

**Turning Point Magazine**  
**International Women's Day 2025**  
**Celebration**  
**Report**



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## List of Acronyms Used

IWD	International Women's Day
KICC	Kenyatta International Convention Centre
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
MCSK	Music Copyright Society of Kenya
CAJ	Commission on Administrative Justice
NGAAF	National Government Affirmative Action Fund
MSMEs	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
SEA	Small Enterprise Authority
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
PLWD	People Living with Disabilities
IPOA	Independent Policing Oversight Authority
ORPP	Office of the Registrar of Political Parties
KRA	Kenya Revenue Authority

# Executive Summary

The International Women's Day (IWD) celebration, held from March 7–8, 2025, at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC) in Nairobi, Kenya, was a powerful convergence of leaders, advocates, and changemakers. Organized by Turning Point Magazine, the event embraced the global theme “Accelerating Action Towards Women Empowerment”, and provided a dynamic platform for dialogue, recognition, and action in support of gender equality and women's advancement across all spheres of society.

The two-day event was strategically curated to address key pillars of women's empowerment including economic empowerment, financial inclusion, digital literacy, and gender equality. Through keynote addresses, panel discussions, exhibitions, and recognition ceremonies, the celebration fostered collaboration among public and private sector leaders, development partners, grassroots organizations, and youth advocates.

A highlight of the event was a keynote address by a Hon. Harriette Chiggai, Cabinet Secretary and the President's Advisor on Women's Rights in Kenya, who emphasized the urgent need for cross-sectoral collaboration, increased investment in innovation, and the amplification of women's contributions in shaping inclusive and sustainable societies. Speakers and panelists echoed these sentiments, underscoring the importance of creating enabling environments where women and girls can thrive.

## Key activities during the event included:

- **International Women's Day Exhibitions:** These showcased innovative products and initiatives by women-led enterprises and organizations advancing gender equity. Exhibitors included startups, NGOs, social enterprises, and government agencies
- **Celebration of the “25 Influential Women of 2025”:** In a moving ceremony, 25 trailblazing women were recognized for their outstanding contributions in leadership, entrepreneurship, advocacy, education, and community development. Their stories served as powerful examples of resilience, creativity, and transformative impact.
- **Launch of the Second Issue of Turning Point Magazine:** The latest edition of the publication was unveiled, featuring in-depth profiles and impact stories of women driving change in their communities and industries. The issue serves as a platform to spotlight women's voices and inspire future generations.

Throughout the event, participants engaged in interactive sessions, networking forums, and solution-focused dialogues, all geared toward identifying pathways to accelerate progress on women's rights and empowerment. The forum called for intentional investment in policies, infrastructure, education, and platforms that center women's experiences and leadership.

The 2025 International Women's Day celebration at KICC not only marked a milestone in the ongoing advocacy for gender equality but also galvanized momentum for collective action. It reinforced the vital role of storytelling, recognition, and knowledge-sharing in shaping a future where every woman and girl has the opportunity to lead, thrive, and influence change at all levels of society.



## Keynote Address

### **Hon. Harriette Chiggai, Cabinet Secretary and President's Advisor on Women's Rights in Kenya**

In her opening remarks Hon. Harriette Chiggai emphasized the pressing need to accelerate gender equality and women's empowerment across all sectors of society, including governance, education, technology, business, and agriculture. Hon. Chiggai underscored that while some progress has been made, structural and cultural barriers continue to limit women's full participation and leadership, calling for a united and inclusive approach to overcome these challenges.

A key theme in her address was the importance of involving men and boys as allies in the women's empowerment agenda. She encouraged a shift in mindset, urging society to move away from viewing gender equality as a competition and instead see it as a shared societal goal. Hon. Chiggai stressed that empowering women ultimately strengthens families, communities, and national development. She also called on both public and private institutions to reassess and reform their structures, policies, and practices to foster inclusivity and equitable opportunities for women and girls.

Hon. Chiggai further highlighted innovation and digital transformation as vital tools for unlocking women's potential, emphasizing the need to close the digital gender gap. She concluded by reaffirming the government's commitment to creating an enabling environment for women's advancement, noting that policies must be matched with actionable, well-funded strategies. Her keynote address served as a rallying call to all stakeholders to play their part in driving gender equality, setting a strong foundation for the discussions, exhibitions, and celebrations that followed during the International Women's Day event.





## Key Issues & Recommendations

### 1. Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Safe Spaces

- GBV remains a persistent issue 30 years after the Beijing Conference.
- Urged the creation of safe spaces for women and children (boys and girls).
- Kenya's medical system (SHIF) will support women and girls, especially survivors of rape and abuse.
- The government has established a Femicide and Gender Committee to address GBV.
- Called for enforcing laws and support mechanisms to protect survivors.

### 2. Economic Empowerment & Gender Equality

- Gender equality is an economic necessity, not just a moral issue.
- Addressing gender disparity in health could inject \$1 trillion into the global economy by 2040 (2024 Health Institute & World Economic Forum report).
- Closing gender gaps in labor and entrepreneurship could increase Kenya's GDP by 10% (World Bank, 2021).
- At the current pace, it could take 131 years to close the gender gap globally.
- Women contribute 68% of Africa's agricultural economy but remain underrepresented in leadership (only 24% of parliamentary seats held by women).
- The Hustler Fund and banking initiatives aim to improve women's access to finance.

### 3. Women's Leadership & Political Representation

- Kenya signed its first Women's Charter, prioritizing women's empowerment at the highest level of government.
- Established the Office of the Women's Rights Advisor in the Office of the President to ensure gender issues remain central in policy and planning.
- Commitment to achieving the two-thirds gender rule in public and private sectors.
- More than 10,000 girls have transitioned into STEM fields, with 103 labs built in 46 centers.
- Called for intentional mentoring and building the next generation of women leaders.


### 4. Strengthening Policies & Collaboration

- Strengthen legal and institutional frameworks to support gender equality.
- Government, civil society, and corporate leaders must collaborate to advance women's rights.
- The private sector must enforce policies on sexual harassment, GBV in workplaces, and create pathways for women in leadership.
- Advocated for return-to-work policies for mothers after childbirth.

### 5. Role of Media in Women's Empowerment

- The media should hold institutions accountable for violations of women's rights.
- Raise awareness on gender equality and women's public rights.
- Report GBV cases and educate the public on discrimination.
- Respect survivors of violence and advocate for policy changes.

### Call to Action

- Gender equality is a human rights issue, not just a women's issue.
  - Kenya, Africa, and the world must accelerate progress toward gender equity.
  - Ignite change by ensuring every woman and girl thrives in a gender-equal world.
- 

**Key Remarks >**





## Dr. Ezekiel Mutua, CEO, Music Copyright Society of Kenya (MCSK)

Dr. Ezekiel Mutua's remarks focused on the centrality of women's empowerment and the vital role men must play in advancing gender equality. He opened his session by inviting two distinguished women leaders, Emmah Mong'ute, Founder of Amandla MEK Foundation, and Lisa Christoffersen, Founder of Lioness Rally Club, to share their personal journeys and community impact.

**Emmah Mong'ute** shared her work in economically empowering grassroots women, especially in rural communities. Through the Amandla MEK Foundation, she supports women to start and grow small businesses by facilitating access to capital, grants, and entrepreneurial training. She also champions mental health awareness and sexual and reproductive health rights, emphasizing the link between economic independence and holistic well-being. Mong'ute called for increased collaboration among women-led organizations, urging stakeholders to build networks that amplify local initiatives and create sustainable change.

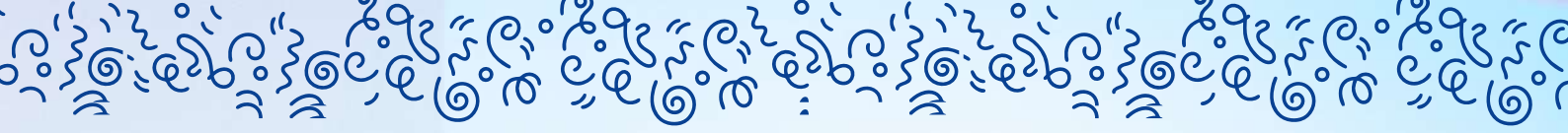
**Lisa Christoffersen**, a rally driver and cancer survivor, gave an emotional account of surviving a near-terminal diagnosis 19 years ago, having been given only 10 days to live. Her survival journey became the foundation of Lioness Rally Club, an all-women motorsport team that empowers young girls to take control of their life journeys, face adversity with courage, and push through societal limitations. Her story served as a metaphor for resilience and strength, inspiring attendees to view challenges as stepping stones to empowerment.

In his key messages, Dr. Mutua recognized and celebrated women trailblazers for their invaluable contributions to society, particularly during International Women's Day. He urged men to reflect on how they support the women around them, not just through words, but through meaningful actions. Sharing a personal story, he recalled supporting his wife as she attended the historic Beijing Women's Conference 30 years ago. Today, she holds a significant leadership position in West Africa, a testament to the long-term impact of leadership.

Dr. Mutua stressed that men must actively empower women in all spaces, including the home, the workplace, and leadership corridors. "We are who we are because of women, because of mothers," he stated, emphasizing that acknowledging women's roles begins with personal accountability and leads to collective transformation. As the CEO of MCSK, he reaffirmed his commitment to promoting women in leadership within the music industry, ensuring that women artists and professionals are supported and represented at all levels. He concluded by encouraging men to "open doors, step back, and cheer women on as they lead," reinforcing the message that gender equality benefits everyone.

Dr. Mutua's address was a powerful reminder of the transformative role men can play in advancing women's rights, not as bystanders but as committed partners in the journey toward an inclusive and equitable society.





**Mr. Michael Ager, CEO of Turning Point Magazine**

Michael Ager, Chief Executive Officer of Turning Point Magazine, began his remarks by underscoring the transformative power of storytelling in advancing social change and gender equality. Addressing an audience of policymakers, corporate leaders, civil society representatives, and youth advocates, he highlighted the publication's core mission: to amplify impactful narratives and celebrate excellence across government and corporate sectors.

He noted that Turning Point Magazine second issue, which featured contributions from 32 distinguished experts across Africa, was anchored on a mentorship-driven approach, intentionally designed to inspire the next generation of African leaders. Through its carefully curated content, the magazine captures stories of personal and professional milestones, challenges overcome, and lessons learned, with a particular focus on empowering women and girls to pursue leadership, innovation, and social impact.

Mr. Ager further encouraged attendees to share their own stories, emphasizing that lived experiences can catalyze meaningful change, foster empathy, and drive inclusive development. He spotlighted the Turning Point Women's Awards, presented during the event, as a celebration of individuals and institutions demonstrating exceptional commitment to women's advancement. These awards, he remarked, are not only a form of recognition but a strategic tool to inspire action and mobilize broader community support for gender equity. In closing, Mr. Ager called upon both men and women to actively participate in storytelling, mentorship, and capacity-building efforts that empower women across the continent.



## Right of Access to Information: Accelerating Action Towards Gender Parity

**Mr. Simon Nzioka, Chief Access to Information Officer at The Commission on Administrative Justice - Office of The Ombudsman**

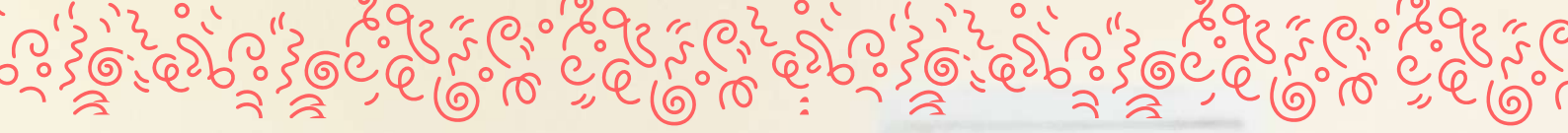
Simon Nzioka, representing the Commission on Administrative Justice (CAJ), outlined the institution's mandate and the pivotal role it plays in safeguarding administrative justice and citizens' rights in Kenya. Established under Article 59 of the Constitution and the Commission on Administrative Justice Act of 2011, CAJ operates alongside the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights and the National Gender and Equality Commission to uphold fundamental human rights, ensure effective service delivery, and enforce the constitutional right of access to information as enshrined in Article 35.

Mr. Nzioka emphasized that access to information is a cornerstone of participatory governance. He noted that the Access to Information Act of 2016 provides a clear legal framework for citizens to request information from public and private entities, thereby empowering them to engage actively in development processes. Highlighting the transformative power of transparency, he explained that readily available information enables informed decision-making, strengthens accountability, curbs corruption, and fosters meaningful public participation in policymaking.

Detailing the obligations imposed on public and private bodies, Mr. Nzioka stressed the duty to proactively disclose information and to respond to requests within 21 days, with an appeals mechanism for non-compliance. He further underscored the importance of safeguarding whistleblowers who expose maladministration and wrongdoing, thereby reinforcing trust in public institutions.

In his call to action, Mr. Nzioka urged intensified efforts to raise awareness of information-access rights, particularly among women and rural communities. He advocated for the simplification of legal language into accessible formats and vernaculars, enabling rural women to comprehend and utilize their entitlements. He also encouraged women to engage confidently in policy discussions, advocating for gender-responsive measures and the enforcement of the two-thirds gender rule in leadership positions. Addressing persistent challenges, he highlighted the need to overcome language barriers in legal documentation and to equip women with the knowledge necessary to assert their rights effectively.





## **Accelerating Economic Empowerment for Women**

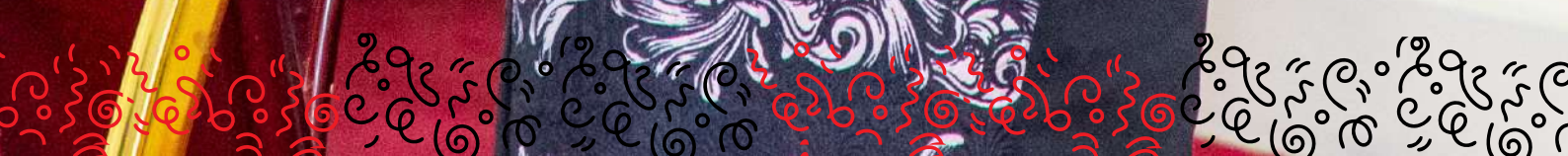
**Veridiana Wasike, Director, Fund Management and Resource Mobilization, NGAAF**

Veridiana Wasike began her remarks by highlighting the vital importance of affirmative action in promoting inclusive development and empowering marginalized populations, especially women, in Kenya. She underscored that such policies are key to closing gaps in economic participation and leadership representation, thereby ensuring equitable progress for all segments of society.

She proceeded to outline the mandate and strategic vision of the National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF), which operates under the Ministry of Gender, Culture, and Heritage through the State Department for Gender and Affirmative Action. Established in alignment with Kenya's 2010 Constitution, NGAAF's primary objective is to empower women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups by promoting economic independence, leadership development, and social inclusion. These efforts aim to create equal opportunities for marginalized populations to contribute meaningfully to the country's development.

A significant focus of Wasike's presentation was the economic empowerment programs facilitated by NGAAF, which include initiatives such as table banking, grant support mechanisms, and entrepreneurship training. These programs are designed to strengthen the financial resilience of women by providing both capital and the necessary skills to succeed in entrepreneurship. She also shared that NGAAF, in partnership with the Government of Italy, is rolling out a three-year Gender-Based Violence (GBV) intervention program in five priority counties, targeting areas with high GBV rates.

Additionally, she also advocated for the provision of free sanitary towels to girls in junior secondary schools, stressing that menstrual health should never be a barrier to education or school attendance. She concluded her remarks by urging women and youth to take full advantage of government programs that foster inclusive growth and social transformation. Wasike's address underscored the government's commitment to sustained investment in women's economic empowerment, highlighting its importance in achieving both national and global gender equality goals.



## Mr Nondo Ebuela Ejano – Executive Director Women's Global Network for Reproductive RightsAfrica (WGNRRAfrica)

He began by reflecting on the day's proceedings within the theme “Accelerate Action: Speeding up Women's Equality for an Inclusive and Sustainable Future.” He stressed that gender equality is not a distant goal but an urgent imperative, one that depends fundamentally on women's ability to make autonomous decisions about their bodies, health, and futures.

Drawing on WGNRRAfrica's mandate, he underscored that sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) lie at the very heart of women's empowerment. He noted that access to contraception, safe abortion, maternal healthcare, and comprehensive reproductive education is a human right yet, across the continent, restrictive laws, chronic underfunding of health systems, and entrenched gender norms continue to erect formidable barriers. Without the power to govern their own bodies, he argued, women cannot fully participate in economic, social, or political life.

He went on to emphasize the necessity of multi-sectoral collaboration. Governments, he argued, must enact and enforce policies guaranteeing universal SRHR access, mainstream gender equality across all ministries, and allocate adequate resources to health-system strengthening. Civil-society organizations, he continued, play a vital role in translating these policies into practice, sustaining local advocacy, and amplifying the voices of marginalized communities. Likewise, the private sector must be held accountable for equitable workplace practices ensuring equal pay, family-friendly policies, and investment in women's leadership and international partners should leverage global platforms to keep SRHR and gender equality at the forefront of development agendas.

He then issued a clear set of imperatives for action. First, legislative reform must enshrine SRHR as a fundamental right and remove punitive restrictions. Second, governments and donors should commit the necessary financial and human resources to deliver comprehensive reproductive care. Third, grassroots movements require sustained technical and financial support to extend services and education into underserved areas. Fourth, he called for innovative cross-sector partnerships that blend public policy, private investment, and civil-society expertise. Fifth, leadership development initiatives must urgently elevate women into decision-making roles at every level. Finally, he emphasized the importance of mutual accountability: all stakeholders must track progress against clear benchmarks and hold one another to the commitments made.

In closing, he reminded participants that accelerating women's equality demands both solidarity and urgency. He called on the audience not merely to leave the fair inspired, but to return to their respective spheres equipped, committed, and accountable, determined to transform today's pledges into tomorrow's realities. Together, he declared, they can ensure that gender equality is a lived reality today, rather than a deferred promise.





## Healthcare & GBV Support

*Dorcas K Wainaina Board Chairperson , Mama Lucy Kibaki Hospital*

Dorcas Kemunto, representing Mama Lucy Kibaki Hospital, started by outlining the hospital's progressive strides in healthcare delivery and its targeted response to gender-based violence (GBV). Her remarks underscored the institution's role as a pioneer in implementing innovative, inclusive, and gender-responsive health interventions, positioning it as a model for public health advancement across Kenya.

Kemunto highlighted the hospital's trailblazing move to become the first facility in Kenya to provide self-test cervical cancer screening kits. This initiative empowers women to take proactive steps in managing their reproductive health, particularly in communities where access to regular screening remains limited. The effort reflects the hospital's broader commitment to preventive healthcare and addressing barriers to early diagnosis and treatment.

Tackling the urgent issue of GBV, she reported that Mama Lucy Kibaki Hospital had established a comprehensive GBV support center integrated with an on-site police station, offering survivors a streamlined and secure environment to report incidents and access medical, psychosocial, and legal support services. Kemunto emphasized that this holistic approach significantly improves survivors' access to justice and reinforces the hospital's position as a safe and responsive care center for vulnerable individuals.

On gender representation within the institution, Kemunto celebrated the fact that women currently occupy three of the five top management roles, reflecting a deliberate institutional shift toward gender-balanced leadership. She also recognized the hospital's first female ICU physiotherapist, a young professional breaking barrier in a male-dominated specialty and serving as an inspiration for women in medicine and allied health fields.

She further elaborated on the hospital's mobile antenatal care outreach program, which delivers essential prenatal services to pregnant women in hard-to-reach areas. This initiative ensures that maternal healthcare is inclusive and accessible, regardless of geographic or economic limitations. Complementing this is the Kangaroo Father Care initiative, a neonatal care program that encourages fathers to engage in skin-to-skin contact with their newborns at home, especially premature and low-birth-weight babies, promoting better health outcomes and fostering shared responsibility in caregiving.

In conclusion, Dorcas Kemunto reaffirmed Mama Lucy Kibaki Hospital's commitment to healthcare innovation, gender equality, and community-centered service delivery. Her presentation showcased how the hospital continues to drive meaningful change in healthcare systems, especially for women and girls, and serves as a national example of gender-sensitive public service.





## **Bridging the Digital Divide -Priya Budhabhatti, CEO, Craft Silicon Foundation**

In a heartfelt and visionary address, Priya Budhabhatti, CEO of the Craft Silicon Foundation, spoke passionately about the transformative power of digital inclusion in advancing women's empowerment across Africa. She began by affirming that access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is no longer a luxury, but an essential right and tool for women to participate meaningfully in today's digital economy. Without it, she noted, women and girls risk being left behind in an increasingly connected world.

Budhabhatti showcased the foundation's innovative and inclusive approach to closing the digital divide, particularly in marginalized and rural communities. She highlighted the mobile, solar-powered computer classrooms that bring free ICT training directly to women and girls in areas where traditional learning infrastructure is lacking. These classrooms not only deliver basic digital literacy but also provide opportunities for learners to pursue globally recognized Microsoft certifications, equipping them with the skills needed to thrive in both formal employment and entrepreneurship.

Beyond digital literacy, she outlined the foundation's efforts in developing fintech solutions designed specifically for women in communities with limited or no access to traditional banking services. These tools empower women to manage their finances securely, save, and engage with digital financial services that are otherwise out of reach, effectively building financial independence and resilience from the ground up.

A particularly moving moment in her presentation was the recognition of Michael Ager, a graduate of the foundation's ICT training program. She shared his inspiring journey from a student to a changemaker who went on to found Turning Point Magazine Africa, a growing platform that amplifies voices and stories of leadership, innovation, and social impact across the continent. His story, she said, is a testament to the power of access, mentorship, and belief in one's potential.

Priya Budhabhatti closed her address by reaffirming Craft Silicon Foundation's commitment to ensuring no woman or girl is left behind in the digital age. Through its dynamic programs, the foundation continues to shape a future where technology serves as a powerful equalizer, driving economic inclusion, social mobility, and gender equity throughout Africa.



Ambassador Dr. Josephine Ojiambo, a veteran advocate for civil society and women's rights, delivered a compelling address that celebrated the strides women have made in leadership, governance, and social transformation. Speaking during the International Women's Day celebration, Dr. Ojiambo reaffirmed the critical role that women leaders play in shaping Kenya's socio-political and economic landscape, and emphasized the importance of recognizing and amplifying their contributions.

As a distinguished diplomat and champion of gender equality, Dr. Ojiambo took the opportunity to honor trailblazing women who have broken barriers and made history in their respective fields. Among those recognized were Professor Mohamed Hutchinson, the first female Vice Chancellor of the University of Nairobi, whose appointment marked a significant milestone in academic leadership. She also lauded Major General Fatma Mohamed, who became the first woman in Kenya's history to be appointed as a military commander in 2024, and Hon. Dorcas Owuor, the first female Attorney General of Kenya, also appointed in 2024. Additionally, Hon. Tabitha, a powerhouse in Kenya's beverage industry, was acknowledged for her leadership and entrepreneurial success in a traditionally male-dominated sector.

Dr. Ojiambo also encouraged attendees to engage with platforms that celebrate women's achievements, notably Turning Point Magazine, which documents inspiring stories of women change-makers across various sectors. She highlighted the magazine's latest issue, featuring influential figures such as Grace Muthoni, a passionate HIV advocate; Sally Muthiga, a leader in social impact; Charity, a disability rights advocate and entrepreneur; and Samson Otieno, a male ally and champion for gender equality. By sharing these stories, she emphasized, the magazine not only inspires the next generation but also promotes inclusive narratives that empower both women and men to take active roles in driving societal change.

Dr. Ojiambo's address served as both a celebration of women's progress and a call to continue pushing boundaries, ensuring that women are visible, valued, and supported at all levels of leadership and development.





**Pan-African Perspective  
Ms . Bunchie Hart, President,  
United Female Entrepreneur  
of Liberia**

Bunchie Hart began by emphasizing that women are the backbone of African economies, particularly in the informal sector, agriculture, and micro-enterprise. Despite their critical contributions, she noted, women continue to face entrenched barriers in access to finance, entrepreneurship opportunities, and leadership positions.

Hart issued a compelling call for greater inclusion of women in governance, decision-making processes, and policy formulation. She underscored that sustainable development and democratic progress in Africa cannot be achieved without women occupying seats at the table where key decisions are made. She challenged governments and institutions to implement gender-responsive policies that reflect the lived realities of women and create equitable access to economic and political power.

In her remarks, Hart also advocated for strong grassroots partnerships, highlighting the need for collaborative efforts that uplift women from the community level upward. She emphasized that development initiatives must be designed with women, not just for them, ensuring that local women's voices and perspectives inform strategies for empowerment. Echoing a timeless truth, she concluded her speech by stating that “empowering a woman is empowering the world,” reinforcing the idea that gender equity is a foundational pillar for holistic and inclusive growth across the continent.

## **Women in Business & Leadership – Department of Safety Management System & State Department**

- Dedicated their award to all women making a difference.
- Supports Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to increase women's participation in leadership.
- Uwezo Fund supports youth and women in small enterprises.
- Small Enterprise Authority (SEA) provides business development tools.
- KJET Projects, funded by the World Bank, to create youth employment opportunities nationwide.



## Supporting GBV Survivors

*Ms Betty Adera, CEO, Betty Adera Foundation*

In her opening remarks, Betty Adera noted the importance of supporting survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and fostering gender equality at all levels of society. In her remarks, Adera highlighted the Foundation's mission to offer “second chances” to survivors of GBV, particularly women and children, through holistic support mechanisms that enable them to heal and thrive beyond their trauma.

She outlined the Foundation's multi-faceted approach, which includes psychosocial counseling, legal support, vocational training, and reintegration programs aimed at restoring dignity, confidence, and economic independence to survivors. Adera underscored that empowering women affected by violence is not only a matter of justice but also a foundational step toward building more resilient communities.

She further emphasized the importance of recognizing and celebrating men who serve as allies in the fight for gender equality. She noted that inclusive progress can only be achieved when all members of society actively participate in dismantling harmful norms and advocating for fairness and equity. By spotlighting male champions, the Foundation promotes a model of shared responsibility and collaboration in addressing systemic inequalities.

In her closing remarks, She commended Turning Point Magazine for serving as a critical platform that amplifies grassroots voices and lived experiences from across Africa. She praised the publication's role in elevating underrepresented narratives, thereby contributing meaningfully to the national and continental dialogue on women's empowerment. According to her, platforms like Turning Point are instrumental in fostering understanding, solidarity, and action toward lasting gender transformation.

### Call to Action

1. Recognize & amplify women's contributions in leadership and economic growth.
2. Strengthen partnerships across all sectors for long-term gender equality solutions.
3. Invest in innovation & economic empowerment programs, especially for PLWD, youth, and women.







## WORK DONE BY DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS IN KENYA TO ACCELERATE WOMENS AGENDA

Various departments in Kenya have taken significant strides to accelerate the women's agenda by prioritizing gender equality, economic empowerment, leadership representation, and improved access to resources. This commitment was evident during the International Women's Day celebrations where high-level representatives from key institutions shared insights on ongoing policy reforms and institutional efforts aimed at advancing women's rights and empowerment across all sectors.

**Jackline Mwenesi, Commissioner at the Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA)**, emphasized that achieving gender equality is a collective societal responsibility. She called for greater support for women entrepreneurs, equitable resource allocation, and intentional mentorship for young women aspiring to leadership. Commissioner Mwenesi affirmed IPOA's commitment to upholding fairness within the National Police Service (NPS), pledging to ensure gender-sensitive practices in law enforcement, particularly in how individuals, especially women, are treated in police custody. Her remarks reinforced the need for institutional accountability and gender-responsive oversight mechanisms within security agencies.


Representing the **Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP)**, **Dr. Ann Nderitu** provided a critical overview of women's participation in Kenyan politics. Despite Kenya having 92 registered political parties, she highlighted that only nine are led by women, a stark indication of persistent gender imbalances in political leadership. Dr. Nderitu urged political actors and civil society to champion women's leadership, advocating for more intentional strategies to support female candidates at both grassroots and national levels. She stressed that political exclusion is a root cause of many systemic inequalities, and called for mental health support structures for women in politics, especially those who face electoral losses, which often carry psychological and social costs.

From the **Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA)**, **Corazon Awino** outlined the agency's ongoing efforts to support women's economic empowerment through inclusive tax policy reforms. KRA has rolled out simplified tax regimes and digital tools tailored to women-led enterprises, aiming to remove barriers to compliance and improve access to financial systems. The authority has also expanded tax education programs targeting women in informal and formal sectors. Institutional gender parity within KRA has seen notable progress, with female leadership representation rising from 35% to 37%, and women now accounting for 46% of the total workforce, underscoring KRA's internal commitment to gender equity.

**Ms. Dorothy Jemator Kimengech, Vice Chairperson**, drew attention to the critical link between access to information and gender equality. Marking 30 years since the Beijing Declaration, she noted that women and girls still face information barriers that limit their participation in education, entrepreneurship, and civic life. She advocated for strengthened efforts to create equitable access to knowledge and opportunity, particularly for young girls, and emphasized the need to prioritize inclusive development as a national goal.

The Commission on Administrative Justice (CAJ), established under the Kenyan Constitution, was also spotlighted for its central role in promoting gender-responsive governance. The commission has actively supported the development and implementation of laws that protect and uplift women, particularly in the areas of climate action, social protection, and peace and security. CAJ has also taken bold steps in addressing gender-based violence (GBV), enhancing public service delivery, and leveraging digital platforms to create more inclusive systems. Despite handling over 250,000 information access requests and training thousands of public officers on gender-sensitive service delivery, CAJ acknowledged that public awareness of women's rights and available resources remains limited, calling for enhanced outreach and civic education.

Collectively, these presentations showcased the significant strides and ongoing challenges faced by Kenyan institutions in actualizing gender equality. The insights presented not only highlighted institutional accountability but also served as a rallying call for cross-sector collaboration, policy enforcement, and sustained public engagement in achieving a gender-equal future.





## PANEL DISCUSSION: ACCELERATING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

This dynamic and insightful panel discussion brought together thought leaders and experts committed to advancing gender equality and inclusion across economic, academic, and social spheres.

### Panelists

- **Josephine Manyasi** (Deputy Commissioner, Customs & Control, KRA)
- **Dr. Joyce Ochola** (Lecturer, Cooperative University of Kenya)
- **Sandra Odhiambo** (United Disabled Persons in Kenya - UDPK)
- **Winnie Gathu** (Founder, Girl Code Movement)

Moderated to emphasize real-world action and cross-sector collaboration, the discussion centered on the theme of Accelerating Action for Women's Economic Empowerment.

The panel opened with a discussion on entrepreneurship as a critical pathway to economic independence for women. Dr. Ochola cited research indicating that 93% of Kenyan women express interest in starting their own businesses, but face barriers related to confidence, business knowledge, and systemic inequalities. She emphasized the need to empower women with practical business skills and understanding of the government's strategic support mechanisms. Sandra Odhiambo spoke on the unique challenges faced by women with disabilities, noting that skilling programs provided by UDPK aim to close the gap in access to entrepreneurship and employment. She urged employers to adapt workplace policies and infrastructure to be inclusive and to recognize the leadership potential of women with disabilities through intentional advocacy and training initiatives.


Josephine Manyasi shared the Kenya Revenue Authority's efforts to ease market access for women entrepreneurs. She highlighted the Authorized Economic Operators (AEO) Program, which simplifies customs procedures, allowing women importers to benefit from fast-track green channels following security checks. She also discussed Advanced Tariff Rulings, which give importers predictability on duties, and the Stakeholder Engagement Program, a platform that offers free information and training to female entrepreneurs. These efforts aim to reduce entry barriers for women in international trade and build trust between the government and women-led businesses.

Winnie Gathu turned the discussion toward technology and gender equality, detailing Girl Code Movement's initiatives that promote inclusion in the tech space. She emphasized the importance of equipping girls with skills in areas like 3D printing and gamified education, especially for differently-abled children. Through its Zero Barriers Campaign, Girl Code partners with tech firms to create accessible learning and working environments, while also advocating for policies that increase women's visibility and representation in STEM fields.

The panel also touched on systemic discrimination and harmful cultural practices. The speakers collectively called for accelerated implementation of protective policies that shield women and girls from gender-based discrimination and practices that hinder their progress. Sandra Odhiambo noted that while Kenya's constitutional framework is inclusive, the impact of government and civil society programs must be strengthened through innovation, better communication, and targeted outreach, especially to marginalized groups.

A particularly engaging moment in the discussion came when Sandra highlighted the use of arts, theater, and sports in UDPK's youth empowerment programs, emphasizing how creativity can foster inclusion and awareness. Panelists agreed on the power of creative platforms to drive social change and build confidence among youth and women in underserved communities.






In closing, the panelists offered strategic recommendations for stakeholders. These included innovating and strengthening the SME business ecosystem, mainstreaming women-owned enterprises into global value chains, and re-evaluating the effectiveness of existing government support mechanisms. Additionally, they stressed the importance of inclusive language and respectful representation of persons with disabilities, calling for policies and programs that reflect dignity, equity, and access for all.

This panel demonstrated the collective will and expertise available across institutions and movements in Kenya to catalyze lasting change. The discussions reaffirmed that achieving gender equality and economic empowerment is not only a moral and human rights imperative but also a critical foundation for national development and global competitiveness.

### Key Recommendations

- **Strengthen the SME Ecosystem:** Support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) through affordable financing, business training, and market access, focusing on sectors like agriculture, technology, and manufacturing.
  - **Mainstream Women-Owned Enterprises into Global Value Chains:** Facilitate women entrepreneurs' entry into global markets by providing capacity-building programs and fostering partnerships with multinational corporations to improve market access and visibility.
  - **Reevaluate Government Support for Entrepreneurship:** Ensure government policies support underserved entrepreneurs, including women, youth, and people with disabilities, through accessible financial assistance, simplified registration processes, and protection of intellectual property.
  - **Promote Respectful Language for Persons with Disabilities:** Advocate for the use of inclusive and respectful language in public and private sectors, helping shift societal attitudes toward persons with disabilities and ensuring their rights and dignity are recognized.
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## Social Inclusion Training

Facilitated by John Cornwell and Doreen Mutune, consultants

As part of our ongoing efforts to promote inclusive governance and psychosocial support, a comprehensive Social Inclusion Training session was conducted, facilitated by John Cornwell and Doreen Mutune, both seasoned social inclusion consultants with extensive experience in equity-based policy development and community empowerment. The training brought together diverse stakeholders, including government officers, civil society actors, youth leaders, and service providers, to explore the structural, cultural, and systemic barriers that hinder equitable access to opportunities and participation in public life.

The session emphasized the practical integration of social inclusion principles into day-to-day service delivery, policymaking, and community engagement. Topics ranged from intersectionality and inclusive communication to the development of gender-responsive and disability-sensitive programs. Participants actively engaged in scenario-building, reflection exercises, and collaborative action planning, all aimed at deepening understanding and inspiring actionable change.

Held concurrently, Childline Kenya facilitated therapy sessions for children, creating a safe, nurturing environment where young participants could express themselves freely through art, play, and storytelling. These sessions aimed to address the often-overlooked emotional and psychological needs of children facing exclusion, trauma, or social neglect. The combined approach ensured that both institutional actors and community members, especially children, benefited from an inclusive and healing space, reinforcing the importance of multi-level interventions in achieving long-term social equity.

### Key Emerging Issues.

- **Persistent Structural and Systemic Barriers** - Participants highlighted entrenched policy and institutional practices that continue to marginalize vulnerable populations, including women, persons with disabilities, and youth.
- **Limited Integration of Inclusion in Daily Practice** - There is a gap in translating inclusion policies into everyday service delivery, with many practitioners unfamiliar with tools for gender-responsive or disability-sensitive programming.
- **Weak Awareness on Intersectionality** - Several participants noted challenges in recognizing how overlapping identities (e.g., gender, age, disability, socio-economic status) compound exclusion.
- **Communication Barriers** - Participants struggled with





## Key Outcomes

1. **Enhanced Understanding of Social Inclusion:** Participants gained deeper insights into social inclusion frameworks, intersectionality, and community-based approaches to engagement.
2. **Strengthened Collaboration:** The activity fostered partnerships between civil society, government, and service providers, encouraging knowledge-sharing and joint problem-solving.
3. **Psychosocial Support for Children:** Child therapy sessions provided safe spaces for emotional expression, with some children identified for ongoing support through child protection networks.
4. **Community Empowerment:** Both adults and children experienced the training as an empowering space, where the voices of marginalized groups were centered and validated.

## Recommendations

1. **Scale Up Inclusion Trainings Across Sectors.**  
Deliver tailored refresher sessions every 6–12 months for frontline workers, administrators, and educators to deepen sector-specific capacity.
2. **Develop Practical Inclusion Toolkits.**  
Create and distribute user-friendly manuals, visual aids, and multilingual materials to support the application of inclusive strategies.
3. **Institutionalize Child-Focused Psychosocial Programs.**  
Expand access to therapy sessions through integration into schools, clinics, and community hubs.
4. **Foster Continuous Peer Learning.**  
Establish a community of practice (e.g., WhatsApp group or learning network) for trained participants to share updates, tools, and best practices.
5. **Monitor and Evaluate Inclusion Interventions.**  
Encourage institutions to adopt clear inclusion indicators and feedback systems to assess progress and identify areas for improvement.





## **A Human-Centered Story: Empowering Women through Voter Registration at the International Women's Day Exhibition**

Turning point magazine in collaboration with Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) and likeminded partners organized the 2025 International Women's Day celebration, an exhibition was held bringing together a diverse group of women from various backgrounds to engage with key issues of voter registration, civic participation, and gender equality. The exhibition was designed not only as a celebration of women's achievements but also as an educational platform to empower women and encourage their active involvement in the democratic process.

The exhibition was held at the KICC with booths, displays, and interactive sections set up to provide information about voter registration and the importance of voting. As the event kicked off, women of all ages and from different walks of life filtered in, some eager to learn and others curious about how they could contribute to the electoral process. At the heart of the event was the IEBC booth, where women could register to vote and learn about the various aspects of the electoral process.

Among the attendees was Dorine, a young woman from a Huruma area, who had never registered to vote before. "I have always thought that voting was something for other people, she shared with a friendly volunteer at the booth. "But today, I learned that voting is for all of us, and that we all deserve to have a say."

The exhibition also featured interactive displays that highlighted the challenges many women face in accessing voter registration, particularly those in marginalized communities. Through real-life stories, videos, and engaging presentations, women were able to understand the barriers that hinder their participation, such as a lack of access to registration centers, limited information, and socio-cultural obstacles.

One of the most impactful displays was a section dedicated to the mobile voter registration units, where women could see firsthand how these units are helping to bring the registration process to remote and underserved areas. "This unit will come to our village?" asked Mariam, a woman from a rural community. "That means I don't have to travel for hours just to register. This is going to change everything for us."


In addition to registration, the exhibition focused on education and awareness, with community leaders and women's rights advocates giving talks on the importance of understanding one's voting rights, the electoral process, and the role of women in shaping the nation's future. Participants were encouraged to become ambassadors for voter registration, spreading the word within their communities about the significance of every woman's vote.

An inspiring moment came when one of the keynote speakers, a former government official, shared her personal journey of how she overcame societal expectations and participated in the electoral process. "When I first voted, it was not just about marking a ballot," she said. "It was about claiming my right to participate in shaping the laws that govern my life, and that of my children. Today, every woman here has the same right."

The exhibition also provided space for discussions on the role of women in politics and leadership. Participants were encouraged to think about how they could contribute beyond voting whether by running for office, supporting women candidates, or advocating for policies that promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

As the day came to a close, the atmosphere was filled with excitement and empowerment. The exhibition succeeded not only in registering new voters but also in creating a renewed sense of civic pride and participation. The women who attended left with a wealth of knowledge and a shared commitment to actively engage in the democratic process. They understood that their votes were not just about casting a ballot but about asserting their rights, empowering future generations, and contributing to the democratic fabric of the nation.

The exhibition was more than just an event it was a catalyst for change, a platform that provided the tools and knowledge needed to create a more inclusive and representative democracy. By showcasing the importance of voter registration and involving women directly in the process, the IEBC has taken a significant step toward ensuring that women are not only part of the conversation but are also empowered to shape the future of their country.





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