



**MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION
OFFICE OF THE CABINET SECRETARY**

SPEECH BY

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**DURING THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE VIOLENCE
AGAINST CHILDREN SURVEY REPORT, 2019,
VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN NATIONAL PREVENTION
AND RESPONSE PLAN 2019-2023,
CHILD FRIENDLY BOOKLET ON PROTECTING CHILDREN
AGAINST VIOLENCE AND
THE VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN “SPOT IT STOP IT”**

ON JULY 16, 2020

AT NSSF BUILDING,

Your Excellency the Ambassador of the United States of America to Kenya, Kyle McCarter

UNICEF Country Representative to Kenya, Ms. Maniza Zaman

The Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Hon. Patrick Ole Ntutu,

The Director General KNBS Mr. Zachary Mwangi,

Distinguished Development Partners and Social Partners joining us virtually

Representatives from Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies,

Children who are joining us virtually from various counties

Ministry Staff,

Members of the Fourth Estate,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning,

It gives me great pleasure to preside over the launch of key child protection and advocacy documents developed by the Ministry in collaboration with various stakeholders.

Kenya is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, representing a commitment towards prevention and response to all forms of violence against children. The Constitution of Kenya, Article 53, is explicit on the protection of the child from all forms of exploitation and abuse. Several Kenyan laws also speak to the protection of the child from situations of vulnerability. Some of these laws include; the Children Act, the Sexual Offenses Act, the Anti-FGM Act, Counter-Trafficking in Persons Act, the Education Act, among others.

The Government of Kenya conducted the first Violence Against Children (VAC) Survey in 2010 aimed at establishing the magnitude, nature and consequences of violence against children, in order to plan for effective programming and resource allocation to combat violence. Consequently, a summary of findings and response plan 2013-2018 were developed in collaboration with partners, to prevent and respond to the violence against children.

The consequences of violence on its survivors are often devastating, causing negative outcomes associated with physical health, social mobility, success and mental health. In addition, violence is specifically associated with increased risk of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. Recent development in neuroscience has also revealed the negative impact of violence on brain development, especially in early childhood. Indeed, violence against children affects the entire social fabric from the individual to the whole society.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The need to conduct the 2019 VAC Survey was derived from the fact that the findings from the 2010 survey were nearly a decade old and needed

to be updated. The 2019 Violence Against Children Survey, was a nationally representative household survey of children and young adults aged between 13 to 24 years. It was designed to measure the prevalence and circumstances surrounding emotional, physical and sexual violence against males and females in childhood (before age 18). It also measured the prevalence of violence, in the last 12 months prior to the Survey, experienced by children aged 13 to 17 years. It identified risks and protective factors as well as consequences of violence against children and service utilization.

The rich data from the **Violence Against Children Survey Report 2019**, will increase our understanding of the frequency, drivers and impact of violence. The Report gives us a strong planning tool for combating all forms of violence against children in the country.

When we compared the results from the 2010 VAC Survey and the 2019 VAC Survey, we see some decline in prevalence of childhood violence. This gives us a great encouragement that reducing violence against children is indeed possible and our country has been making progress in the right direction. However, the overall prevalence is still too high and it is important to note that some form of recent sexual violence experienced by girls aged 13 to 17 years has increased from 2010 to 2019, which is concerning.

I also wish to highlight that the violence children experience in homes was found to be high where children are exposed to physical violence, emotional violence, violent discipline by their parents, caregivers or other adult relatives. Children who witness or experience violence might learn that violence is appropriate for conflict resolution or is acceptable in intimate interpersonal settings. The 2019 Survey has indeed found a

high association between witnessing violence at home and child's victimization of violence.

Another critical finding is that children who experience physical, sexual and emotional violence suffer from mental health problems. Emotional violence, while its effects are not as visible as other forms of violence, was found to be particularly damaging to mental health of children and youths affected. What is also alarming is a high level of tolerance of violence such as corporal punishment, wife beating and negative gender norms among children and young people. Believing violence is necessary or tolerated make our children vulnerable to both victimization and perpetration of violence. In this way, a cycle of violence perpetuates itself through families, schools and communities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Now is the time to stop this cycle of violence to protect our children and their children and generations to come in this great nation. Beyond the pain and suffering of each and every child survivor of violence, economic cost of violence against children is too high for all sectors and the entire society to bear through direct service provision cost, undermined learning and the loss of productivity.

We now however have an unprecedented opportunity to address violence against children in our country. Based on the latest data from the 2019 Survey as well as globally available evidence-based strategies to address violence against children, the Government of Kenya has developed the **National Prevention and Response Plan on Violence Against Children in Kenya (2019-2023)**, using a multi-sectoral, whole-of-society approach together with various line Ministries, civil society organizations and development partners. It focuses on prevention of

violence against children from happening in the first place in addition to response.

Important aspects of this Plan is that it aims to reduce violence against children in Kenya by 40 % in the next 5 years. The Plan has 6 strategic areas of actions reflecting the multi-sectoral and the whole-of-society approach involving children, parents, caregivers, families, communities, service providers and the Government, both at national and country levels. The Plan includes a monitoring and evaluation plan, and will also be costed to know how much it will cost to implement the strategic actions. The National Prevention and Response Plan 2019-2023 will guide programming and resource mobilization for child protection programmes in Kenya.

The data from the 2019 Violence against Children Survey and the National Prevention and Response Plan on Violence against Children together will aid in reviewing the national prevention and response strategies as well as progress towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) related to violence against children and violence against women.

To ensure that our children also get a snap shot of the VAC National Prevention and Response Plan, a **Child Friendly Booklet on Protecting Children Against Violence** had been developed in a simpler language they can understand. It will assist children be aware of the various kinds of violence, why children experience violence and where they can seek for help.

As part of addressing norms, attitudes and behaviours around violence against children in our society, we need a movement and today we are also kick starting a public behaviour change campaign on Violence

against Children, ***Spot it, Stop it.*** The campaign materials aim at creating awareness from the national to the grass root levels on violence meted against children, and how we can stop it. They are advocacy materials to drum up support to combat the vice and raise resources for implementing programmes to stop physical, sexual and emotional violence against children.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My Ministry, on its own, cannot address all the issues affecting children in the country. This requires the concerted efforts of all stakeholders.

We recognize the role our development partners and stakeholders continue to play, in ensuring that we all together achieve the goal of preventing and responding to violence against children in our nation. I wish to particularly recognize the efforts of the Social Partners, Development Partners, Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), County Governments, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the general public, for your continued support to the Ministry.

We appreciate the technical and financial support we received from the US Government through the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention(CDC), The United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF), Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) and other partners, in the development of these important documents that we are launching today.

We also recognise the participation of the more than 2,000 children and youths who participated in the Survey, as well as the development of the National Prevention and Response Plan. We appreciate the multi-sectoral and multiagency approach that led to the development of this

documents and count on all of us to continue to work together to implement the Plan.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we move forward, we will seek to strengthen linkages and collaborations with all our partners and stakeholders which we have built over the years. At the same time, we will strive to establish new partnerships and collaborations, especially in key emerging areas relevant to our mandate. My appeal to all of us is to walk together as we all seek to protect and serve the child in this great Nation.

The Government of Kenya, in collaboration with its development partners, is committed to addressing the problem of violence against children and will continue to support and monitor the actions resulting from the survey findings. It is our collective responsibility to prevent violence and shift harmful norms to create safe, protective and nurturing environments where children and young people have the opportunity to live their lives to the fullest potential.

Finally, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is now my honour and privilege to officially launch **the Violence Against Children Survey Report 2019, the National Prevention and Response Plan on Violence Against Children in Kenya (2019-2023), the Child Friendly Booklet on Protecting Children Against Violence, and the Violence against Children “Spot it, Stop it” Campaign.**

On my behalf, and on behalf of the Government of Kenya, we commit to actively implement the VAC National Prevention and Response Plan 2019-2023 and provide the required leadership and guidance.

Together, we will provide the conducive environment for the growth and development of all children in Kenya.

Thank you and God bless you all.