

**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**



**THE NATIONAL TREASURY AND ECONOMIC PLANNING  
STATE DEPARTMENT FOR ECONOMIC PLANNING**

**TALKING POINTS FOR MR. JAMES MUHATI, PRINCIPAL  
SECRETARY, STATE DEPARTMENT FOR ECONOMIC  
PLANNING, DURING THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS' MEETING ON  
ENDING TRIPLE THREAT OF NEW HIV INFECTIONS, SEXUAL  
AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, AND PREGNANCIES AMONG  
ADOLESCENTS IN KENYA**

- **Rev Bishops, Priests, Pastors, Imams and Sheikhs**
- **Ms. Veronica Nduva, Principal Secretary State Department of Gender and Affirmative Action**
- **Dr Mohamed Sheikh, Director General NCPD**
- **Dr. Ruth Masha, CEO National Syndemic Diseases Control Council**
- **Ms. Betty Sungura CEO National Gender and Equality Commission**
- **Dr Rose Wafula, representing Principal Secretary Medical Services**
- **Dr. Stephen Jackson, United Resident Coordinator**

- **Representatives of the UN Joint Team on Triple Threat**
- **Distinguished Guests**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

### **Good Morning**

1. It is a great pleasure to join you today in this meeting as the government opens a new chapter with religious leaders towards the realization of the first commitment Kenya made during the Nairobi Summit on International Conference on Population and Development at 25 (ICPD25). During the Nairobi Summit, Kenya joined the global community and committed to ***Eliminate***

***teenage pregnancies, new adolescent and youth HIV infections, and harmful practices such as child marriages by 2030.***

## **Ladies and Gentlemen**

2. Kenya's adolescents (10-19 years) account for almost a quarter (24.6 per cent) of the total population. This critical segment of the population, which ideally should be in school, bears the brunt of the high teenage pregnancies, new HIV infections, and harmful practices.

3. The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS) 2022, results show that the rate of teenage pregnancy has declined from 18 per cent in 2014 to 15 per cent in 2022.
  
4. Notwithstanding this, there are wide county variations, for example Samburu County reported that more than half (50.1 per cent) of the girls aged 15-19 years had given birth or were pregnant with the first child at the time of the survey. Other counties for example West Pokot County reported 36.3 Per cent, Homabay 23.2 per cent, Vihiga 7.7 per cent and Nyeri 4.5 per cent just to mention but a few.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen**

5. Whereas Kenya committed to end new HIV infections among adolescents and young people by 2030, the 2021 Kenya HIV report shows that 5,123 new HIV infections were reported among adolescents (10-19) years which translates to about 99 new infections every week. In addition, according to the 2022 KDHS, knowledge on HIV prevention is lowest (44 per cent) among adolescents aged 15-17 years.

## **Distinguished Guests**

6. One form of harmful practice is early marriage. The 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census showed that the percentage of girls aged 12-19 years who were married was 14.5 per cent while that of boys of the same age was 8.1 per cent. Early marriage jeopardizes the chances for girls' and boys' education and it's a threat to human capital development.
  
7. Another form of harmful practice among the adolescents is Sexual Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). In 2022, 36 per cent of all SGBV cases were among adolescents aged 10-17 years. This

paints a grim picture of the vulnerability and adverse childhood exposure for the adolescents which is likely to impact them later in life.

8. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is widely recognized as a violation of human rights and is deeply rooted in beliefs and perceptions over generations. The prevalence of FGM has declined from 38 per cent in 1998 to 15 per cent in 2022 as shown by 2022 KDHS.



## **Ladies and Gentlemen**

9. All is not lost and together we can reverse this narrative by joining hands in addressing this triple threat that affects the adolescents. Towards this end, the Government held a national dialogue with stakeholders on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020 where the ***Let's Act to End Teenage Pregnancy Campaign*** was launched.
  
10. However, on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020 following a national outcry of high teenage pregnancies and gender-based violence reported during the lockdown, Principal Secretaries drawn from various Government departments came together and directed the

formation of County Technical Working Groups (CTWGs) on ending teenage pregnancy and gender-based violence.

11. Forty-seven multi-sectoral County Technical Working Groups with members drawn from all sectors that have a stake in adolescents' welfare were established to analyse county specific drivers and interventions to address teenage pregnancy.

### **Distinguished Guests**

12. On 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021, NCPD in partnership with National Syndemic Disease Control Council celebrated the World Aids Day which was the birth of the ***Triple Threat Campaign*** that aims

at addressing new HIV infections, sexual and gender-based violence, and pregnancies among adolescents.

13. To actualize this Campaign, a training manual and handbook for the National Government Administrative Officers on triple threat have been developed. Training of master trainers has been undertaken in two regions (Nyanza and Eastern)
14. The Government has been working closely with the UN Joint Team and are developing a joint response towards ending the triple threat. They have supported activities to empower the adolescents for meaning engagement in response to triple threat

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

15. Today is a new dawn when we are bringing yet another key stakeholder on board in this triple threat campaign. Religious leaders (Rev Bishops, Priests, Pastors, Imams and Sheikhs) play a very important role in shaping the moral fabric and values of the society.
  
16. You hold influential strategic platforms that can impact behaviour change of the adolescents. To quote ***Proverbs 22, Verse 6 of the Holy Bible: Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.***

17. It is for this reason that the Government would like to strengthen this partnership with you, the Religious Leaders. We want to work together with you as our partners towards addressing the challenges facing the adolescents in Kenya and secure their future. We are confident that bringing you, the Religious Leaders on board will pave way towards strengthening the family unit where the adolescents live. As Government, we will ensure that we provide all the necessary instruments and structures to make this partnership strong.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen**

18. Lastly, I wish to thank the UN Joint Team on Ending Triple Threat for supporting this noble initiative. I also wish to appreciate you the Religious Leaders for honouring our invite and joining hands with us against the triple threat. The adolescents are the future of Kenya and investing in their education and welfare today will lead the country in harnessing its demographic dividend.

**Asanteni Sana**

**May God Bless our Country Kenya**