



## **CONCEPT NOTE**

**Beyond Zero Initiative  
Side Event  
63<sup>rd</sup> Session Commission on the Status  
of Women**

**MONDAY, MARCH 18, 2019  
1:15 – 2:30 PM  
ECOSOC CHAMBER, UNHQ, NY**

## **THE BEYOND ZERO INITIATIVE - THE POWER OF WOMEN'S AGENCY IN TRANSFORMING SOCIAL NORMS FOR BETTER HEALTH OUTCOMES AND WELL BEING**

Kenya has in recent years, undertaken a number of health system and financial reforms to increase coverage for quality health services, improve availability of essential medicines and reduce out of pocket payments. Universal social protection systems have the potential to contribute to the achievement of a range of goals in the 2030 Agenda—from eradicating poverty and reducing inequalities to strengthening food security, from enhancing access to education, health and decent work to building resilience in the face of disasters. Well-designed social protection systems can support the accelerated realization of gender equality by narrowing gender gaps in poverty; enhancing women's access to personal income; and providing a lifeline for poor women. While social protection coverage has increased during the last decade, the world is still a long way from achieving comprehensive coverage for all. Globally, only 29 per cent of the population are covered by comprehensive social security systems that include a full range of protections across the life course.

Universal Health Coverage (UHC) is an important component of social protection particularly when conceptualised from a gender awareness lens and designed to be gender-responsive in its implementation. Universalism specifies that nobody should be left behind. It is explicit in stating that health services should be allocated according to people's needs. This speaks specifically to the concept of vertical equity which means that those with higher needs (e.g. pregnant women) should receive more services than others. Lastly, the notion of financial protection is understood as people's financial contributions towards funding health services should be according to their ability to pay. UHC, therefore, requires that healthy and wealthy members of society cross-subsidise services for the sick, the vulnerable and the poor, underpinned by the notion of social solidarity.

The Beyond Zero side event will demonstrate Kenya's leadership, commitment and investment to gender equality and the empowerment of women within the health and social sector.

The focus of the side event will be around Kenya's social protection measures towards advancing wellness and positive health outcomes. The side event will showcase the leadership, brokering and convening power of **Her Excellency, Mrs Margaret Kenyatta, First Lady of the Republic of Kenya**, and the Beyond Zero Initiative in catalysing positive changes.

Kenya's First Lady, founder and patron of the Beyond Zero Initiative has provided unprecedented leadership profiling the health and wellbeing of women and their families. Through her high-level advocacy, a series of policy and resource interventions at the national and county government levels have been witnessed. By highlighting the specific risks over the life course of women and girls who experience

multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, particularly young women and adolescent girls, older women, migrant women, women with disabilities, the Beyond Zero platform has advocated for inclusive and holistic social protection measures. Beyond Zero has contributed towards interventions such as:

- An Expanded resource envelope in form of cash transfers to the elderly and those living with disabilities
- National Health Insurance Fund packages fully supplemented by government such as the maternity Linda Mama super cover that includes prenatal, delivery (normal and caesarean section) and post-natal
- Design and national roll out of the Universal Health Coverage as part of the Big Four priorities of the Government
- Pioneered a movement of spouses of elected leaders to venture to social causes that enhances wellness and enjoyment of rights.

This side event will be co-hosted with the **Ford Foundation** and **Princess Mabel van Oranje, Chairperson of 'Girls Not Brides'** initiative. Key respondents to the panel interventions include the **Republic of Singapore**, the **Kingdom of Denmark** and the **President of OAFLA**. The UN family will be represented by two agencies namely the **United Nations Trust Fund** and the **United Nations Resident Coordinator Kenya office**.

### **FORMAT OF THE SIDE EVENT**

To situate the discussions, a 5 minute video on the journey of Beyond Zero and its strategy of enlisting advocates and ambassadors to cascade the movement of improved health and well-being will be presented.

**Welcome Remarks:** Professor Margaret Kobia, Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs

#### **Key note address:**

- **Her Excellency, Mrs. Margaret Kenyatta, First Lady of the Republic of Kenya:**  
*Advocating for improved quality and access for health for the well-being and healthier people*

#### **Panel:**

**Moderator:** Maurice Makoolo Regional Director Eastern Africa, Ford Foundation

- **Princess Mabel van Oranje, Chair Girls not Brides:**  
*Role of multisectoral and coordinated measures to end child marriages*
- **Executive Vice President Ford Foundation:**

*Social protection as a measure to reverse inequalities*

- **Executive Director United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women:**

*Promoting human security as a human right; ending all forms of gender-based violence*

### ***Discussants/Respondents***

- **Her Excellency, Madame Adjoavi Sika Kabore, First Lady of Burkina Faso, President of Organization of African First Ladies against HIV/AIDS (OAFLA)**

*OAFLA's collective voice in advancing social protection for women, young people and children*

- **Siddharth Charterjee, UN Resident Coordinator Kenya**

*Beyond Zero as a social inclusion intervention/movement and its potential for replication in advancing maternal and child health*

- **Desmond Lee, Ti-Seng (TBC), Minister of Social and Family Development of the Republic of Singapore**

*Social protection advancing gender equality and women's empowerment (TBC)*

- **Eva Kjer Hansen (TBC), Minister for Fisheries, Equal Opportunities and Nordic Cooperation for the Kingdom of Denmark**

*Universal health care coverage as a social protection mechanism for women and girls (TBC)*