

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 2 DAY WOMEN'S ECONOMIC FORUM - KENYA (WEF-K) WITH THE THEME: GETTING WOMEN INVOLVED IN KENYA'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY.

PREAMBLE

Community Advocacy and Awareness Trust – CRAWN Trust in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Service, Gender and Affirmative Action, University of Nairobi Women's Economic Empowerment Hub (UON WEE HUB), Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMwA), CARE Kenya, UN Women and Global Affairs Canada organized the two-day Women's Economic Forum 2023 from 27-28 February 2023. The theme for the forum was "Getting Women Involved in Kenya's Economic Recovery". It was attended by over 400 participants physically while around 1000 others joined virtually. Participants were drawn from various captains of industry, high-ranking government officials, private sector, non-state actors, development partners, thought leaders, women's rights organisations, media, academia, and grassroot women from Nairobi County and its environs.

The goal of the third WEF-K was to foster discussions on the role of women groups, government, and institutions to drive collaborative action and successful responses to enable women's effective leadership and contribution towards Kenya's economic recovery. The discussions of the forum were centered around influencing non-exclusive economic policy to effect the desired changes at national and county levels for women's effective contribution to economic recovery, **Convening private sector players and other key stakeholders involved in capital development, enterprise development, and market regulation, to enable women to engage in local and global supply chains, Bringing unique and subtle Women's Economic Empowerment issues that policymakers may not have considered and addressing barriers to women's economic and political empowerment, including addressing the scourge of violence against women and the cost to the economy.**

The Women's Economic Forum 2023 was officially opened by the Cabinet Secretary of Gender and Affirmative Action Hon. Aisha Jumwa following keynote addresses from the Canadian High Commissioner and representatives from partner organisations. The thematic areas that were

covered by panels were; Women's Economic Empowerment priority areas (women leaders driving the legislative and policy agenda for WEE); Women's Economic Justice and Climate action; Economic recovery outlook and the participation of women (Policy and legislative interventions); The power of women collectives to drive economic growth; Financial inclusion and the cost of finance; Women in the manufacturing sector; Geopolitical dynamics/trade agreements and their impact on women's economic and social well-being.; Women in Agriculture; Integrating women collectives into local and global supply chains; Barriers to WEE (including the burden of unpaid care-work and the cost of violence against women); Gender lens investing; Harnessing the power of technology and innovation and Gender responsive budgeting.

OBSERVATIONS

The panelists and participants observed that there is need to:

1. Have more women in political leadership, in addition to addressing the barriers that limit their political participation.
2. Prioritize access to affirmative funds through awareness creation and information sharing. This should include giving information on regulatory requirements and using platforms trusted by women such as chiefs' barazas.
3. Address the barriers women face in regard to access to credit such as access to collateral and social/gender norms.
4. Recognize, reduce, remunerate, and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work.
5. Prioritize skilling women on lifelong learning experiences, either in informal or formal workplaces.
6. Strengthen frameworks to promote supply chain linkages, particularly for women-owned businesses.
7. Focus on solutions towards addressing Gender Based Violence especially Intimate Partner Violence.
8. Advocate for fuller engagement on the two-thirds gender principle for both the public and private sectors.
9. Develop and strengthen monitoring, evaluation, and information on social categorization to enhance gender equity and justice using an intersectional approach by focusing on age, sex-disaggregated data, socio-economic status or class, geographical location, and physical ability, among others.

10. Leverage technologies, innovation, and digitization to accelerate the empowerment of women.

Policy Recommendations that can support women's economic recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. A legal and policy environment that promotes and monitors the economic justice and rights of women and protects women's interests including access to decent work for all.
2. Policies on property ownership, land tenure, and irrigation. Policies on the involvement of women in conflict resolution. Research shows that there is a 64% chance of good results when women are involved in negotiation processes yet women are involved only 10% of the time.
3. The national government ensures that prioritization of the fiscal consolidation strategy does not sideline spending on women's empowerment as this will derail progress towards women's empowerment and gender equality in Kenya.
4. Policies on gender-responsive contract farming to avert food insecurity.
5. Policies geared towards resource mobilization allocation and utilization for gender and climate justice.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is clear that Women's Economic Empowerment is crucial for sustainable and inclusive economic growth. As we work towards economic recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that we prioritize getting women involved in every aspect of the economy. This includes increased budget allocation by the government towards women's economic empowerment and increased financial resources by the private sector towards developing and enhancing women-led social and development enterprises, as well as promoting gender-sensitive supply chains. Let us work together to create a world where women have equal opportunities to thrive economically, and in turn, contribute to the prosperity of our communities and Kenya at large.