

“GIRLS MATTER FORUM”

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Ladies and gentlemen, Good morning

1. It gives me great pleasure to be part of this conversation “The Girls Matter” a conversation with young women in Kenya.

2. Over the years, the government and other stakeholders have made impressive strides in empowering Kenyan women to effectively participate in development of our country as equal players. However, I note that recent studies indicate that young women are not actively engaged in governance and development discourse as their male counterparts.

3. It is against this background that the “Girls Matter” was founded to provide a platform for young women ages 18 to 35 years to engage directly with government on subjects of their interests with the dual purpose of self-empowerment and public participation.

4. I note that since its formation in August 2017, the “Girls Matter” has hosted two sessions where young women participated and participant population has been growing from session to session and that today’s session on AGPO is said to be the most attended yet.

5. **Ladies and gentlemen,** the Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) Programme was

initiated by His Excellency the President and launched on October, 2013 to facilitate participation of Youth, Women and Persons With Disabilities entrepreneurs in Public Procurement. The programme requires all Public Procuring entities to set aside a Minimum of 30% of their annual Procurement spending to be awarded to enterprises Owned by Youth, Women and PWDs. This is in fulfilment of Article 227(2b) of the Constitution that require protection and advancement of persons or groups previously disadvantaged by unfair competition or discrimination in public procurement, and Article 55 on Affirmative action measures.

6. **Ladies and gentlemen**, the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act, 2015 has made clear provisions for implementation of this noble programme.

7. Section 53(6) requires all Procurement and Asset Disposal Planning to reserve a minimum of 30% of the budgetary allocations to enterprises owned by Youth, Women and PWDS; Section 157(5) requires an accounting officer when processing procurement to reserve a not less than 30% of his procurement budget to be awarded to the disadvantaged groups; and Section 157(10) requires procuring entities to ensure a minimum of 30% of its procurement budget has been awarded to Youth, Women and PWDS every financial year.

8. Further, the National Treasury and Ministry of Planning is mandated by law to facilitate affirmative action for disadvantaged groups in accordance with the constitution and advance their participation in procurement processes. In exercising this mandate, the National Treasury and Ministry of Planning is responsible for:

- Registering, Prequalifying and Certifying AGPO groups;
- Training and Capacity Building of AGPO groups;

- Providing technical and advisory assistance to procuring entities on the implementation of AGPO; and
- Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of AGPO.

9. **Ladies and gentlemen,** to-date, the National Treasury and Ministry of Planning has registered 82,158 enterprises into the AGPO programme. These comprise of 46,538 Youth enterprises, 31,946 Women enterprises and 3,674 PWDs enterprises; Registrations of these enterprises is done at the National Treasury, Huduma Centres countrywide and county treasuries.

10. The National Treasury carries out Capacity Building programme to the target groups countrywide every financial year in accordance with the Procurement Act. This is done in collaboration with other Government Agencies and Development Partners.

11. Since its inception in 2013, a total of 58,925 tenders reported worth Ksh.64,891,804,495 has been awarded to these Special Interest groups.

12. Women entrepreneurs received 30,205 tenders worth, Ksh.33,953,900,402 representing 52.32% of the total volume of tenders that has been awarded to these groups. Youth entrepreneurs got 28,067 tenders worth,

Ksh.29,111,476,651 representing 44.86% while PWDs entrepreneurs received 2,653 tenders worth Ksh.1,826,427,442 representing 2.81%.

13. It is instructive to note that not all Procuring Entities have been submitting implementation reports as is required and therefore the implementation status may be much higher.

14. **Ladies and gentlemen,** the following measures have been put in place to foster sustainability of the programme:

- Enactment of Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act, 2015 which provides anchorage and guidelines for implementing AGPO. It is now mandatory to reserve 30% of procurement budget to Special Interest Groups;
- Establishment of Preference and Reservations Secretariat to advance the interest of Youth, Women, PWDs and other disadvantaged groups in procurement as well as promote local industries;
- Establishment of AGPO desks at Huduma Centres to carry out AGPO registration at County levels;

- LPOs/LSOs financing through Affirmative Funds e.g. Youth Enterprise and Development Fund and Women Enterprise Fund and Uwezo Fund all of which are now being restructured and harmonized to create Biashara Fund.

15. **Ladies and gentlemen**, the National Treasury and Ministry of Planning is in the process of Re-engineering of the AGPO portal to foster:
- Faster online application for AGPO certificates;
 - Online certificate verification to ascertain their authenticity with linkages to Kenya Revenue

Authority, National Construction Authority, National Council of Persons With Disability and Registrar of Companies;

- Access to information on available tender opportunities for the Special Interest Groups;
- Report generation on performance for purposes of enhancing monitoring and evaluation;
- Accessibility to online training modules on the Public Procurement System.

16. **Ladies and gentlemen,** the AGPO Programme has had significant socio-economic impacts on the special interest groups through:

- Creation of Employment opportunities;
- Improvement of the Economic welfare of Youth, Women and PWDs as a result of increased business offered by the government;
- Enhanced skills for the target groups in government procurement processes through sensitization/capacity building of the target groups;

- Interactions between Youth, Women and PWDs with the government have been up scaled which have in turn enhanced the confidence of the public in government procurement.

17. **Ladies and gentlemen,** notwithstanding the above mentioned benefits the programme has not been devoid of Challenges in its Implementation such as:-

- Delayed payments by Procuring Entities;
- Lack of clear understanding on how to participate in Government Procurement Opportunities;

- Misuse of the Special Interest Groups by crafty business persons fronting for business opportunities.

18. However, the following measures have been taken to mitigate against the aforementioned challenges:

- Issuance of periodic Circulars and Letters to accounting officers on prioritization of payments to these groups of suppliers;
- Public Procurement Regulations has provided for statutory period within which settlements of payments to these groups should be made (not exceeding 90

days) beyond which the contracted company may demand interests on overdue accounts.

- Simplifying of standard bid documents to facilitate ease of understanding, completing and submission;
- Continuous Country wide capacity building of Special Interest Groups on Public Finance Management;

19. **Ladies and gentlemen,** as I conclude my remarks, I wish to invite all youth, women and Persons With Disability to take advantage of this noble government programme that has made significant socio-economic impact to persons previously disadvantaged.

20. As this conversation goes on, I invite those of you here who have not registered under the AGPO programme to do so at the registration desk outside this conference room. Registration does not attract any fee at all.

Thank you.

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