

Chairperson

I congratulate you and members of the bureau on your election and assure you of my delegation's support as you guide the work of this Commission. We thank the Secretary General for his comprehensive reports that will serve to enrich our discussions.

We align our statement with the statements delivered by the State of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Benin on behalf of the African Group, and Chile on behalf of the Group of friends of older persons.

This year's theme resonates with the Government of Kenya's commitment for inclusive and sustainable development and aligns with the 2030 Agenda's call to leave no one behind.

The Constitution of Kenya articulates measures that protect the rights of vulnerable persons and promote their inclusion in the development process.

Chairperson

To reduce inequalities and ensure dignity for all Kenyans, the Government is focusing on four key priority areas branded "the Big 4 Agenda".

These include food security, universal health care, affordable housing and Manufacturing with an allocation of **4 billion US\$** for implementation.

Specifically, to achieve food security, large-scale production of diversified food crops will be promoted through waivers, irrigation and improved technologies.

Efforts are underway to bring down the cost of medical cover within the reach of every Kenyan. The health expenditure will go up from **610 million US\$ in 2018 to 730 million US\$** in 2021 while the coverage is expected reach 100 per cent by 2022.

The National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) has designed a comprehensive free Maternity and Health Insurance Subsidy program targeting disadvantaged groups. The services are meant to ensure equality in the provision of health services.

Kenya is also committed to establishment of modern manufacturing industrial parks that is will create about new jobs.

The government has laid down strategies for constructing decent and affordable houses for its citizen by reducing the cost of mortgages and cutting the cost of construction by use of innovative ways and materials.

As noted in the Secretary General's report, social protection has emerged as one of the key policy instruments to reduce inequality and poverty simultaneously, while also promoting inclusive growth.

In this regard, Kenya's National Social Protection Policy, (2016) outlines measures to address inequalities and vulnerabilities.

The **National Safety Net Programme** targets poor households with orphans and vulnerable children, older person and persons with disabilities. The cash transfer program has over 1.3 million beneficiaries with annual allocation of USD. **200 million**.

Additionally, in 2016/2017, a Universal Social Pension Scheme was introduced targeting older citizens above seventy years.

Chairperson,

High youth unemployment is a challenge in many developing countries and drives inequalities and social exclusion. The Kenya National Youth Policy seeks to address these challenges through various programs.

The Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF), launched in 2007 addresses youth unemployment through provision of credit, business development services and appropriate skills for entrepreneurship.

The Secretary General's report observes that investments in education, particularly higher education and skills training, are critical in improving labour market outcomes and in narrowing the wage gap.

Kenya's Industrial Training and Attachment Policy (2015) aims to facilitate coordination, regulation and financing of industrial training and attachment. A total of 76,364 trainees from 202 tertiary institutions have been placed on industrial attachment to gain hands-on experience.

From 2013 to 2017, 109,354 vulnerable persons were trained in various industrial skills out of which 125 needy female students from the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) received full scholarships to study engineering courses.

The National Industrial Training Authority (NITA) in 2006 established the "**Female Engineering Programme**". To date this programme has sponsored 255 qualified and needy female students from marginalized areas to study engineering courses which are predominantly male dominated.

The Uwezo Fund is a flagship program of Kenya's Vision 2030. It aims to facilitate women, youth and persons with disability to access funds for promoting their businesses and generate gainful self-employment.

Several gender and disability responsive policies and programs have been put in place Notably:

The Affirmative Action Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) is a program that aims to facilitate youth, women and persons with disability owned enterprises. It sets aside 30% of the total government tenders to these groups.

A total of 45,812 tenders amounting to US\$500 million during the Medium Term Plan (2013/2017).

The Women Enterprise Fund was established in 2007 with an aim of providing accessible and affordable credit facility to women for starting up or expanding their businesses.

This Fund targets all Kenyan women entrepreneurs who are economically active, above 18 years undertaking formal or informal business ventures in all sectors.

The Sanitary Towel Project for young girls.

Lack of access to adequate menstrual hygiene causes many girls to miss school. The aim of this program is to keep the girls in school, restore their dignity and self-esteem.

A total of 3.7 million girls in public primary schools, special primary and secondary schools were reached at a cost of **4.7 million US\$** during the 2017/2018 Financial year.

Chairperson,

To empower PWDs and ensure their inclusion, several measures and legal frameworks have been put in place including; the National Disability Policy, 2016, the National Disability Acts, 2003 and the Special Needs Education Policy.

The Government has also reserved 5% employment opportunities for PWDs in the public service.

The Government has also established 14 Vocational Rehabilitation Centers across the country for PWDs.

Financial Grants for infrastructure and equipment to institutions of PWDs. has seen a total of 130 institutions supported from 2013-2-17) and 23,406 PWDs were provided with assistive devices to increase independence in their daily lives.

A total of 6,030 PWD learners were also facilitated with education bursaries and 1,591 PWD organizations provided with grants for economic empowerment.

3,156 persons with Albinism were given sunscreen lotion, protective gear, skin cancer treatment and eye care services while 8162 PWDs were facilitated to obtain Pay As You Earn (PAYE) tax exemption.

The National LPG Enhancement Project

National LPG enhancement Project (Mwananchi Gas Project) is a subsidy program developed to enable poor citizens access cooking gas. This project is set to reach 1.2 million households annually for next 5 years.

The Government recognizes that **education** is a primary enabler for the empowerment, we are happy to report that Kenya has attained parity in both primary and secondary education and the number of girls enrolling in tertiary education is on the rise. Tuition is free in all public primary and secondary schools, while the Government has a system of subsidizing University education for disadvantaged youth. A total of 22,000 secondary school children were also supported under the **Presidential Bursary Fund**

Empowerment of communities is very critical for sustainable development. The government has continued to promote resilience and sustainable community-driven development through mobilization and promotion of Self-Help Groups to address their common challenges. A total of 333,900 community groups were reached during the last Medium Term Plan (2013/2017).

Chairperson,

Kenyan women are still not receiving equal pay for equal work. According to the World Economic Forum report 2017, a Kenyan woman is paid 0.5 US\$ to every 1 US\$ paid to a man doing a similar job.

Several measures have been undertaken by the Government to close the wage gaps.

The main approaches to determination of wages and benefits in the country are minimum wage setting, collective bargaining and administered wage setting. A total of 1,405 Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) covering 1,284,437 unionizable employees were analyzed for conformity with Wage Orders and the labour laws and forwarded to the Employment and Labour Relations Court (ELRC) for registration.

The Constitution created the Salaries and Remuneration Commission (SRC) to guide wage and benefits for public sector workers.

The anticipated integrated National Wages and Remuneration Policy will provide a framework and necessary guidance on wage levels, wage formation and adjustment mechanisms. The policy will be based on the principles of fairness, equity and transparency. This is in line with Article 41 of the Constitution of Kenya (Bill of Rights) which provides that every employee has a right to fair remuneration and to reasonable working conditions irrespective of the gender. It will also address wage gaps between the public and private sector.

The Employment Act 2007 (226) Revised in 2012 provides for non-discrimination of whatever form in employment.

Chairperson,

In conclusion,

As noted in the report of the Secretary General, one of the key challenges to expanding social protection, particularly in low and middle-income countries, is adequate financing. This calls for innovative sources of development finance and partnerships.

I wish to reaffirm the Government of Kenya's commitment to addressing inequalities and achieving inclusive and sustainable development.

I THANK YOU