



EQUALITY BULLETIN

FOLLOW THE MONEY

COUNTIES UNDER PRESSURE TO REWIRE KENYA'S BUDGETS AS GENDER RESPONSIVE FINANCE TAKES CENTRE STAGE.

Kenya's public finance system is undergoing renewed scrutiny as the National Gender and Equality Commission intensifies Gender Responsive Budgeting engagements across Turkana, Marsabit, and Wajir counties. The sessions bring together county executives, finance officers, civil society organisations, and development partners to examine how public resources are planned and allocated, with growing emphasis on whether budgets are responding to inequality in access to services among women, men, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, and marginalised communities. The engagements come at a time when counties are preparing and implementing development budgets that directly determine access to essential services at the community level. Page 10, 11



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A Message from the Chief Executive Officer

This edition of the Equality Bulletin highlights an important pillar of inclusive development—**Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB)** and **Child-Responsive Budgeting (CRB)**. Public budgets are among the clearest expressions of government priorities, and equitable budgeting ensures that the needs of all citizens, especially women, children, and other groups that have historically faced exclusion, are taken into account.

When resources are planned and allocated equitably, budgets become instruments for expanding access to education, healthcare, economic empowerment, protection services, and equal opportunity. As highlighted in this edition, responsive budgeting is essential to addressing persistent inequalities and ensuring that development benefits every Kenyan.

The stories featured here also reflect the Commission’s continued work in promoting accountability, influencing policy, and strengthening inclusive governance at both national and county levels. They demonstrate that progress is most meaningful when decisions are guided by fairness, dignity, and measurable impact.

In line with its constitutional mandate, NGECK remains committed to monitoring compliance, advising on policy and legislative reforms, and advocating for equitable planning and budgeting processes that turn the promise of equality into a lived reality for all.

Purity Ngina, PhD, MBS
Chief Executive Officer
National Gender and Equality Commission



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NGEC and Plan International Kenya Deepen Safeguarding Capacity Through Intensive Training on Protection, Accountability and Child Safety Systems

Plan International Kenya-led training strengthens institutional safeguarding systems, mandatory reporting, and ethical responsibility across NGECE programmes

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), in collaboration with Plan International Kenya, has undertaken an intensive Safeguarding Training aimed at strengthening institutional systems and reinforcing individual responsibility in the prevention and response to harm. Led by Plan International Kenya, the training brought together Commission staff to enhance understanding of safeguarding frameworks, child protection principles, and accountability mechanisms, with a focus on creating safer and more inclusive environments for children, young people, women, persons with disabilities, older persons, minorities and marginalised communities.



NGEC staff during safeguarding training session



Plan International Kenya Child Rights & Safeguarding Advisor Halima Sarah addresses participants during safeguarding training.

The training focused on reinforcing safeguarding as a core institutional responsibility that combines policy, systems, and individual conduct in preventing and responding to harm. Participants examined NGECE's safeguarding mandate alongside national and global child protection frameworks, with emphasis on how institutional procedures must be consistently applied across programmes and engagements.

The sessions underscored that safeguarding is both a structural requirement and a behavioural responsibility, requiring ethical practice, vigilance, and adherence to established reporting and response mechanisms. A key component of the training involved the application of child protection principles within both local and international contexts.

Drawing from global safeguarding standards, participants were trained on zero tolerance to abuse and exploitation, mandatory reporting obligations, and the responsibility of all staff to act when safeguarding concerns arise.

Plan International Kenya led discussions on how international safeguarding principles are translated into practical organisational procedures, particularly in programme delivery and community-level interactions. The training reinforced the importance of consistency, accountability, and responsiveness in safeguarding systems.

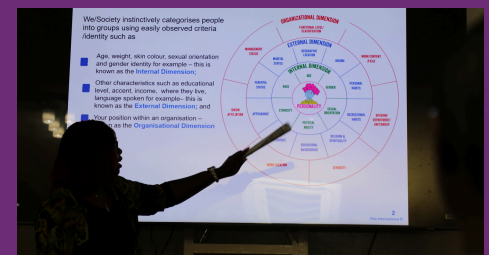
The sessions explored the nature and causes of abuse, with particular focus on how social norms, power relations, and individual behaviour influence vulnerability and protection outcomes.

Participants examined how gender roles, authority structures, disability, and inequality can shape exposure to risk and contribute to cases of harm going unreported or unaddressed.

The discussions highlighted the importance of recognising early warning signs and strengthening institutional capacity to respond effectively to safeguarding concerns. Emphasis was placed on the role of personal values, attitudes and behaviour in either strengthening or weakening safeguarding systems.

A central outcome of the training was the advancement of a Safeguarding Policy and practical implementation guide.

Participants noted that well-defined safeguarding policies are critical in ensuring that cases of harm are not ignored and that responses are consistent, timely and survivor-centred. The framework is also intended to improve clarity in reporting procedures and strengthen institutional coordination in handling safeguarding concerns.



NGEC staff during a safeguarding training

The Safeguarding Training led by Plan International Kenya in collaboration with the National Gender and Equality Commission marks a significant step in strengthening institutional protection systems and ethical practice. By enhancing understanding of safeguarding frameworks, mandatory reporting obligations, and behavioural responsibility, the training equips staff with practical tools to prevent harm and respond effectively to protection concerns.

The initiative reinforces a clear institutional commitment to safeguarding as a foundational principle for all programmes and engagements, ensuring safer and more inclusive environments for all.

NGEC, European Union in Kenya Deepen Collaboration on Equality, Inclusion and Institutional Strengthening

Engagement highlights shared priorities on gender equality, youth empowerment, GBV and FGM elimination, climate justice, digital transformation and inclusive development



NGEC Commissioner Michael Mbithuka, CEO Dr Purity Ngina and staff during a courtesy visit to the European Union Delegation

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) paid a courtesy visit to the European Union in Kenya, where the two institutions held strategic discussions aimed at strengthening collaboration in advancing equality, institutional capacity, and inclusive development.

The engagement provided a platform for NGENC to present its key achievements and ongoing initiatives in promoting gender equality and inclusion, while also discussing operational challenges in fulfilling its constitutional mandate. The discussions between NGENC and the European Union in ~

Kenya centred on strengthening partnerships that support equality, governance reforms, and inclusive development outcomes.

Both institutions reaffirmed their commitment to advancing shared priorities that include gender equality, youth empowerment, and the promotion of inclusive public policy frameworks. The dialogue also underscored the importance of coordinated efforts in addressing structural inequalities that continue to affect access to opportunities and public services for vulnerable and marginalised groups. During the engagement, NGENC outlined key achievements in advancing its mandate, particularly in promoting

gender equality, inclusion of special interest groups, and monitoring compliance with constitutional provisions on non-discrimination.

The Commission also highlighted ongoing initiatives aimed at strengthening institutional frameworks for equality and improving coordination across national and county levels of government. At the same time, NGENC noted challenges affecting the delivery of its mandate, including resource constraints, implementation gaps within public institutions, and the need for stronger enforcement of equality-related policies.

The dialogue identified several areas of convergence between NGENC and the European Union, including equitable economic growth, gender responsive budgeting, climate justice, digital transformation, and inclusive governance systems.

The courtesy visit between the National Gender and Equality Commission and the European Union in Kenya reinforced a shared commitment to advancing equality, institutional strengthening and inclusive development. The engagement highlighted aligned priorities on gender equality, youth empowerment, GBV and FGM elimination, climate justice, digital transformation and gender responsive budgeting.

NGEC hosts South Africa on GBVF lessons

NGEC Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa leads high-level engagement as Kenyan and South African leaders exchange lessons on gender-based violence, femicide prevention and survivor-centred protection systems

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), led by Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa, hosted a benchmarking visit by South Africa's Limpopo Provincial Legislature focused on strengthening responses to Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF). The Commission presented Kenya's legal frameworks, institutional systems, accountability mechanisms and survivor-centred approaches. Present were NGENC Vice Chairperson Thomas Koyer, Commissioner Dr Margaret Karungaru and members of the Limpopo Legislature Portfolio Committee on Social Development led by Hon. Simon Matsobane Mathe.

The engagement provided a platform for Kenya and South Africa to exchange lessons on prevention, protection, access to justice, institutional coordination and survivor support systems.

NGEC outlined Kenya's interventions in addressing GBV and femicide, including legislative tools, oversight mechanisms and efforts to improve survivor support pathways within justice and governance systems.



NGEC Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa with Limpopo Social Development Committee member led by Hon. Simon Matsobane Mathe during a benchmarking visit

The visit marked an important step in strengthening Kenya-South Africa cooperation on GBVF, with both sides affirming that progress depends on strong institutions, partnerships, prevention efforts and unwavering commitment to the dignity and safety of survivors.

Stakeholders Advance Child-Responsive Budgeting Framework in Kenya Planning Reform Push

NGEC, Plan International Kenya and partners develop first draft Child-Responsive Budgeting checklist to strengthen inclusion, transparency and evidence-based public finance for children

A three-day Children Coordination Meeting convened by the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) in collaboration with Plan International Kenya and key stakeholders has marked a significant step toward the development of minimum standards for Child-Responsive Budgeting (CRB) in Kenya. The engagement brought together actors working on children's issues to strengthen how government planning and budgeting processes integrate children's rights, needs and priorities across sectors.

A key outcome of the meeting was the development of the first draft Child-Responsive Budgeting checklist, designed to guide institutions in planning, allocating and tracking public resources for children in a more structured and accountable manner. The coordination meeting focused on advancing Child-Responsive Budgeting as a practical approach to ensure that public financial management systems reflect the realities and needs of children.

Participants worked on developing minimum standards that can be applied across government institutions to improve consistency in how resources are allocated for child-focused programmes.

The discussions emphasised the importance of aligning budgeting processes with children's rights frameworks, while ensuring that planning and expenditure decisions are informed by reliable evidence on children's needs across different sectors.

The engagement also highlighted the need for stronger coordination among institutions responsible for child welfare, protection, education, health and social services. A key milestone of the meeting was the formulation of the first draft Child-Responsive Budgeting checklist.

The tool is designed to guide government institutions in assessing whether their budgeting processes adequately consider the needs and rights of children at all stages of planning, allocation, implementation and monitoring.



Vice Chairperson Thomas Koyier joins NGECK, Plan International personnel and key stakeholders in advancing development of minimum standards for Child-Responsive Budgeting (CRB) in Kenya

It aims to strengthen transparency and accountability by providing a structured framework for tracking whether resources intended for children are effectively planned and utilised. Stakeholders noted that the checklist will also help identify gaps in current budgeting practices and provide a basis for improving policy and programme design.

Participants emphasised that child-responsive budgeting must be grounded in evidence-based planning that reflects the real conditions affecting children across the country. The discussions highlighted the need for improved data collection and analysis to inform resource allocation decisions affecting children's services and welfare.

Stakeholders noted that inclusive budgeting processes should take into account disparities affecting children in different contexts, including those in marginalised communities and vulnerable situations.

The engagement underscored that planning and budgeting systems must move beyond general allocations to more targeted and responsive approaches that address specific child-related needs.

A key focus of the discussions was the need to strengthen mechanisms for tracking how public resources allocated for children are used.

Participants noted that improved monitoring systems are essential for ensuring that budgeted funds translate into effective service delivery and measurable outcomes for children. The checklist is expected to support institutions in improving oversight and ensuring that child-focused programmes are implemented as intended.

Stakeholders also highlighted the importance of transparency in budgeting processes to enhance public trust and accountability. The coordination meeting brought together government institutions, development partners and organisations working on child rights and welfare.

The collaboration between NGECK, Plan International Kenya and other stakeholders was identified as critical in advancing child-responsive budgeting reforms.

Participants reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening partnerships aimed at improving planning and budgeting systems to better reflect children's needs.

The engagement also provided a platform for sharing experiences and aligning approaches to ensure coherence in child-focused interventions.

Through its involvement in the Child-Responsive Budgeting initiative, the Commission is working to ensure that public resource allocation processes are aligned with constitutional and policy commitments on children's rights and welfare.

NGEC Strengthens Human Rights Reporting Capacity Through Two-Day Training on African Charter Obligations

About 60 staff trained on human rights frameworks, regional reporting systems, and coordination mechanisms to enhance Kenya's compliance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) has convened a two-day training programme facilitated by the Department of Justice aimed at strengthening institutional capacity on human rights frameworks and reporting procedures. The training brought together approximately 60 staff members from various departments to enhance technical skills, deepen understanding of regional reporting obligations, and improve coordination in line with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

The training programme concentrated on strengthening understanding of Kenya's obligations under regional and continental human rights instruments, with particular reference to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

Participants were taken through key reporting procedures, compliance requirements, and institutional responsibilities associated with human rights monitoring and documentation. The sessions also focused on improving accuracy, consistency, and coordination in the preparation of reports submitted under regional accountability frameworks. Officials noted that effective reporting is a critical component of human rights protection systems, as it enables states to track progress, identify gaps, and implement corrective measures.

The engagement brought together approximately 60 staff drawn from different departments within the Commission, reflecting an internal effort to build a coordinated and technically equipped workforce. The training aimed to enhance staff competence in interpreting human rights frameworks and applying reporting standards in line with regional and international obligations.

Participants were also exposed to practical approaches for collecting, analysing, and consolidating human rights data across different thematic areas.



NGEC staff during training on African Charter obligations

This capacity-building initiative is part of ongoing institutional efforts to ensure that the Commission is well equipped to fulfil its monitoring and reporting mandate.

A key focus of the training was strengthening coordination mechanisms within the Commission to support efficient human rights monitoring and reporting.

Discussions highlighted the importance of interdepartmental collaboration in ensuring that data collection, analysis, and reporting processes are streamlined and consistent.

Improved coordination was identified as essential for producing comprehensive and timely reports that accurately reflect the human rights situation in the country.

The engagement also emphasised the need for clear communication channels and standardized procedures to support institutional efficiency.

The training was anchored in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which provides a regional framework for the protection and promotion of human rights across African Union member states.

Participants were guided on Kenya's obligations under the Charter, including reporting responsibilities and mechanisms for monitoring compliance.

The two-day training programme marks a continued effort by the National Gender and Equality Commission to strengthen institutional capacity in human rights monitoring and reporting.

NGEC, EACC Boost Inclusion in Anti-Corruption Drive as Integrity Plan 2023–2028 is Reviewed



Delegates pose for a group photo during the Mid-Term Performance Review of the Kenya Integrity Plan 2023–2028 held in Naivasha

Advancing inclusion in the fight against corruption is emerging as a key pillar in Kenya's governance and accountability reforms, as the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) and the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) deepen collaboration under the Kenya Leadership and Integrity Forum framework.

The commitment was reaffirmed during the implementation and Mid-Term Performance Review of the Kenya Integrity Plan 2023–2028 held in Naivasha, where NGEC was represented by Joshua Ogembo. The engagement focused on assessing progress, strengthening partnerships, and embedding inclusion within national integrity systems.

The Naivasha forum brought together stakeholders involved in governance, accountability and anti-corruption efforts to review progress under the Kenya Integrity Plan 2023–2028. Discussions centred on the need to integrate inclusion principles into anti-corruption systems to ensure that accountability frameworks are responsive to the needs of all segments of society.

The forum underscored the importance of designing anti-corruption systems that are accessible and responsive to all citizens. The collaboration between NGEC and EACC under the Kenya Leadership and Integrity Forum framework was identified as a key mechanism for advancing integrity and inclusion objectives.

The review process was also used to align priorities for the remaining implementation period, with emphasis on strengthening inclusion and accessibility in anti-corruption frameworks.

NGEC Kisumu Regional Office Joins Launch of SAWA Project to Strengthen Young Women’s Leadership and Civic Participation

New AU–EU Youth Voices Lab-supported initiative targets mentorship, agency building, and inclusion of young women in governance and policy spaces across Kisumu County

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) Kisumu Regional Office has participated in the inception meeting of the Strengthening Action and Women Agency (SAWA) Project in Kisumu County, an initiative aimed at empowering young women and expanding their participation in governance, civic engagement, and public policy processes. The project is being implemented by Dreams Redefined CBO with support from the AU–EU Youth Voices Lab and in partnership with Restless Development, focusing on mentorship, leadership development, and structured pathways for young women to influence decision-making.

The SAWA Project is designed to strengthen the agency of young women by addressing long-standing barriers that limit their participation in leadership and governance systems. These barriers include restricted access to mentorship opportunities, economic constraints, harmful gender stereotypes, unpaid care responsibilities, and exclusion from formal policy and decision-making spaces.

The initiative seeks to respond to these challenges through structured mentorship, leadership training, and sustained capacity building aimed at enhancing confidence, networks, and civic engagement skills among participants. The programme aligns with broader regional and continental efforts supported under the AU–EU Youth Voices Lab, which promotes youth engagement in governance and accountability processes across participating countries.

The inception meeting was described as a co-creation session that brought together stakeholders to design a practical roadmap for implementation, partnership development, and long-term sustainability.

Participants engaged in discussions on programme structure, delivery mechanisms, and strategies for ensuring that outcomes remain locally relevant and community-driven.

The approach reflects a broader shift in youth programming that emphasises participation of beneficiaries in designing interventions that directly affect them, particularly in governance and leadership development initiatives.



Kisumu Regional Head Mr. Davis Okeyo addresses participants at the inception meeting of the Strengthening Action and Women Agency (SAWA) Project in Kisumu County

A central component of the SAWA Project is a structured mentorship programme that will directly support 60 young women through 30 mentors.

The mentorship framework is intended to provide participants with leadership skills, confidence building, networking opportunities, and practical tools for engagement in decision-making spaces.

Stakeholders noted that mentorship remains a critical intervention in addressing the leadership gap affecting young women, particularly in contexts where access to role models and institutional support remains limited.

The programme is also expected to strengthen peer learning and intergenerational knowledge transfer between mentors and mentees.

The SAWA initiative is implemented under the AU–EU Youth Voices Lab framework, a multi-country programme focused on strengthening youth participation in governance, advocacy, and policy engagement.

The initiative places emphasis on empowering young people to influence decision-making processes and improve accountability within institutions through structured engagement platforms and capacity development support.

The National Gender and Equality Commission continues to support initiatives that promote equality, inclusion, and non-discrimination, particularly among special interest groups including women, youth, persons with disabilities, and marginalised communities.

Through its participation in the SAWA Project inception meeting, the Commission reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening institutional frameworks that support women’s participation in governance and public policy processes.

The Commission’s engagement reflects its broader mandate to ensure that equality principles are integrated into development programmes and institutional practices at county and national levels.

The launch of the Strengthening Action and Women Agency (SAWA) Project in Kisumu County marks a targeted effort to address persistent barriers to young women’s participation in governance and civic life.

Through structured mentorship, capacity building, and collaborative implementation supported by regional partners, the initiative seeks to strengthen leadership pathways and civic engagement opportunities.

As implementation progresses, emphasis will remain on ensuring that young women are not only participants in governance processes but also active contributors to decision-making systems at community and county levels.

Kenya Pushes for Zero Tolerance on Gender-Based Violence at SWEDD+ Summit in Banjul as NGEK Calls for Stronger Regional Action

NGEC Chairperson urges coordinated systems, accountability and survivor-centred responses, as Kenya shares legal and institutional reforms at Africa-wide empowerment forum

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) participated in the First Ladies of the Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend Plus (SWEDD+) initiative held in Banjul, The Gambia, where Kenya renewed its commitment to zero tolerance on gender-based violence. NGEK Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa called for decisive implementation of gender-based violence frameworks, stronger institutional coordination, and sustained accountability mechanisms to protect women and girls across participating countries.



First Ladies, government representatives and regional stakeholders pose for a group photo at the SWEDD+ First Ladies Forum

The SWEDD+ engagement brought together First Ladies, government representatives, and regional stakeholders to advance coordinated action on women's empowerment, demographic dividends, and elimination of gender-based violence across participating African countries. Discussions centred on strengthening systems that prevent violence, improve survivor support, and enhance accountability within justice, health, and social protection structures.

Participants noted that despite progress in policy development across the region, gaps remain in implementation, coordination between institutions, and access to timely services for survivors. The forum emphasised the need for practical, system-wide reforms that move beyond policy commitments to measurable protection outcomes for women and girls.



NGEC Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa addresses the SWEDD+ First Ladies Forum

During the engagement, Hon. Rehema Jaldesa highlighted Kenya's ongoing reforms aimed at strengthening prevention and response to gender-based violence.

These include the development of legal frameworks, establishment of specialised gender-based violence courts, and adoption of survivor-centred service delivery models that integrate legal, medical, and psychosocial support.

She noted that while these reforms represent significant progress, their effectiveness depends on how well institutions coordinate and implement them at national and county levels. The Chairperson emphasised that fragmented systems reduce the impact of otherwise strong legal and policy frameworks.

A key message from the Kenyan delegation was the need for stronger institutional coordination across all actors involved in GBV prevention and response.

This includes justice sector institutions, health service providers, social protection agencies, civil society organisations, and community-based structures.

Hon. Jaldesa stressed that accountability mechanisms must be strengthened to ensure consistent implementation of GBV policies and timely support for survivors.

The discussions reinforced that without coordinated systems, survivors often face delays, service gaps, and inconsistent responses.

Kenya also highlighted ongoing collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency in strengthening gender-based violence prevention and response systems.

Through this partnership, efforts are being directed towards improving county-level response mechanisms, enhancing institutional capacity, and supporting community-based interventions that focus on prevention and early response. The collaboration also supports innovation in service delivery models aimed at improving accessibility and effectiveness of survivor support systems.

The Kenyan delegation underscored ongoing efforts to strengthen GBV response systems at the county level, recognising the critical role of devolved governance structures in service delivery. These efforts include improving referral systems, expanding access to survivor support services, and strengthening community-based prevention initiatives.

Community engagement was identified as a key component in addressing harmful social norms and increasing awareness of available support mechanisms.

Kenya reaffirmed its readiness to share lessons learned from its legal, institutional, and community-based interventions with other SWEDD+ participating countries.

The delegation emphasised the importance of regional cooperation in addressing gender-based violence, particularly through shared strategies, policy alignment, and coordinated action frameworks. The SWEDD+ forum in Banjul provided a platform for renewed regional commitment to eliminating gender-based violence and strengthening women's empowerment systems across Africa.

Parliamentary Committee and NGECE Push for Stronger Inclusion of Special Interest Groups Across Public Sector

Lawmakers and equality commission flag persistent gaps in representation of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and marginalised communities, call for stronger enforcement and affirmative action measures

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) has participated in a strategic engagement with the Parliamentary Committee on Implementation of the Constitution, focused on strengthening the representation of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) across national and county governments as well as the wider public sector. The meeting addressed persistent gaps in the inclusion of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and marginalised and minority communities, with Members of Parliament calling for stronger enforcement of constitutional and policy provisions to ensure equitable participation in governance.

During the engagement, Members of the Parliamentary Committee expressed concern that representation of Special Interest Groups remains below the levels envisaged in the Constitution and related legal frameworks.

The discussions highlighted continued underrepresentation of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and minority and marginalised communities in decision-making structures across both national and county levels of government.



Vice Chairperson Thomas Koyier, Commissioner Michael Mbituka and Director Paul Kuria before the Parliamentary Committee on Implementation of the Constitution in a strategic engagement

Lawmakers noted that despite existing legal provisions on equality and inclusion, implementation gaps continue to limit meaningful participation of these groups in public sector institutions. The concerns were framed within the broader constitutional requirement for inclusivity in governance, which seeks to ensure that all segments of society are represented in public decision-making processes.

Participants in the meeting identified structural and institutional barriers as key contributors to

low representation of Special Interest Groups.

These include challenges in recruitment processes, limited targeted capacity building initiatives, and inadequate enforcement of inclusion policies across public institutions. The discussion also noted gaps in monitoring and reporting systems, which limit the ability to track progress on inclusion commitments and identify areas requiring corrective action.

Members emphasised that without deliberate measures, existing inequalities in access to public sector opportunities are likely to persist.

The Parliamentary Committee proposed a series of practical interventions aimed at addressing representation gaps.

These included strengthening enforcement of existing legal and policy frameworks that support inclusion, enhancing targeted recruitment practices, and expanding capacity building programmes for underrepresented groups.

The proposals also emphasised the need for improved monitoring and reporting mechanisms to track inclusion outcomes across all levels of government. Affirmative action measures were highlighted as a key tool for accelerating equitable representation and ensuring compliance with constitutional requirements.

The engagement underscored the importance of accountability mechanisms in ensuring that inclusion policies are effectively implemented. Participants noted that coordination between oversight institutions, including parliamentary committees and constitutional bodies, is critical in ensuring that government institutions comply with inclusion requirements.

The discussions also highlighted the need for regular reporting on representation of Special Interest Groups within public sector institutions to support evidence-based oversight and policy adjustments.

The National Gender and Equality Commission reiterated its constitutional mandate to promote equality and freedom from discrimination, with a specific focus on monitoring and promoting the inclusion of Special Interest Groups in governance and public service. The Commission continues to support government institutions in implementing inclusion frameworks, conducting assessments on representation gaps, and advising on corrective measures where disparities are identified.

Its engagement with the Parliamentary Committee reflects ongoing efforts to strengthen oversight and implementation of constitutional provisions on equality and inclusion. Members of the Parliamentary Committee reaffirmed their commitment to working collaboratively with relevant institutions to ensure full realization of constitutional provisions on equality and inclusion.

The engagement emphasised the shared responsibility of state institutions in ensuring that no group is excluded from participation in governance and development processes.

The strategic engagement between the National Gender and Equality Commission and the Parliamentary Committee on Implementation of the Constitution highlights renewed focus on addressing representation gaps for Special Interest Groups in public sector institutions.

With emphasis placed on enforcement, targeted recruitment, capacity building and accountability mechanisms, the discussions point to ongoing efforts to strengthen inclusive governance structures.

The outcomes of the engagement reaffirm a constitutional commitment to equitable participation, with a clear expectation that future reforms will prioritise measurable progress in ensuring that all groups are adequately represented in decision-making processes at all levels of government.

NGEC Nakuru Regional Office Hosts Peace Advocates in Strategic Talks on Inclusion, Equality and Social Cohesion

The National Gender and Equality Commission's Nakuru Regional Office hosted officials from the International Family Pageant Global Advocates of Peace Flag in Nakuru for a strategic engagement focused on strengthening collaboration in peacebuilding, gender equality and social inclusion. The meeting brought together stakeholders to examine how inequality, discrimination and exclusion continue to fuel conflict and social instability, while inclusive governance and equal opportunity remain central to peaceful and resilient communities.

The engagement focused on the growing recognition that many conflicts are sustained by structural inequalities that deny sections of society access to opportunities, representation and resources.

Participants noted that where women, youth and marginalised communities are excluded from decision-making processes, public institutions become less responsive and communities more vulnerable to division, mistrust and tension.

They further observed that discrimination in economic participation, education, leadership and access to justice can deepen grievances and weaken social cohesion if left unaddressed. The discussions reflected wider national and international findings that peacebuilding efforts are more sustainable when they address the underlying causes of exclusion rather than responding only to visible conflict.

Stakeholders emphasised that inclusive societies, where rights are protected and participation is broad-based, are more likely to experience long-term peace, economic stability and resilience.

Where communities feel represented and protected, trust in institutions tends to improve, civic participation increases and disputes are more likely to be resolved through dialogue rather than confrontation. Participants also highlighted that empowering women and young people in governance and development processes contributes to stronger local leadership, innovation and shared responsibility.



Nakuru Regional staff and officials from the International Family Pageant Global Advocates of Peace Flag during a strategic engagement in Nakuru

The meeting reaffirmed that equality and peace are closely connected policy priorities rather than separate development goals. A key outcome of the engagement was the shared commitment to strengthen grassroots initiatives that promote peaceful coexistence and civic responsibility.

Discussions explored practical areas of collaboration including community-based civic education programmes, youth empowerment initiatives and joint advocacy on human rights, social cohesion and inclusion. Particular emphasis was placed on reaching communities directly through local forums, awareness campaigns and partnerships that encourage informed participation in governance processes.

Officials noted that sustainable peace is often built at community level, where citizens interact daily and where early tensions can either be resolved through dialogue or allowed to escalate. Youth empowerment featured prominently during the talks, with participants recognising the role of young people as both stakeholders and agents of peace.

The meeting considered opportunities to support youth leadership, civic awareness, entrepreneurship and participation in ~

decision-making spaces as part of broader conflict prevention strategies.

Stakeholders observed that where young people face persistent exclusion, unemployment and lack of representation, communities may become more vulnerable to unrest and instability.

By contrast, investing in youth inclusion can strengthen social resilience and expand opportunities for positive community engagement.

The National Gender and Equality Commission has a constitutional mandate to promote equality and freedom from discrimination, while safeguarding the rights of special interest groups including women, youth, persons with disabilities, children, older members of society, minorities and marginalised communities.

Its engagement with peace-focused organisations reflects the increasing recognition that human rights, equality and peacebuilding are interdependent areas requiring coordinated responses.

Through its regional offices, the Commission continues to expand partnerships aimed at translating constitutional principles into practical community outcomes.

The Nakuru engagement between the Commission and the International Family Pageant Global Advocates of Peace Flag signals a deliberate effort to advance collaborative approaches to peacebuilding rooted in equality and inclusion.

As Kenya continues to address social and economic disparities, such partnerships are expected to play an important role in promoting civic awareness, reducing exclusion and strengthening community cohesion.

The discussions underscored a central policy reality: sustainable peace is more likely where dignity is protected, participation is meaningful and development opportunities are shared across all sections of society.

» CONTINUATION

Gender Budgeting Drive Gains Ground Nationwide



NGEC staff, County Executives, sector directors and budget leads in Marsabit County during discussions on upcoming changes to planned Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) trainings and forums

Kenya's efforts to align public expenditure with constitutional equality and inclusion obligations have intensified, with the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) leading Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) engagements across Turkana, Marsabit and Wajir counties.

The engagements, which brought together county executives, finance officers, civil society organisations and development partners, focus on strengthening how public budgets are planned, allocated and assessed to reflect the needs of women, men, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons and marginalised communities.

The initiative comes amid growing recognition that county budgets directly determine access to essential services and that financial allocations remain a key driver of inequality or inclusion in Kenya's devolved system.

Across Kenya, public budgets are increasingly being analysed beyond their fiscal function, with growing emphasis on their role as instruments that shape social and economic outcomes.

Under the devolved system, county governments control major service delivery sectors including health, water, agriculture, early childhood education, local infrastructure and markets.

These sectors directly affect household welfare and determine access to basic rights in practice.

Despite constitutional guarantees of equality, analysis of public finance systems shows that budgeting processes often do not systematically integrate gender or inclusion analysis. In many cases, allocations are made without detailed assessment of how different population groups are affected by public spending decisions.

This gap has contributed to persistent inequalities in access to services, particularly affecting women, persons with disabilities, youth and communities in arid and semi-arid regions.

Gender Responsive Budgeting is a public finance approach that integrates equality considerations into all stages of budgeting, from planning and formulation to implementation and evaluation.

It does not create separate budgets for specific groups. Instead, it examines whether government revenue and ~

expenditure decisions respond to the different needs and circumstances of the population. The approach is grounded in the principle that equal allocation of resources does not automatically produce equal outcomes. It therefore focuses on whether public spending reduces or reinforces existing inequalities.

In Kenya, official GRB guidelines are designed to support ministries, departments and counties in mainstreaming gender considerations into planning and budgeting processes, while also enabling tracking of outcomes across sectors.



Participants pose for a group photo during a Gender Responsive Budgeting training in Wajir County

However, implementation remains uneven, with limited integration of gender analysis into mainstream budget documentation and planning cycles. Kenya's Constitution provides the legal foundation for equality, non-discrimination and equitable access to public services. These principles extend to public finance management and require that state resources be distributed in a manner that promotes fairness and inclusion.

» CONTINUATION



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County governments remain central to the success of Gender Responsive Budgeting because they control sectors that directly shape daily life outcomes.

Health budgets determine availability of maternal services and emergency care. Water infrastructure influences time use and household productivity. Agricultural spending affects livelihoods in rural and pastoralist economies. Education allocations shape long-term human capital development.

Because of this proximity to citizens, county budgeting decisions often have more immediate and visible impacts than national-level fiscal policy. Where budgets fail to reflect differentiated needs, service delivery gaps tend to widen, particularly for groups already facing structural disadvantages.

The engagements in Turkana, Marsabit and Wajir counties reflect the growing emphasis on addressing inequality in regions facing compounded development challenges. These counties are characterised by arid and semi-arid conditions, dispersed settlements, limited infrastructure networks and frequent exposure to drought and climate shocks.

These factors increase the cost of accessing basic services and intensify vulnerability among households. Stakeholders involved in the engagements noted that in such contexts, budgeting decisions must go beyond uniform allocations and instead incorporate vulnerability and equity considerations.

For example, the location of water infrastructure affects time burdens disproportionately borne by women and girls. The distribution of health facilities influences maternal health outcomes and emergency response capacity. Investment in livestock and climate resilience programmes determines household stability during drought cycles.



Abdiwahab Mohamed, Lotaruk Nahashon and Lewis Mwaniki during a high-level Gender Responsive Budgeting forum in Turkana County.

Despite policy recognition, several structural challenges continue to limit the effective implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting.

A key constraint is the limited availability of disaggregated data that captures differences by gender, age and disability status. Without this information, it becomes difficult to assess whether public spending addresses specific needs or reproduces existing inequalities.

Technical capacity within budgeting systems is another challenge. While finance officers are trained in fiscal planning, many lack specialised skills in gender and inclusion analysis, reducing the integration of GRB principles into mainstream budgeting processes.

Institutional fragmentation further complicates implementation, as gender mainstreaming functions are often separated from core budget-planning units, limiting coordination during the formulation and evaluation stages. In addition, many budgeting systems continue to rely on historical allocation patterns rather than updated assessments of need, which can entrench existing disparities over time.

Public participation is a legal requirement in Kenya's budgeting process, but its effectiveness remains uneven. In many cases, consultations occur late in the budget cycle, after key priorities have already been determined. Technical budget documents are often not accessible to non-specialist participants, limiting meaningful engagement.

Representation of women, youth and persons with disabilities in decision-making forums also remains inconsistent, affecting the inclusiveness of inputs received during consultations. These limitations have prompted increased emphasis on strengthening participation mechanisms so that citizen input informs actual allocation decisions rather than serving as procedural compliance.

Policy discussions increasingly highlight the economic cost of exclusion in public finance systems. When women and girls spend significant time on unpaid care work due to inadequate infrastructure, labour productivity is reduced. When persons with disabilities are excluded from services and economic opportunities, potential economic output is lost. When youth lack access to training and employment pathways, long-term economic growth is constrained.

From this perspective, exclusionary budgeting is not only a social equity issue but also a macroeconomic efficiency concern. Conversely, inclusive budgeting can enhance workforce participation, improve health outcomes, strengthen resilience to shocks and reduce long-term public expenditure pressures.

The expansion of Gender Responsive Budgeting in Kenya signals a shift in public finance governance from focusing solely on expenditure levels to assessing outcomes and equity impacts. The engagements in Turkana, Marsabit and Wajir counties underscore the growing expectation that budgets must respond to lived realities, particularly in regions facing structural and environmental disadvantage.

NGEC Joins Stakeholders for Launch of Ubuntu Village Social Justice Centre in Push for Community-Based Access to Justice

The National Gender and Equality Commission's Kisumu Regional Office joined stakeholders from across Western Kenya during the convening of the Social Justice Centers Working Group – Western Chapter and the groundbreaking of the Ubuntu Village Social Justice Centre in Kisumu County. The forum brought together social justice centres, civil society partners, county stakeholders and community leaders to strengthen grassroots responses to injustice, expand access to rights information and improve support systems for vulnerable communities.

The Ubuntu Village Social Justice Centre is expected to serve as a safe and accessible community space where residents can meet, organise, seek information and raise concerns affecting their rights and welfare. Stakeholders at the event said the centre will provide a platform where wananchi can learn about legal protections, civic responsibilities and available support mechanisms without fear or intimidation.

The initiative is also designed to promote local leadership development, dialogue, healing and mental well-being, particularly in communities where residents face challenges such as discrimination, violence, exclusion and limited access to formal justice systems. Participants noted that community-based centres can play an important role in bridging the gap between citizens and institutions by creating trusted spaces for engagement.

The discussions reflected wider concerns that many Kenyans, particularly women, youth and other vulnerable groups, often hesitate to report injustice due to fear of retaliation, stigma, financial barriers or lack of confidence in available systems. Human rights advocates at the forum observed that distance from institutions, low awareness of legal rights and limited psychosocial support frequently discourage reporting of abuse or discrimination. By placing support services closer to communities, stakeholders said centres such as Ubuntu Village can increase confidence, improve documentation of complaints and encourage earlier intervention in disputes and rights violations. The approach is increasingly viewed as an effective model for expanding justice services to underserved populations.

The forum brought together representatives from social justice centres across Western Kenya alongside partners, including Haki Africa and county stakeholders. The gathering focused on strengthening collaboration among grassroots organisations working on human rights, accountability and community empowerment.



Davis Okeyo (far right) during the groundbreaking of the Ubuntu Village Social Justice Centre in Kisumu County

Participants exchanged experiences on handling complaints, conducting civic education, protecting vulnerable persons and building sustainable community-led advocacy networks.

The event also explored strategies for improving referrals between local centres, county institutions and national bodies responsible for addressing rights violations. A key theme during the engagement was the recognition that justice work extends beyond legal processes and includes emotional recovery, healing and psychological support.

Many communities affected by violence, discrimination, economic hardship or prolonged exclusion experience trauma that often goes unaddressed.

Stakeholders said integrating mental well-being support into community justice centres can help survivors and affected persons recover, rebuild confidence and participate more actively in civic life.

This broader approach reflects growing recognition that social justice requires both accountability and restoration. The National Gender and Equality Commission reaffirmed its commitment to supporting documentation of complaints, following up on reported cases and promoting accountability on issues raised by members of the public.

The Commission has a constitutional mandate to promote equality and freedom from discrimination, while safeguarding the rights of special interest groups including women, youth, persons with disabilities, children, older persons, minorities and marginalised communities.

Through its regional offices, the Commission continues to engage directly with communities and local institutions to improve reporting pathways and ensure grievances receive appropriate attention. Officials noted that partnerships with community justice centres can strengthen early response systems and improve public trust in accountability mechanisms. The launch of the Ubuntu Village Social Justice Centre reflects the growing importance of decentralised and community-driven responses to governance and rights challenges.



The Ubuntu Village Social Justice Centre in Kisumu County

Rather than relying solely on central institutions, the model places support structures within communities where issues first emerge and where citizens can access help more easily. Observers at the event said such centres can also strengthen democratic participation by enabling residents to organise around shared concerns and engage constructively with authorities.

Nakuru GBV Response Systems Under Review as Stakeholders Move to Strengthen Coordination, Accountability and Survivor Services

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) convened the Nakuru East and West Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Cluster in collaboration with SHOFCO Gender and Inclusion, bringing together key stakeholders in the GBV prevention and response system in Nakuru County.

The engagement focused on strengthening coordination, improving accountability mechanisms, and enhancing service delivery for survivors of gender-based violence. It also provided a platform to review progress made in 2025 and align priorities for the ongoing implementation of the GBV Taskforce Report.

The discussions centred on the need to strengthen coordination among institutions involved in GBV prevention and response, including justice sector actors, health service providers, civil society organisations, and community-based structures.

Stakeholders noted that effective response to gender-based violence depends on a well-aligned system where roles are clearly defined, communication channels are functional, and referral pathways operate without delay or fragmentation. The engagement highlighted that gaps in coordination often lead to delays in service delivery, duplication of efforts, and reduced efficiency in supporting survivors.

Participants emphasised the importance of building an integrated response system that ensures survivors can access support services in a timely, safe, and dignified manner.

The forum provided an opportunity to assess progress made in 2025 within the county's GBV response framework and identify areas requiring further strengthening. A key area of focus was the implementation of recommendations contained in the GBV Taskforce Report, which outlines measures aimed at improving prevention, response, and accountability structures.



Participants during the Nakuru East and West Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Cluster meeting at the Nakuru office

Stakeholders underscored the need to translate policy recommendations into practical actions that are coordinated across institutions and responsive to community needs. Attention was drawn to the importance of monitoring implementation progress to ensure that agreed reforms are reflected in service delivery outcomes at both institutional and community levels.

Discussions highlighted the need to streamline referral pathways within the GBV response system to ensure survivors are not subjected to delays or repeated processes when seeking assistance.

Participants noted that fragmented referral mechanisms can discourage reporting and weaken trust in available support systems. Efforts to improve coordination between police services, health facilities, legal aid providers, psychosocial support services and community structures were identified as critical to strengthening the overall response framework.

The engagement reaffirmed that survivors require integrated services that address medical, legal, psychological and protection needs in a coherent manner.

Stakeholders also identified duplication of services as a challenge affecting GBV response efforts within the county. Overlapping interventions by different actors were noted to sometimes result in resource inefficiencies and reduced coverage of support services. The discussion emphasised the need for better coordination frameworks that map service providers, clarify mandates and promote complementary rather than parallel interventions. Improved coordination was identified as a key factor in expanding reach and ensuring that available resources have maximum impact.

The National Gender and Equality Commission reiterated its mandate to promote equality and freedom from discrimination, including monitoring responses to gender-based violence and supporting institutional coordination.

Through its engagements, the Commission continues to work with stakeholders to strengthen systems that enhance protection, improve accountability and ensure effective service delivery for survivors. The collaboration with SHOFCO Gender and Inclusion reflects ongoing efforts to build partnerships that support integrated and responsive GBV prevention and response frameworks.

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