CONCEPT NOTE

Beyond Zero Campaign Side Event
59th session Commission on the Status of Women/Beijing +20, 2015

March 2015

INTRODUCTION TO THE BEYOND ZERO SIDE EVENT

The 59th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will be devoted to review and appraise the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly on Beijing +5 held in 2000. The Commission is expected to undertake the review in the context of current challenges that affect the implementation of the Platform for Action and the achievement of gender equality and women empowerment. It is also expected to consider opportunities for strengthening gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post 2015 development agenda through the integration of a gender perspective.

The 59th Session is expected to provide strong impetus to the accelerated implementation of the Platform for Action, as well as be a celebratory forum providing an opportunity for dialogue and sharing of experience that will result in enhanced political commitment to action. As such there shall be deliberate focus on the cross cutting topics of a structural and systemic nature where further action is expected to have game changing effect on the realization of gender equality.1

The Kenyan delegation proposes that a side event showcasing the Beyond Zero Campaign is hosted within the United Nations (UN) showcasing Kenya’s political commitment and investment to gender equality and empowerment of women within the health and social sector. The focus on the side event

1. CSW 59th session proposed organisation of work 3rd December 2014
would be around accelerated elimination of transmission of HIV from mother to child (eMTCT), maternal and child health, showcasing the leadership of Her Excellency Mrs. Margaret Kenyatta, First Lady of the Republic of Kenya and the Beyond Zero Campaign in catalyzing positive change.

Kenya has witnessed remarkable expansion of rights protection systems with specific advances related to many of the Platform’s objectives. These achievements are attributed to the strong commitment demonstrated by the highest level of leadership in the country towards implementing the Constitution. His Excellency the President of the Republic of Kenya has taken charge of gender mainstreaming across all sectors by locating the national gender machinery within his office. Throughout the 12 critical areas of concern outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action, Kenya has made great advances. The Beyond Zero Campaign not only addresses critical area number 3 relating to inequalities and inadequacies in and unequal access to health care and related services but has made significant contributions to other critical areas namely: critical area number 1 on the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women; critical area number 4 on violence against women; critical area number 8 on insufficient mechanisms to promote the advancement of women as well as critical area number 12 on persistent discrimination against and violation of rights of the girl child.

The campaign is intended to catalyse local, county, national, continental and international actions as well as mobilize greater partner engagement, with a view to accelerating the realization of three Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – namely goal number 4 on reducing child mortality; goal number 5 on improving maternal health and goal number 6 on combating HIV and AIDs, malaria and other diseases. The Beyond Zero campaign seeks to galvanize national and county leadership for sustained support towards stopping new HIV infections among children and promoting mothers, new-borns and children’s health. It anticipates spurring momentum on the three MDGs by supporting county health management efforts through provision of fully kitted mobile clinics as well as mobilizing partners to spearhead greater community and household sensitization on adoption of preventative health practices/behaviours and uptake of health services

**RATIONALE FOR THE BEYOND ZERO SIDE EVENT**

The Beyond Zero Campaign is Kenya’s First Lady, Her Excellency Margaret Kenyatta’s campaign on maternal and child health. Her Excellency has provided high level political leadership and profile on these issues and this will continue to be the game changer in terms of accelerating national accountability of diverse stakeholders on maternal, child health as well as the elimination of mother to child transmission of HIV (eMTCT). In less than a year, the Campaign has generated unprecedented broad sector support throughout the country. It (the campaign) has dramatically profiled neonatal, maternal health as significant and transformative agenda for attaining improved development standards. The campaign in its rights based approach has sought to bring visibility of the continued suffering and pain of the vulnerable and marginalised, with calls for much needed service delivery interventions. The campaign has also shifted public perception and enhanced understanding on the potential of persons living with HIV by reducing stigma as well as reiterating the hopes of many families that there can be a HIV free generation in our lifetime. In terms of women’s leadership, the
First Lady has been able to galvanise and captivate Kenyans across tribal, age, economic, social or political divide – with a series of public polls in 2014 placing her as the most popular, authentic, focused and humble leader.

The panel discussions proposed for the 59th CSW session resonate with most of the themes that the Beyond Zero Campaign has been seeking to advance specifically: resources for gender equality; the responsibility of men and boys in achieving gender equality; changing social norms to achieve gender equality- expectations and opportunities; realising the rights of marginalised and disadvantaged women and girls.

The Beyond Zero Campaign in Kenya stands out as a model of how political leadership and commitment can propel and accelerate action and momentum responding to systemic and structural challenges hindering overall health improvements. The continued deaths of women from complications arising from pregnancy the magnitude of continued maternal mortality reflects a serious developmental deficit. In its own unique way, the campaign probes the health system (from policy to service delivery) for its integration of gender equality and equity principles across age and socio-economic status and physical ability/disability.

The proposed side event will demonstrate the Beyond Zero campaigns’ catalytic role in promoting gender equality, advancing the implementation of the normative framework on equality and giving an example on future interventions that could be modeled in the post 2015 development agenda. The side event will show case the potential and influence/leverage of Her Excellences convening role that has brought a broad range of actors together to focus on ending maternal and child deaths.

**FORMAT OF THE BEYOND ZERO SIDE EVENT**

Through a 10-minute documentary, the session will benefit from the highlights of the Beyond Zero Campaign one-year journey. This would capture the raison d’entre for the campaign, which is informed by the high, unnecessary and painful cost of inaction around maternal, and child mortality and particularly the eMTCT. Through the campaigns identification of the mobile clinic provision at each of the 47 Counties, the resulting advocacy actions including increased resource allocation for health has provided glimpses of hope amongst underserved, marginalised and vulnerable families whose access to quality health services is gradually being assured. The unique resource mobilisation effort undertaken by the First Lady to increase access to health through her participation in two marathons (half marathon in Nairobi and 42kms marathon in London) will be featured as one of the strategic ways of propelling much needed policy responses and resource allocation both at national and county government levels. This campaign ultimately illustrates one of the unique ways to prompt increased accountability on gendered dimensions of health. As a result the emergence of policy prioritisation to respond to the challenge of data paucity around drivers of ill health that include low levels of girls and women empowerment as well as structural gender inequalities will be highlighted. The session ultimately hopes to demonstrate the power of women’s leadership and in particular entail the First Lady of Kenya articulating how she has interpreted her role as a catalyst in improving Kenya’s development
indices with a view to securing equity and equality for women, men, boys and girls.

Following the documentary, the Cabinet Secretary of Health would present the new opportunities that the Beyond Zero Campaign has provided in terms of holistic approach towards health as well as its alignment to government priorities and targets particularly in reinforcing the free maternal health policy as well as renewed investments on tracking critical health data. As part of modeling the significance of partnerships and maximising institutional strengths an illustration of the journey towards universal health access utilising the proposed model partnership between the National Health Insurance Fund, Equity Foundation, Beyond Zero Campaign and the Ministry of Health.

The panel would also be represented by the Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA) who constitutes members of the National Assembly. A critical component of the Beyond Zero campaign is to assure sustained and lasting impact for Kenyan families, as such, the role of legislatures in formulating and endorsing laws that advance neonatal and maternal care cannot be gainsaid. KEWOPA’s role in advocating for increased health budgetary allocations, calling for accountability on the performance and care for new-borns and their mothers will be highlighted at this side session.

One of the key features of the campaign is the private sector engagement and it is proposed that one of the panelists represents this constituency. Investments in health ultimately improve productivity of the nation, the Beyond Zero Campaign has benefited from a strong boost from the private sector, which ultimately spurs the economic engine of the county.

It is proposed that at least One County that has benefitted from the mobile clinic is present at the side event to illustrate dividends and improvements that the clinic has made in the lives of communities. Whilst the beneficiary voices will be captured in the 10 minute documentary, the presence at least one of the Governors spouse who are the County champions of the Beyond Zero campaign and who are also entrusted to advocate and monitor the mobile clinics, provides opportunity for delegates to interrogate this model. The County case study would also demonstrate the diverse interventions that partners and County governments have made as a way of complimenting the mobile clinic efforts.