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HARNESSING THE POWER OF DATA TO TRANSFORM THE LIVES OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN KENYA

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Kenya is steadily redefining how development is planned, measured, and implemented by placing data at the center of decision-making, particularly in advancing gender equality. This transformation aligns closely with the country's long-term development blueprint, Vision 2030, which emphasizes inclusive growth and improved quality of life for all citizens. By ensuring that women and girls are visible in national statistics, Kenya is strengthening its ability to track progress and deliver on its commitments under the Fourth Medium-Term Plan (MTP IV), the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Over the years, the country has made notable strides in strengthening its data systems to ensure that gender considerations are fully integrated into policymaking. This progress reflects a growing recognition that without accurate, timely, and inclusive data, it is impossible to design effective policies or measure real progress in addressing inequalities. As Kenya advances its development priorities under MTP IV, data has become a critical tool for identifying gaps, allocating resources efficiently, and ensuring that no segment of the population is left behind.

At the heart of this transformation is strong collaboration between government institutions, development partners, civil society, and research organizations. These partnerships have enhanced the country's capacity to collect, analyze, and use gender statistics effectively. Institutions such as the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics and key government departments have increasingly integrated gender perspectives into their data processes, ensuring that policies are informed by evidence that reflects the lived realities of women and girls across the country. This collaborative approach also supports the implementation of BETA, which prioritizes inclusive economic growth by

empowering marginalized groups, including women, through targeted interventions informed by reliable data.

One of the most significant outcomes of this progress has been the improved availability and use of gender data in policymaking. Today, data is actively driving solutions in areas such as women's economic empowerment, prevention of gender-based violence, and humanitarian response. These efforts directly contribute to achieving several SDGs, including Goal 5 on gender equality, Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth, and Goal 10 on reducing inequalities. By aligning national priorities with global development frameworks, Kenya ensures that its policies are both locally relevant and internationally responsive.

Innovation has also played a key role in advancing gender data systems. Kenya has emerged as a leader in exploring new approaches, including the use of sub-national data, citizen-generated data, and gender-responsive budgeting. These innovations are helping to bridge longstanding gaps by capturing more localized insights, which are essential for effective planning under devolved governance structures. Such approaches strengthen accountability and support the broader objectives of Vision 2030 by promoting equitable development across all regions.

Despite these achievements, challenges remain. Data gaps still exist in critical areas, and there is a continuous need to improve data quality, accessibility, and utilization. Limited technical capacity and resource constraints can hinder the full integration of gender data into planning processes, particularly at the county level. Additionally, translating data into actionable policies requires sustained coordination among stakeholders. Addressing these challenges will be crucial for ensuring that the gains made so far are sustained and scaled up to meet national development ambitions.

Looking ahead, Kenya has a unique opportunity to consolidate its leadership in gender data and expand its influence across the region. Strengthening partnerships, fostering innovation, and investing in capacity building will be key to unlocking the full potential of data-driven development. By continuing to align its efforts with Vision 2030, the SDGs, and national economic transformation strategies, Kenya can ensure that gender equality remains at the core of its development agenda.

Ultimately, the growing emphasis on gender data represents more than a technical shift; it is a transformative approach to governance and development. By making women and girls visible in data, Kenya is building a foundation for inclusive growth, stronger accountability, and sustainable progress. This commitment ensures that development is reflected in meaningful improvements in the lives of all citizens, leaving no one behind.