



# EQUALITY BULLETIN

## GIVING GAINS

International Women’s Day 2026 ignites a nationwide call for rights, dignity and decisive action for women and girls.

Kenya’s Constitution speaks clearly about equality. It promises freedom from discrimination, equal opportunity, and the dignity of every citizen. Yet for millions of women and girls, that promise remains unevenly realised. Ahead of the global commemoration of International Women’s Day 2026, the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), together with government agencies, development partners and local stakeholders, had brought the conversation on gender equality directly to the community. Unlike many commemorations marked largely by speeches, the Tharaka Nithi outreach focused on tangible support.

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## A Message from the Chief Executive Officer

International Women's Day 2026 provided an important moment for reflection and renewed commitment to the advancement of gender equality in Kenya. For the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), it reaffirmed our constitutional mandate to promote equality and freedom from discrimination, and to ensure that the rights of women and girls remain central to the nation's development agenda.

This edition highlights the power of engagement and accountability. Through our outreach in Tharaka Nithi, the Commission brought the national conversation on women's rights closer to communities—creating space for dialogue on leadership, economic empowerment, and the protection of women's dignity and opportunities. Such engagements remind us that meaningful progress is achieved when policies, institutions, and communities work together to uphold the principles of equality.

Achieving substantive equality requires sustained collaboration among institutions, communities, and duty bearers. NGEC will continue to monitor compliance with constitutional and legal provisions on equality and inclusion, advise the government on responsive policies, and advocate for the protection and advancement of the rights of women and girls.

As Kenya progresses in its development journey, the Commission remains steadfast in ensuring that the constitutional promise of equality is translated into tangible outcomes for all.

**Purity Ngina, PhD, MBS**

Chief Executive Officer

**National Gender and Equality Commission**



## THE COMMISSION



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**Commissioner**

## Kenya Must Not Leave Its Elderly Behind

*Stakeholders call for stronger coordination and policy action to safeguard the rights and dignity of older persons*

As Kenya's population ages, a quiet but urgent question is emerging: are the country's systems ready to protect the rights and dignity of its older citizens?

This question took centre stage at a recent multi-stakeholder forum on ageing, where government agencies, civil society organisations and development partners gathered to examine the realities facing older persons in Kenya and to chart a more coordinated path forward.

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), represented by its Disability and Elderly Division, joined the forum as a panellist, bringing the Commission's constitutional mandate on equality and inclusion into the national conversation on ageing.

The discussions reflected a growing recognition that protecting the welfare of older persons is not merely a social concern but a governance and human rights priority.

Kenya's Constitution recognises the rights of older members of society as part of the broader commitment to equality and freedom from discrimination. Yet translating those protections into lived realities remains an ongoing challenge.

Participants at the forum examined available data, policy frameworks and lived experiences of older persons across the country. While Kenya has made progress in recognising the rights of the elderly, significant gaps remain in implementation, coordination and access to services.

During the panel discussion, NGEC outlined key milestones achieved in advancing the rights of older persons, while also highlighting persistent barriers that continue to limit their full participation in social, economic and public life.

The Commission emphasised that many elderly Kenyans still face poverty, limited



NGEC's Lynette Kigotho participates as a panellist in a multi-stakeholder forum

healthcare access, social isolation and weak institutional protection, particularly in rural and marginalised communities.

One of the central themes emerging from the forum was the need for stronger coordination among institutions working on ageing and social protection.

Stakeholders acknowledged that while multiple programmes exist, fragmented implementation often undermines their impact.

To address this gap, the forum explored the establishment of a Multi-Stakeholder Technical Working Group on Older Persons and Ageing, which would bring together government agencies, civil society organisations and experts to strengthen collaboration and policy implementation.

Such a platform, participants argued, could help streamline interventions, improve data sharing and ensure that policies designed to protect older persons translate into practical support.

### **Data, dignity and inclusion**

Another challenge highlighted during the discussions was the shortage of reliable, comprehensive data on ageing in Kenya.

Without accurate data on the number, conditions and needs of older persons, policymakers often struggle to design targeted programmes that respond to their realities.

The Commission stressed that improved data systems are essential for effective planning and resource allocation, particularly as Kenya's elderly population continues to grow.

At the heart of the discussion, however, was a broader principle: the dignity of older persons must remain central to national development. Ensuring access to healthcare, social protection, safe living conditions and participation in community life is not merely a welfare issue but a matter of human rights.

Beyond statistics and policy frameworks lies a deeper principle: the dignity of older persons. Access to healthcare, social protection, safe housing and community participation are not privileges but rights that must be protected. Ensuring that older citizens remain visible in national development agendas reflects a society's commitment to equality and social justice.

For the National Gender and Equality Commission, safeguarding the rights of older persons is both a constitutional obligation and a moral imperative. How a nation treats its elderly often reveals the depth of its humanity — and the strength of its commitment to leaving no one behind.

Kenya has made notable progress in expanding social protection programmes that benefit older persons.

The Older Persons Cash Transfer Programme, for instance, has provided financial support to thousands of elderly citizens nationwide. The programme, administered by the government, aims to cushion vulnerable older persons against extreme poverty and to improve their access to basic needs.

While the programme has had positive impact, stakeholders at the forum noted that gaps remain in coverage, awareness and sustainability.

## Commission Contributes to Public Participation on Child Welfare Fund Regulations

The Commission's Kitui Regional Office participated in a public participation forum in Machakos County on the proposed Child Welfare Fund Regulations, convened by the National Treasury of Kenya.

The forum brought together representatives from government institutions, civil society organisations and community stakeholders to review the proposed regulatory framework and provide input on how the Fund can effectively support vulnerable children across the country.

Participants examined key provisions of the proposed regulations, focusing on governance structures, accountability mechanisms and strategies to ensure that financial resources are directed to programmes that address the needs of children in vulnerable situations.

The engagement provided a platform for stakeholders to share perspectives on strengthening social protection systems for children, particularly those facing barriers related to poverty, neglect, disability or limited access to essential services.

Through its participation, the Commission underscored the importance of policy frameworks that promote equitable access to services and safeguard the welfare of children, especially those from marginalised and disadvantaged backgrounds.

Public participation forums play a critical role in ensuring that policy development processes are



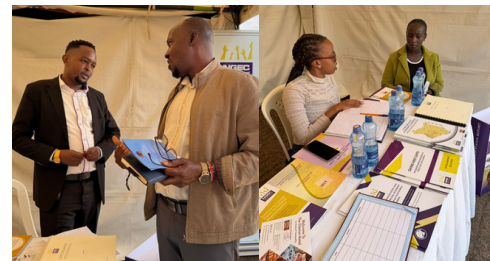
Dr. Moses Saranta, NGEK Kitui Regional Head, during a Machakos forum

inclusive and responsive to the needs of communities. By engaging with diverse stakeholders, such platforms help shape regulations that are practical, transparent and aligned with the realities faced by children and families across the country.

Through such engagements, the Commission continues to contribute to policy discussions aimed at strengthening protection systems, ensuring resources reach children who need them most, and advancing the welfare and best interests of every child.

## NGEC Amplifies Citizens' Voices

*Commission highlights equality, inclusion, and responsive governance at Nairobi's civic platform.*



NGEC team at the Commission's stand during the People's Dialogue Forum 2026

The National Gender and Equality Commission actively participated in the People's Dialogue Forum 2026, a four-day platform that brought together government institutions, civil society, development partners, and citizens to deliberate on governance, development priorities, and social cohesion in Kenya.

The event provided a timely opportunity to amplify citizens' voices, interrogate policy gaps, and strengthen accountability in public service delivery.

At the NGEK exhibition stand, the Commission engaged visitors on its constitutional mandate to promote equality, prevent discrimination, and safeguard the rights of special interest groups. Members of the public were informed about ongoing programmes, key initiatives, and the tangible impact of the Commission's work across the country.

## Nakuru Stakeholders Tackle Justice Barriers for GBV Survivors

*Regional office collaborates with Gender Sector Working Group to strengthen support for vulnerable groups.*

The Nakuru Regional Office of the National Gender and Equality Commission joined the Nakuru Gender Sector Working Group in a consultative meeting with Hon. Tito M. Gesora at the Nakuru Law Courts, addressing systemic barriers affecting access to justice for survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and other Special Interest Groups.

The engagement provided a platform for stakeholders to examine key challenges reported by communities, including delays in the conclusion of GBV cases, low conviction rates, and difficulties in enforcing bond and bail conditions for suspects.

These systemic gaps, participants noted, often exacerbate the trauma experienced by survivors and undermine public confidence in justice processes.

Enhanced capacity-building for gender sector personnel was highlighted as critical to improving survivor support and delivering more responsive justice outcomes.

The consultative session also explored strategies to strengthen referral pathways, integrate community-based monitoring, and facilitate collaboration ~



Douglas Wawire (NGEC) and the Nakuru Gender Sector Working Group during talks with Hon. Tito M. Gesora at Nakuru Law Courts.

between institutions and civil society organisations, with the goal of ensuring that vulnerable populations are not left behind in accessing justice.

## Building Alliances for Disability Rights

*NGEC and L'Arche Kenya explore partnership to strengthen inclusion, care reforms and protection of persons with disabilities.*

Efforts to advance the rights and wellbeing of persons with disabilities increasingly depend on strong collaboration between institutions and community-based organisations. Recognising this, the National Gender and Equality Commission hosted a delegation from L'Arche Kenya for a courtesy call aimed at deepening cooperation on disability inclusion and social protection.

The meeting created an opportunity for both institutions to explore areas of collaboration in advancing community awareness, inclusive education and reforms in care systems affecting persons with disabilities.

At the centre of the discussions was a shared commitment to ensuring that disability rights are not treated as a peripheral issue but as an integral component of Kenya's broader equality and human rights agenda.

Participants emphasised the importance of community education in addressing stigma and discrimination faced by persons with disabilities.

Despite progressive constitutional protections, many families and communities still lack adequate awareness of disability rights and available support mechanisms. Misconceptions, cultural stigma and social exclusion continue to limit access to education, healthcare and employment opportunities for many persons with disabilities.

Through joint initiatives, the Commission and L'Arche Kenya aim to expand awareness campaigns that empower communities with knowledge on disability inclusion, human rights protections and available institutional support.

Another key area of discussion centred on inclusive education, an issue that remains central to Kenya's development agenda.

Access to education for learners with disabilities has improved in recent years, yet many institutions still face challenges related to accessibility, specialised learning support and inclusive infrastructure.

Collaboration between the Commission and L'Arche Kenya could help strengthen advocacy for inclusive education policies while supporting institutions to adopt practices that ensure students with disabilities learn in safe, supportive and accessible environments.

Ensuring that learners with disabilities remain visible within education systems, participants noted, is essential for building a more equitable society.



NGEC and L'Arche Kenya officials pose for a group photo

Safeguarding mechanisms to protect persons with disabilities from abuse, neglect and exploitation were highlighted as a critical component of these reforms. Both institutions expressed interest in working together to strengthen advocacy, policy dialogue and community engagement aimed at ensuring that care systems align with human rights principles and constitutional protections.

Resource mobilisation also featured prominently in the discussions, with both organisations recognising that sustainable programmes require strong partnerships and coordinated investment.

By pooling expertise and strengthening networks across government institutions, civil society and development partners, initiatives aimed at empowering persons with disabilities can achieve broader reach and lasting impact.

Such partnerships also create opportunities for scaling programmes that promote social inclusion, economic participation and community-based support systems for persons with disabilities.

## Commission Takes Services to the People at Nakuru Business Expo

*NGEC engages the public on equality and non-discrimination during Huduma Mashinani outreach.*

The Nakuru Regional Office of the National Gender and Equality Commission partnered with Huduma Kenya through the Nakuru Huduma Centre to participate in the Huduma Mashinani outreach held during the Nakuru Business Expo 2026.

The three-day engagement, held from 5–7 March 2026 at the Rift Valley Sports Club, provided a strategic platform for direct interaction between the Commission and members of the public attending the business expo.

The outreach formed part of the Commission's ongoing efforts to decentralise services and strengthen public awareness on equality, inclusion and human rights protections across the country.

During the engagement, officers from the Commission provided information on the principles of equality and non-discrimination, while also distributing informational materials and publications to members of the public. The team further received complaints and inquiries relating to discrimination, exclusion and violations affecting special interest groups.



NGEC officials at the exhibition stand during the Nakuru Business Expo 2026

Public outreach initiatives such as Huduma Mashinani are designed to bring government services closer to communities by enabling citizens to access critical services and information outside traditional office settings.

Public outreach initiatives such as Huduma Mashinani play a critical role in bringing government services closer to communities by enabling citizens to access information and support outside traditional office settings.

## Taking Equality to the Grassroots

*NGEC civic education mission in Isiolo South amplifies community voices and strengthens access to justice for marginalised groups.*

In Kenya's remote and historically marginalised regions, the promise of equality often collides with the realities of limited awareness, weak institutional access and persistent social barriers. Bridging that gap requires institutions to move beyond offices and into communities themselves.

It is against this backdrop that the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), led by Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa, undertook an intensive civic education and public engagement mission across Isiolo South. The outreach sought to deepen public understanding of constitutional rights while advancing the Commission's mandate to promote equality, inclusion and freedom from discrimination at the grassroots.



NGEC conducts civic education and public engagement in Isiolo South

In Sericho Ward and neighbouring areas, community dialogues revealed a stark reality: many citizens remain unaware of their rights or the mechanisms available to report violations.

Residents spoke candidly about limited knowledge of reporting pathways in cases of gender-based violence, harmful cultural practices and discrimination. For many women and vulnerable groups, these information gaps remain one of the most powerful drivers of vulnerability and exclusion.

Community members described the challenges they face when seeking justice — from lack of awareness about referral institutions to the logistical barriers of accessing government services in remote areas.

Such concerns underscore a broader national challenge. Despite progressive constitutional protections, the effectiveness of rights-based frameworks depends heavily on public awareness and accessible institutions.

During the engagement, the Commission worked to strengthen public understanding of its mandate while clarifying available referral pathways for victims of discrimination, violence and rights violations.

Participants were guided on how to report cases, access legal and institutional support

and engage with relevant government agencies responsible for addressing rights violations.

The Commission also emphasised institutional accountability, reminding communities that public bodies have a legal obligation to uphold constitutional principles of equality and non-discrimination.

For NGEN, civic education remains a critical tool in dismantling systemic barriers that prevent vulnerable populations from fully exercising their rights.

The mission in Isiolo South also included the Commission's monitoring of the Isiolo South by-election, underscoring NGEN's oversight role in safeguarding inclusive and credible democratic processes.

Electoral participation remains a critical component of equality. Ensuring that women, persons with disabilities and marginalised communities can participate freely in political processes is central to Kenya's democratic development.

Through its monitoring role, the Commission observes electoral processes to ensure that they remain transparent, inclusive and free from discrimination.

Such oversight helps protect the political rights of vulnerable groups whose voices have historically been underrepresented in governance and decision-making.

Beyond civic education, the engagement served as an important listening exercise for the Commission.



Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa interacts with a participant

The mission focused on Special Interest Groups — including women, girls, persons with disabilities and marginalised communities — whose lived experiences continue to reveal structural barriers to justice, representation and economic opportunity.

Established under the National Gender and Equality Commission Act of 2011, NGEN is mandated to promote gender equality and protect the rights of vulnerable groups while monitoring compliance with constitutional principles of equality and non-discrimination across public institutions.

## 80 Ambassadors Step Forward to Champion Gender Equality at MMUST

*NGEC and partners launch a new generation of student and staff advocates to advance inclusion, safety and dignity on campus.*

Universities are often described as spaces where ideas shape the future. But increasingly, they are also becoming frontline arenas in the fight for equality, dignity and safe learning environments.

At Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, that commitment took a decisive step forward when 80 Gender Mainstreaming Ambassadors were officially commissioned in a joint initiative led by the National Gender and Equality Commission's Kisumu Regional Office and the Directorate of AIDS Control, Gender and Disability Mainstreaming.

Drawn equally from students and staff, the newly appointed ambassadors represent a deliberate effort to institutionalise gender-responsive leadership within the university community.

The initiative signals a growing recognition that higher education institutions must play a central role in confronting discrimination, strengthening gender-sensitive policies and protecting vulnerable members of academic communities.

### From policy to practice

Gender equality in education is not merely a question of access to classrooms. It also concerns the safety, dignity and opportunities available within those spaces.

The commissioning ceremony reinforced the Commission's broader mandate to promote equality, prevent discrimination and advance inclusive practices in public institutions. Universities, where thousands of young people shape their social and professional identities, present a critical platform for embedding these values.

Through the ambassador programme, the Commission and its partners aim to ensure that gender mainstreaming moves beyond policy documents into daily campus culture.

Participants will work within faculties, administrative departments and student organisations to promote awareness of institutional gender policies, strengthen



Group photo of 80 Gender Mainstreaming Ambassadors at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology

reporting mechanisms and foster environments where diversity and inclusion are actively protected.

The newly commissioned ambassadors have embraced a role that extends far beyond symbolic representation.

They are expected to act as advocates, role models and facilitators of inclusive practices within the university. Their work will include raising awareness on gender justice, supporting disability inclusion initiatives and promoting institutional policies that safeguard the rights of all members of the academic community.

Particular emphasis has been placed on addressing gender-based violence and the emerging challenge of technology-facilitated abuse — a growing concern within digital spaces increasingly used by students and staff.

By strengthening awareness and encouraging responsible use of reporting systems, the ambassadors will help ensure that survivors of violence receive support while perpetrators are held accountable within established institutional frameworks.

Gender-based violence remains a concern within many higher ~

education institutions worldwide, including in Kenya. Harassment, intimidation and digital abuse can undermine learning environments and discourage participation, particularly among women and students with disabilities.

The ambassador initiative seeks to confront these challenges by placing trained advocates directly within the university community.

Through peer engagement, dialogue forums and awareness campaigns, the ambassadors are expected to encourage a culture of respect while strengthening the visibility of available support services.

Such initiatives also contribute to building trust between students, staff and institutional leadership — an essential factor in ensuring that survivors of violence feel safe reporting abuse.

The partnership between NGECK and the university's Directorate of AIDS Control, Gender and Disability Mainstreaming reflects a broader strategy to integrate gender equality across institutional structures.

Gender mainstreaming — the practice of incorporating equality considerations into policies, programmes and institutional culture — is increasingly recognised as a critical component of inclusive governance.

By empowering both students and staff to lead change within their own spaces, the programme aims to ensure that gender-sensitive practices are sustained long after the commissioning ceremony.

For the National Gender and Equality Commission, the programme therefore represents more than a campus activity. It is part of a broader national effort to cultivate leaders who understand the importance of equality, respect and justice.

## County Leaders, NGEC and JICA Strengthen Action Against Gender-Based Violence in Baringo

*High-level engagement seeks deeper collaboration on survivor support, prevention and justice in communities.*

In Kabarnet, Baringo County, a high-level delegation from the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) — led by Vice Chairperson Thomas Koyier, Commissioner Caroline Lentupuru, and Chief Executive Officer Purity Ngina — met with Governor H.E. Benjamin Cheboi to advance strategic partnership efforts with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) on eliminating Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

The discussions unfolded against the backdrop of a growing national focus on GBV as a persistent social challenge, with authorities and civil society alike calling for more robust prevention, survivor support systems and coordinated responses. Recent national data show staggering levels of violence against women and girls, with one in three women globally experiencing physical or sexual violence in their lifetime — a pattern that is reflected in local realities across Kenya.

Governor Cheboi acknowledged the heavy toll that GBV has on families and communities in Baringo, identifying insecurity, entrenched harmful norms and ignorance about rights as key drivers of the problem. He welcomed the proposed partnership with JICA and urged support for the establishment of a GBV safe house in the county — a facility that could offer secure shelter and psychosocial support to survivors as they pursue justice and recovery.

The NGEC delegation, joined by Maya Soma, Chief Advisor for the JICA GBV Elimination Project, reaffirmed a shared commitment to strengthen survivor-centred prevention and response interventions. The approach emphasises coordinated action in areas affected by conflict and heightened vulnerabilities, with particular attention to emerging threats such as technology-facilitated abuse — an issue gaining national visibility as part of broader GBV trends.

The Commission highlighted its role in promoting equality and non-discrimination, noting that GBV not only undermines the dignity and security of individuals but also erodes community cohesion and economic participation.



NGEC Vice Chairperson Thomas Koyier, Commissioner Caroline Lentupuru, CEO Purity Ngina, Director of Programmes Paul Kuria, and Maya Soma of the JICA GBV Elimination Project with Governor H.E. Benjamin Cheboi

The partnership with JICA, which spans law enforcement, healthcare, social services training, policy engagement and innovative community outreach, seeks to bolster local capacities to prevent and respond to violence through evidence-informed, culturally sensitive practices.

JICA's involvement reflects a growing trend in multi-sector engagement to address GBV. Across Kenya, organisations and government agencies are co-creating programmes that combine policy reform, awareness raising and practical service delivery — acknowledging that lasting change demands both institutional coordination and grassroots commitment.

The delegation also held talks with Baringo County Commissioner Stephen Kutwa, who noted progress in stabilising local insecurity through community sensitisation and strengthened patrols. Commissioner Kutwa emphasised the need to deepen public education on the root causes of GBV, including harmful gender norms and power imbalances that persist in some settings.

Stakeholders agreed that strengthening county coordination mechanisms — including referral pathways, data tracking and integrated support services — remains essential to ensure that survivors receive timely support and that preventative strategies are effective.

The emphasis on multi-level collaboration aligns with national GBV priorities, which call for a comprehensive response that cuts across

law enforcement, healthcare, social services and community structures. Experts and national task forces have highlighted the importance of survivor-centred, trauma-informed approaches that prioritise dignity, safety and justice at every stage of intervention.

Emerging forms of violence, including digital and technology-facilitated abuse, featured prominently in the discussions. As Kenya grapples with rapid changes in how people communicate and engage online, both institutional and community actors recognise that protective mechanisms must evolve accordingly.

The NGEC and JICA team underscored the importance of equipping frontline responders with tools and knowledge to detect, prevent and respond to such forms of abuse — particularly among young people and vulnerable groups whose lives are increasingly entwined with digital platforms.

These priorities reflect a broader shift in GBV prevention and response, where traditional service models are complemented by innovative strategies that address behavioural norms, technological contexts and community mobilisation.

The engagement in Baringo is part of a wider national effort to tackle GBV through partnerships that combine policy influence, capacity building and practical support on the ground.

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## When Women Rise, the Nation Moves

*From a village school in Tharaka Nithi to communities across the country, International Women's Day 2026 sparks a national call for rights, justice and decisive action for women and girls.*



Participants celebrate International Women's Day 2026 with a march in Tharaka Nithi

The struggle for gender equality in Kenya is often debated in policy papers and parliamentary chambers. But on a warm March morning in Tharaka Nithi County, that national conversation found its truest expression far from the corridors of power.

At Mbwiru Primary School, hundreds of women, girls and community members gathered not simply to commemorate International Women's Day, but to confront a question that continues to shape the country's future: what does equality truly look like in the everyday lives of Kenyan women?

The outreach forum, organised by the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) in partnership with government institutions, development partners and community stakeholders, turned the rural school into a platform for both reflection and action.

It was a reminder that the promise of equality written in Kenya's Constitution must ultimately be realised in villages, homes and schools across the country.

### From celebration to tangible support

For many residents of Tharaka Nithi, the commemoration delivered more than speeches and symbolism.

Across the school grounds, women sought medical consultations and received health

services that are often difficult to access in rural areas. Others turned to legal aid clinics for guidance on family disputes, land ownership and inheritance rights — issues that continue to disproportionately affect women.

Young girls gathered for mentorship sessions, listening to conversations about leadership, education and personal safety.

These practical interventions reflected a deliberate shift in how institutions approach gender equality — moving beyond awareness to direct service delivery that responds to real community needs.



H.E. Nyaga Muisrael and Hon. Rehema Jaldesa at the NGECKENYA exhibition stand in Tharaka Nithi

The event drew strong local leadership, with Tharaka Nithi Deputy Governor H.E. Nyaga Muisrael and Chuka/Igambang'ombe Member of Parliament Hon. Patrick Munene joining residents for the commemoration.

Their participation underscored the role of both national and county leadership in shaping policies that expand opportunities for women and girls.

### A global message with national urgency

International Women's Day 2026 is being marked worldwide under the theme "Rights. Justice. Action. For All Women and Girls."

In Kenya, the message has been reinforced through the campaign "Give to Gain," which frames investment in women as a foundation for national progress rather than a social obligation.

Delivering the keynote address, NGECKENYA Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa emphasised that empowering women is central to building a stronger and more prosperous nation.

Investing in women, she said, strengthens families, expands economic opportunities and protects the future of girls.

The Commission's presence in Tharaka Nithi, she explained, reflects its constitutional mandate to promote equality, prevent discrimination and safeguard the rights of special interest groups, including women, youth, persons with disabilities and marginalised communities.

International Women's Day, she said, must therefore serve not merely as a celebration but as a call to sustained action.

### Confronting the shadow of violence

Even as the event celebrated women's ~

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achievements, it also confronted a persistent challenge that continues to affect families across the country — gender-based violence.



Tharaka Nithi residents during International Women's Day 2026

Domestic abuse, sexual violence, emotional manipulation and economic control remain among the most serious threats to the safety and dignity of women and girls.

Addressing the gathering, Hon. Jaldesa stressed that violence within families must never be dismissed as a private matter.

It is a violation of constitutional rights and a threat to community stability. Survivors, she said, must feel empowered to report abuse and seek support from institutions mandated to protect them.

Community leaders, elders and religious figures were also urged to take a stronger stand against harmful cultural practices and to promote respect, dignity and lawful conflict resolution within families.



International Women's Day 2026 in Tharaka Nithi features traditional women dancers

### Equality requires partnership

Speakers at the event also emphasised that the pursuit of gender equality cannot fall solely on women. Men and boys, they said, must actively participate in challenging attitudes and traditions that perpetuate discrimination and violence.

The call was framed as a partnership rather than a confrontation — a recognition that equality benefits entire communities by strengthening families~

and fostering social stability.

### The road to 2027

Beyond social issues, discussions in Tharaka Nithi also turned to Kenya's political future. With the 2027 General Election approaching, leaders warned that women must not remain on the margins of political decision-making.

Despite constitutional provisions requiring that no gender occupies more than two-thirds of elective or appointive positions, the country has struggled to achieve that threshold.

Hon. Jaldesa urged political parties to open space for women candidates and ensure fair nomination processes free from intimidation or discrimination.

Women from diverse backgrounds — including young women, women with disabilities and those from rural and marginalised communities — must be supported to compete for leadership positions.

Electoral institutions were also challenged to ensure elections are accessible, safe and transparent for all citizens. The goal, she said, is for Kenya to achieve the two-thirds gender principle through electoral outcomes themselves rather than relying on corrective nominations.



Desire Njamwea (NGEC) offers legal support during International Women's Day 2026

The outreach programme also demonstrated the value of collaboration between institutions working toward social inclusion. Several government agencies and partners contributed resources to support the event, including mobility aids for persons with disabilities, tree seedlings for environmental conservation, and food supplies for vulnerable households.

For beneficiaries, these contributions represented more than assistance. They symbolised dignity, recognition and the ~

possibility of a more inclusive society.

A wheelchair meant restored mobility. A legal consultation meant clarity on long-standing disputes. A medical check-up meant access to healthcare often beyond reach.

Each intervention illustrated how institutional partnerships can translate policy commitments into real change.

### A nationwide chorus for women's rights

While the Tharaka Nithi outreach formed part of the build-up to International Women's Day, similar commemorations unfolded across the country.

In Kisumu, the Commission's regional office joined more than one hundred widows alongside civil society organisations and the Siaya Widows Network, reaffirming the importance of protecting women's land and property rights.



NGEC Kisumu team and participants pose for a group photo

In Nakuru, national celebrations led by Cabinet Secretary for Gender, Culture, the Arts and Heritage Hanna Cheptumo brought together government agencies, civil society organisations and citizens to reflect on progress while confronting persistent challenges such as gender-based violence and female genital mutilation.

Further along the coast in Kilifi County, leaders and development partners gathered to recognise women's achievements while renewing commitments to protecting rights and expanding opportunities.

In Kitui County, Governor Julius Malombe led local commemorations attended by county leaders and community members, reaffirming the county government's commitment to empowering women through education, healthcare and economic development.



NGEC Kitui staff with participants celebrating International Women's Day

Across these gatherings, a consistent message emerged: empowering women is not only a moral imperative but also a national development priority.



# INTERNATIONAL Women's Day

## THANK YOU

 OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT
 
 MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE, HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AND SPECIAL PROGRAMMES
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## Partnerships Take Root in Marsabit to Advance Health, Equality and Inclusion

*NGEC joins multi-stakeholder engagement to deepen collaboration on SRHR, GBV responses and county service coordination.*



NGEC Isiolo team joins Access to Medicines Platform and Marsabit representatives for a photo

The National Gender and Equality Commission's Isiolo Regional Office, with support from Access to Medicines Platform, has launched an inaugural three-day engagement in Marsabit County to strengthen collaboration between county leadership and local stakeholders on priority health and equality challenges.

The initiative began with participation in International Women's Day events on the first day of the engagement, where the Commission and partners used the occasion to advance conversations on gender equality, inclusion and protection from discrimination in community development and health programming.

The Commission team also paid courtesy calls to key county offices, including the Office of the County Commissioner, Mr. James Kamau, and the Department of Culture, Gender and Social Services led by Armara Galwab.

These engagements underscored a shared commitment to reinforcing strategic partnerships that can strengthen public health responses and promote inclusive service delivery for all residents.

At the heart of the discussions was a focus on expanding cooperation in sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) programming and strengthening systems to prevent and respond to gender-based violence (GBV).

Access to Medicines Platform, a civil society organisation working to improve access to essential health commodities and strengthen health systems — particularly in reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health — brings multi-stakeholder advocacy experience to these efforts. Its work aims to ensure vulnerable populations, including women, girls and other marginalised groups, have access to safe, quality and affordable health services and information.

Discussions with county officials and partners centred on how existing programmes can be reinforced through coordinated planning, improved referral pathways and enhanced community awareness. In particular, representatives explored ways to deepen collaboration between the Commission, the County Health Management Teams (CHMTs) and

civil society networks to improve data sharing, community outreach and the delivery of essential services.

Participants also highlighted the importance of robust county-level coordination structures in ensuring that health systems and social support mechanisms remain responsive to the needs of vulnerable populations.

Structures such as the Gender Technical Working Group and County Health Coordination Forums were identified as key platforms for driving collective action on issues like SRHR, GBV prevention, referral systems and community education.

By strengthening these mechanisms, stakeholders said Marsabit County can improve alignment between policy intentions and on-the-ground implementation, ensuring that strategic planning leads to measurable outcomes in health and inclusion.

The Isiolo Regional Office's engagement in Marsabit reflects the Commission's broader commitment to advancing equality and inclusion through partnerships, capacity building and sustained dialogue with local institutions.

While International Women's Day provided a focal point for initial conversations, the outreach aims to lay the groundwork for longer-term collaboration that improves access to essential services and strengthens community resilience.

The engagement in Marsabit underscores that when institutions work together — guided by shared goals and anchored in citizen experiences — progress toward inclusion, dignity and equality becomes more tangible.

Marsabit County hosts populations whose access to health information and services has historically been constrained by geography, limited infrastructure and resource gaps. Strengthening partnerships that connect community voices with decision-making platforms offers an opportunity to address these constraints more effectively.

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