CONCEPT NOTE

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

THEME: KENYA’S TRANSFORMATIVE PROGRAMME: ACCESSING BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

1.0 Introduction

The fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women will take place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 9th to 20th March 2015. The main focus of the session will be on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, including current challenges that affect its implementation and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. A review of progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 20 years after its adoption at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 will be undertaken. The review of Beijing+20 will also include the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly, the first five-year assessment conducted after the adoption of the Platform for Action, which highlighted further actions and initiatives. The session will also address opportunities for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda.

Kenya has made strides in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women since adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995. Significant progress is notable on the key legislative, policy and programmatic initiatives undertaken in the 12 critical areas of concern. The Government has also demonstrated its commitment by introducing transformative socio-economic programmes for special groups which include Women. The main focus is on the 30% public procurement reservations and preferences
for Youth, Women and Persons with Disabilities and 59th CSW session will provide an excellent opportunity for Kenya to showcase progress made in these programmes.

The Side event will feature under the title: **Kenya’s Transformative programme: Accessing Business Opportunities for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities.**

The 30% Affirmative Action Procurement Reservations and Preferences for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities was a Directive by His Excellency the President that procurement rules be amended to provide for 30% of all Government contracts to be set aside to Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities. The aim is to facilitate enterprises owned by these special groups to participate and do business with the government. The initiative aims at uplifting their economic empowerment, create jobs and revolutionize the domestic economy.

The implementation of this government initiative has seen 3,208 Women Enterprises, 2,474 Youth Enterprises and 72 PWD enterprises benefit with Ksh.8.2 billion worth of tenders from the government. This transformative government initiative clearly addresses critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action on Poverty and the Economy which are fundamental to the socio-economic empowerment of women and the other special groups. The Side event on this programme would therefore generate much interest as a platform for information and experience sharing.

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

i) **Panel Discussion**

**Panelists**

- **Cabinet Secretary – Ministry of Devolution and Planning** - to give an overview on rational for the Socio-economic programmes which include: UWEFO Fund, Women Enterprise Fund, Youth Enterprise Fund, the 30% Affirmative Action Policy on Procurement. This will also include the Legislative and Policy Frameworks on which the Programmes are founded.

- **Representative of the Public Procurement Oversight Authority**: to discuss monitoring of the initiative, compliance with the law, emerging trends, challenges and how these are being addressed.

- **Representative of Kenya Private Sector Alliance**: The Public/Private partnerships on the socio-economic programmes: Lessons from Kenya. Supplier diversity in the private sector. How has (or will) the Private Sector follow Government’s lead and create supplier diversity programmes to empower women and youth owned businesses
• **Representative Kenya Association of Women Business Owners:** To discuss their role in capacity building on public procurement across various counties as well as in supporting government legislation including lobbying work with KEWOPA on the Sakaja Bill and (women's business associations role in legislative developments and the power of women to women networks). Lessons on how women's business associations can be allies in supporting government economic empowerment initiatives.

• **Representative from Kenya Women Parliamentary Association:** The role of Women Parliamentarians in advancing the socio-economic programmes by mobilizing the target groups.

• **A Moderator** (to be identified from the Government delegation) who will pose targeted questions to the panelists to make the event powerful and interesting

**i) Documentary**

A short 10 minutes documentary on the Beijing Platform for Action with a particular focus on the socio-economic programmes will be screened. The Documentary will in particular capture voices of the beneficiaries of the 30% public procurement policy and experiences of a cross section of personalities including grass root women on the Beijing Platform for Action in terms of milestones achieved, challenges and opportunities in accelerating its implementation in the context of the Post-2015 development agenda. These experiences will be captured from representatives of Government, Civil Society, and Individuals including the voices of beneficiaries of the various programmes.

**ii) Publicity materials**

Pamphlets, fliers depicting among other materials will be distributed and displayed at the event. A photo exhibition of pictures which tell the stories on Kenya’s engagement with the BPFA will also be mounted at the venue.