Kenya’s Side Event at the 59th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

THEME: Women’s Economic Empowerment and Financial Inclusion: Elevating Livelihoods through Table Banking and Information.

1.0 Introduction

The 59th session of the commission of the status of women is scheduled to take place at the United Nations in New York from the 9th to the 20th March 2015. The main focus of the session will be on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 20 years after its adoption at the fourth world conference on women in 1995. The review will also include the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly, the first 25 year assessment conducted after the adoption of the Platform for Action, which highlighted further actions and initiatives. The sessions will also address opportunities for addressing gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda.

While growth has been recorded in the education of women and their participation in the workforce, women’s inclusion in the Kenyan financial services sector workforce as well as in manufacturing and transport is significantly low at only 20-30%. The low participation of women in major sectors of the economy is attributed to the burdens arising from domestic and reproductive responsibilities which hold women back from and render them ‘un-bankable’. This means the bulk of Kenyan women cannot access loans, cannot take up entrepreneurial ventures and as a result, cannot make savings. In short, they can neither contribute to, nor benefit from the vibrant Kenyan economy.
The theme of this side event will be: Women’s Economic Empowerment and Financial Inclusion: Elevating Livelihoods through Table Banking and Information

The Joyful Women Organization (JoyWo) was founded by Her Excellency Rachel Ruto 5 years ago in UasinGishu County, with the aim of empowering Kenyan women economically, and enhancing their household food security through supporting their involvement in viable livelihood projects. The organization’s flagship programme has been Table Banking - a powerful model that enables members to make and multiply their savings, access cheap loans and channel resources that will propel them to financial emancipation. Through Table Banking, JoyWo supports women’s engagement in livelihood projects and access to markets, including the opening up of opportunities in poultry rearing, green house farming, passion fruit growing, sericulture, open drip irrigation, and entrepreneurship and business skills. The organization also helps women to access the 30% public procurement reservations and preferences for Youth, Women and Persons with Disabilities.

So far, JoyWo has launched in 37 counties with 160,000 members in 5,000 groups and intends to spread its reach to all 47 counties with the aim of reaching 1,000,000 women by 2016.

The side event will be conducted in a panel discussion and Documentary:

1) Panel Discussion

Panelists

- **Patron- Joyful Women Organization- Her Excellency Mrs. Rael Ruto** - To give an overview of Joyful Women Organization’s visions and initiatives, particularly on the flagship; Table-Banking.

- **Representative from Joyful Women Organization Emily Nge’tich** - to highlight how JoyWo helps to translate women’s savings, borrowing and micro-investment capacities into elevating them to major economic players at the national level.

- **Representative from Joyful Women Organization Daisy Waimirito** discuss how JoyWo helps women to access the 30% public procurement reservations and preferences for Youth, Women and Persons with Disabilities.

- **Representative from Joyful Women Organization Rosalyn Nandwa**. To discuss how JoyWo envisions the future, for the organization and the members.

- **A moderator: Daisy Maritim**. Will engage the panelists and asks questions to steer and guide the panel discussions.
JoyWo’s Global Ambassador: Naila Chowdry to highlight JoyWo’s global vision in line with Women Economic Empowerment across the globe.

2) Documentary. A short documentary on JoyWo’s work, the table banking model and the organizations impact will be screened. It will highlight success stories and some member profiles, by John Kipchumba Kiprotich.

3) Publicity Materials

There will be photos of the ‘JoyWo journey’ displayed in the side event, depicting a sample of members’ stories, and JoyWo events and table banking in action. Other materials such as fliers and pamphlets and fliers will be distributed and displayed at the side event.