus hindering their empowerment.

The Government is alive to these challenges and will remain steadfast in its quest to empower rural women by safeguarding their rights and interests the Constitution. As I conclude, I wish to reaffirm and assure you of Kenya's commitment to the empowerment of women in all spheres of life.

**I thank you.**

rural areas are enjoying the benefits of efficient technological advancements in Kenya - particularly in the communication sector, mobile phone sector, money transfer and e-banking.

Chairperson,

In 2010/11 financial year, the Government invested - chairman of the education sector by 80.0 per cent. This has led to an increase in the number of educational institutions, improved facilities in the rural areas and enhanced enrolment of girls and boys. Further, the Government allocated USD3.65 million in the current financial year 2011/2012 for the provision of sanitary towels in a bid to curb absenteeism of girls from school especially those in the rural areas. We expect this to grow in future.

Chairperson,

The National Agriculture and Livestock Extension Programme (NALEP) where women constitute 46 per cent of the beneficiaries has significantly contributed to improvement of food security and increased household incomes. The Government has also been supporting women small scale holder farmers through the provision of subsidized fertilizer and certified seeds as well as reviving irrigation schemes aimed at boosting production levels and assuring food security. The best agricultural products the Government has in the last two years included tea, dairy products, coffee and maize. In addition, irrigation schemes and water supply systems have been established.

Chairperson,

Despite the gains and efforts made, there are still a number of the greatest challenges in rural areas. The lack of access to credit, extension services, markets, patterns compromise production, distribution and accessibility thereby elevating poverty and poor health. Despite the Constitutional bar against negative cultural practices these practices are still a challenge to women's accessing productive resources, employment and property ownership thus hindering their empowerment.

The Government is alive to these challenges and will remain steadfast in its quest to empower rural women by strengthening the legal framework for their empowerment. As I conclude, I wish to re-affirm and assure you of Kenya's commitment to a comprehensive and sustained support of women in all spheres of life.

I thank you.