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## Message from the Representative

Girls and women in Kenya hold unlimited potential, which can only be realized through the breakdown of barriers that constrain their full participation in social, economic, and political spheres. Gender-based violence and harmful practices such as early and child marriage as well as female genital mutilation remain prevalent in the Kenyan society. Women are also underrepresented in decision-making processes at all levels, with less access to resources and opportunities in education, training, and economic empowerment. During the 9th Country Programme running from 2018-2022, UNFPA Kenya has advocated for women and girls, promoting legal and policy reforms and supporting initiatives that improve women's and girls' health, and expand their choices in life.

Our achievements have been bolstered by strong commitment at the highest level towards UNFPA's mandate, including the presidential commitment to end FGM in Kenya by 2022, increased domestic resource allocation for sexual and reproductive health, including family planning, and enhanced partnerships to strengthen the capacity of health-care workers in the provision of sexual and reproductive health information and services. This multisectoral approach and coordinated action are imperative to the continued realization of the transformative results, namely, ending preventable maternal deaths, ending unmet need for family planning, and ending gender-based violence and all harmful practices.

The year 2022 has started on an earnest note for the Country Office as we celebrate crucial gains such as the establishment of the first-ever specialized sexual and gender-based violence court in Shanzu, Mombasa County, and commitments made at the Global Disability Summit to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights for women with disabilities. Our work continues to be informed by lessons learned during the 9th Country Programme, as we prepare to embark on the 10th Country Programme (2022-2026) whose focus will be on accelerating the achievement of the three transformative results in Kenya.

UNFPA continues to work in partnership with the Government of Kenya in the achievement of its strategic priorities and towards the attainment of the highest standard of health for all. We look forward to building on the strong partnerships established as we continue the march towards realizing the ICPD Program of Action's promise of universal access to sexual and reproductive health, girls' and women's empowerment, and gender equality, all the while making sure everyone is counted and no-one is left behind.

**Dr. Ademola Olajide**  
UNFPA Representative



## Gender equality trailblazers honored on International Women's Day



*Photo: Gender Equality trailblazers being recognized by H.E Uhuru Kenyatta during the International Women's Day 2022, held at Kenya School of Government in Nairobi Kenya.*

International Women's Day is marked annually on 8 March, offering an opportunity to reflect on progress made towards gender equality, and to celebrate the work done by ordinary women and others who have played a pivotal role in advancing women's empowerment in all spheres.

His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta led the 2022 International Women's Day celebrations in Kenya, where he conferred the 2022 Gender Trailblazer Awards to outstanding gender equality champions. UNFPA Representative, Dr. Ademola Olajide, was among those awarded and recognized as a trailblazer for his contribution to anti-FGM and GBV programming in Kenya. President Kenyatta thanked Dr. Olajide for his service during his tour of duty in Kenya, which comes to an end on 31st March 2022. The Cabinet Secretary in the Ministry of Public Service, Gender, Senior Citizens Affairs and Special Programmes, Prof. Margaret Kobia, echoed the President's sentiments, noting that UNFPA, under Dr. Ademola's leadership has supported all pragmatic efforts to end FGM and gender-based violence in Kenya.



*Photo: His Excellency, Uhuru Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya, makes remarks during the International Women's Day 2022 at Kenya School of Government.*



“We wish him the very best in his future endeavors,” said Prof. Kobia.

This year’s theme for International Women’s Day “Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow” underscores the ways in which women and girls are leading the charge on climate change adaptation, mitigation, and response around the world. President Kenyatta underscored the need to enhance the empowerment of women and entrench gender equality as part of ongoing efforts to combat climate change.

“Actions we have taken to strengthen women empowerment, improve their ownership of assets such as land, and to increase their control of financial resources, have consolidated the role of women as change-makers. We now need to harness that capacity by putting women and girls at the center of climate change initiatives. This includes initiatives on climate financing, new technologies as well as training,” said President Kenyatta.

In a statement issued to mark the day, UNFPA Executive Director, Dr. Natalia Kanem, called upon the international community to ensure that women’s and girls’ health, rights and dignity are safeguarded and critical infrastructure is protect-

ed, particularly in conflict and crisis-affected countries. “We must listen to women’s voices and invest in their leadership and resilience. Women bring communities together; women lead efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and women can drive reconciliation and ensure long-lasting peace,” said Dr. Kanem.

Kenya also celebrated the launch of the new Margaret Kenyatta Institute for Gender and Social Development, located at the Kenya School of Government. The institute is an initiative of the First Lady Margaret Kenyatta under the Beyond Zero Campaign, and is aimed at advancing the gender and social development agenda through research, training, and targeted interventions. The First Lady lauded all stakeholders working to expand platforms for women empowerment, and stressed the importance of inclusivity in driving economic development and social change.



Photo:(left to right) Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Sports Heritage and Culture, Ambassador Dr. Amina Mohammed; Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Public Service, Gender, Senior Citizens Affairs and Special Programmes, Prof. Margaret Kobia; President of the Republic of Kenya, His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta; First Lady of the Republic of Kenya, Her Excellency Margaret Kenyatta; First Lady of Republic of Rwanda, Her Excellency Jeannette Nyiramongi Kagame; and Dr. Ludeki Chweya, Director General of Kenya School of Government during the International Women's Day.



## Kenya launches first-ever specialized Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Court to accelerate access to justice for GBV survivors



During the commemoration of the 2022 International Women's Day, UNFPA supported the International Association of Women Judges Kenya Chapter to celebrate the International Day of Women Judges, an event which was held in Shanzu, Mombasa County. The occasion acted as a potent symbol that celebrated the accomplishments of women judges, provided a focal point to educate the public on matters of access to justice for GBV survivors and served as inspiration to girls and young women who aspire to become Judges. The day also offered a challenge to continue to work to identify issues, such as the glass ceiling responsible for delayed access to justice for GBV survivors as well as the under-representation in higher levels and policy-making bodies of the Judiciary, and the need to gather and track data on women Judges worldwide. This will enable the women judges in Kenya and the justice system stakeholders to ensure the expediency of the judicial process and enhancement of participation of judges at all levels in identifying the challenges and solutions.

During the event, the Chief Justice of Kenya, Hon.

Martha Koome, launched the special court to handle sexual and gender-based violence cases. This is the first-ever special court for handling sexual violence cases at Shanzu Law Courts, Mombasa. The court is aimed at helping preserve the dignity of victims and enhancing fair trial within the tenets of the Constitution. "When it comes to SGBV cases, courts are hereby directed to implement the 'no adjournment policy,'" the Chief Justice said.

Data from the judiciary indicates that 56 percent of adjournments are occasioned by external parties, the reason being that witnesses or parties were not present. The Chief Justice, therefore, said that she expects the courts to showcase best practices towards ensuring expeditious trials through stakeholder engagement and collaboration with the Court User Committees.

The International Association of Women Judges, Kenya Chapter, was lauded for championing the establishment of the SGBV courts across the country, starting with Shanzu. This launch coincided with a public outcry against GBV caused by a horrifying video of a young female motorist in a



vehicle being molested by motorbike motorists that went viral. This is one of the many invisible cases of GBV that happen away from the public radar and which go unreported.

The special court is thus a much-needed move towards guaranteeing access to justice for GBV survivors, and will reinforce the urgency to align the criminal justice system as a coordinated structure that preserves the dignity of GBV survivors and enhances fair trial within the tenets of the Constitution. UNFPA remains committed to supporting all initiatives that seek to improve access to justice for GBV survivors in Kenya, and toward the advancement of gender equality and women empowerment. This was reaffirmed by Dr. Ademola Olajide, the UNFPA Kenya Country Representative who also acknowledged the great role of the judiciary in ensuring access to justice for survivors. “The judiciary is uniquely placed to ensure that criminal laws relating to GBV are interpreted and effectively enforced to protect individuals from violence, including recur-

rent violence and enforce adequate reparation for survivors. Today’s launch of the special court is confirmation that we are increasingly taking sexual and gender based violence seriously,” Dr. Ademola said.

Much progress has been made towards enhancing access to justice and more efforts to sustain and accelerate the gains is important. “No matter how long, winding or bumpy the road might be, as long as it leads to the destination, UNFPA is committed to keep at it. Every positive step to #GenderEquality, #BreakTheBias and #EndGBV must be celebrated and consolidated. #TheMarchContinues!” Dr. Ademola reiterated UNFPA’s resolve to protect the rights and dignity of women and girls. In Kenya 45% of women and girls aged 15-49 years have experienced physical violence since age 15.



Photo: Dr. Ademola Olajide, makes his remarks during the launch of the first SGBV court in Shanzu, Mombasa County.



## Drought Disaster: Sustaining focus on the three zeroes



*Photo: John Wafula, UNFPA Kenya Humanitarian Specialist, hands over drought relief boys to young men in Isiolo County as part of the UNFPA drought response.*

The land is parched. The sting of aridity is severe in the throat. As vultures descend on the carcass of decimated livestock littered all over the plains, furrows of despair deepen on the brows of the two young boys in Isiolo County! In the horizon, the whirlwind and staircase of dust spiraling up into the sky is a harrowing confirmation of another prolonged season of no rains!

Isiolo County is among ASAL counties facing severe impacts of drought that has exposed 3.1 million people in Kenya to unprecedented levels of food insecurity, health and protection risks. This follows three successive seasons of failed rains since the last quarter of 2020. The current long rainy season of March to May has had equally depressed rains.

To cope with the multiple and adverse impacts of the drought emergency, families have resorted to diverse coping strategies including those that imperil the lives and well-being of women, girls and boys. An upsurge in cases of female genital mutilation and child marriage targeting girls has been

reported in the local media as families strive to eke out a living in the perilous situation. The number of girls fleeing from food deprived and insecure households to rescue centres has expanded steadfastly in counties like Isiolo. In Kilifi County, adolescent girls recount experiences of sexual violence, teenage pregnancy and school dropouts among their peers.

Women of reproductive age are grappling with the difficult choice of subsistence for survival and sustained access to SRH services, including safe childbirth. Walking long distances in search of water and food makes it impossible for expectant women to adhere to maternal, new-born and child health requirements, even when danger signs manifest. The drastic decline in household resources marked by the rarity of nutritious food has also weakened the health of women and girls. Though less highlighted, the plight of boys and men suffering from the vagaries of drought is equally catastrophic. Boys like Lekolol and Lenayara\* whom a UNFPA team interacted with in the field expressed concern about personal safety. "We graze livestock in far-flung places when hungry



and weak. Flare-ups of resource-based conflicts are growing in frequency and severity. We put our lives at risk to secure the livestock,” said Lekolol. “Some of us have never attended school for the last two years as a result of the drought,” added his peer, Lenayara.

UNFPA is among development partners collaborating with national and county governments to mitigate the effects of the drought. Since the drought was declared a national disaster by President Uhuru Kenyatta in September 2021, UNFPA has mobilized over US\$1,000,000 to cushion affected populations. This has included distribution of mama kits and dignity kits to women, girls and boys. UNFPA is working with partners such as the Kenya Red Cross Society and Healthcare Assistance Kenya to provide emergency referral and psychosocial support services to affected populations in Garissa, Wajir, Turkana, Baringo, Samburu, Isiolo, Marsabit, Mandera, Kilifi and Tana River counties.

“Emergencies like the current drought elevate SRH and protection needs, especially for women and girls. UNFPA is committed to delivering life-saving interventions through the lens of gender responsiveness, inclusivity, and accountability to affected populations,” says the UNFPA Representative,

Dr. Ademola Olajide.

Drought is estimated to account for 5 percent of GDP loss for Kenya every 5 years. The end drought emergency programme in the country seeks to identify, prevent and reduce hazard exposure and vulnerability to disasters, increase preparedness for response and recovery, and thus strengthen resilience. As a global champion of climate change, Kenya is making impressive strides in strengthening the architecture of disaster risk management policies and laws.

“Our build-back better strategy recognizes climate change as a critical site for accelerating the achievement of zero preventable maternal health, zero unmet need for family planning, and zero gender-based violence and harmful practices” stresses Dr. Ademola Olajide.

\*Not the boys’ real names.



Photo: Female beneficiary from Isiolo County displays contents of a dignity kit donated by UNFPA as part of the drought response.



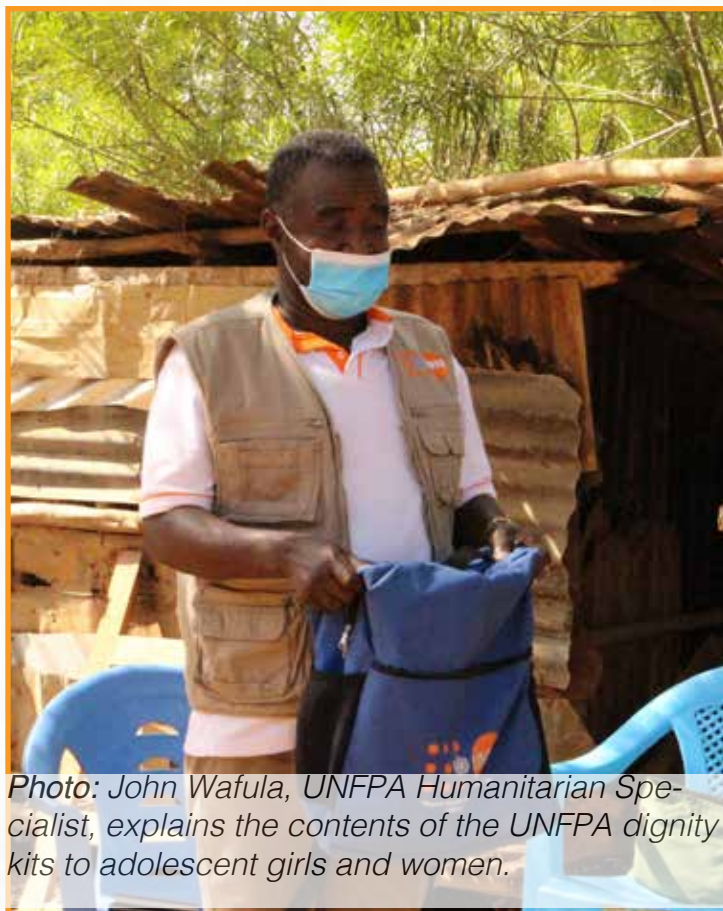
## National GBV Helpline strengthens response to reach survivors in drought-affected counties.



*Photo: UNFPA staff, Satsuki Arai and John Wafula, with the team from Healthcare Assistance Kenya engage during a sensitization on access to GBV services during the drought response.*

From Mandera County, Annete\* clutches her phone and dials the number 1195 to reach the gender-based violence hotline operated by Healthcare Assistance Kenya (HAK) in partnership with the State Department for Gender. The mother of three is in distress, and the tele-counselor at the other end of the line is her only hope. She reports that her husband has been physically abusive and has even gone as far as making death threats against her.

Mandera is one of 10 arid and semi-arid counties that have been worst affected by the ongoing drought in Kenya. As communities and families lose their livelihoods, hunger, and food insecurity fuels conflict and heighten women's and girls' exposure to gender-based violence and harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation. In the month of February 2022, the GBV Helpline 1195 received 171 calls from the drought-affected counties. An overwhelming majority of the calls were from women and girls seeking help after undergoing various forms of gender-based violence, includ-



*Photo: John Wafula, UNFPA Humanitarian Specialist, explains the contents of the UNFPA dignity kits to adolescent girls and women.*



ing physical assault, psychological abuse, child marriage, rape, and denial of resources.

With support from UNFPA, the helpline has been conducting outreach activities to women and girls in the affected counties by distributing dignity kits and information materials on GBV prevention and response. Trained tele-counselors provide the callers with psychosocial support and further refer the cases to partner organizations including the Kenya Red Cross, the national police service, legal aid clinics, and safe houses. In Annete's case, the tele-counselor was able to offer psychological first-aid before referring her case to the local police. Annete's abuser was placed under arrest. HAK 1195 also reached out to the Federation of Women Lawyers Kenya(FIDA-K) who will provide pro- bono legal aid to Annete.

According to a report published by the National Gender and Equality Commission, about 39 percent of women and girls in Kenya aged 15 and above have experienced physical violence, with approximately one in four experiencing such violence each year. Survivors in the arid and semi-arid counties face additional challenges such as long distances to health facilities, difficult terrain, and poor infrastructure which causes delays in ac-

cessing GBV services.

"UNFPA will continue to provide lifesaving integrated sexual reproductive health and gender-based violence services aimed at safeguarding the rights of women and girls in the drought-affected counties," says UNFPA Kenya Humanitarian Specialist, John Wafula.



*Photo: Adolescent girls in Kilifi County, being sensitized on ASRH after they were issued with UNFPA drought response dignity kits.*



*Photo: Adolescent girls staying in a rescue centre in Isiolo County, display dignity kits distributed by Kenya Redcross Society and UNFPA.*



## Your dreams are valid despite the drought emergency!



*Photo: Dr. Ademola Olajide, UNFPA Representative, and Chief Administrative Secretary, Nadia Abdalla, hand over a dignity kits as part of the drought response in Kajiado led by the Malkia Initiative.*

Adolescent girls and young women remain a vulnerable population in the face of crises. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, violence against women and girls worsened with increased cases of domestic violence, FGM, teenage pregnancies, maternal and child mortality.

Women and girls living in Kajiado County have had to bear with the pandemic as well as a severe drought that has destroyed livelihoods and exacerbated poverty levels. Vital resources for sexual and reproductive health and rights services have been redirected towards the Covid-19 response, while the drought has heightened the risk of gender-based violence and harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation for women and girls living in the county. "In times of drought, young girls are married off so that the families can have one less mouth to feed, and for bride price which is seen as a means of regaining lost wealth," says Malkia Initiative Executive Director, Jedidah Lemaron.

With support from UNFPA, the Malkia Initiative has been at the forefront in providing information and services to adolescent girls and young women in Kajiado County so as to cushion them against the impact of

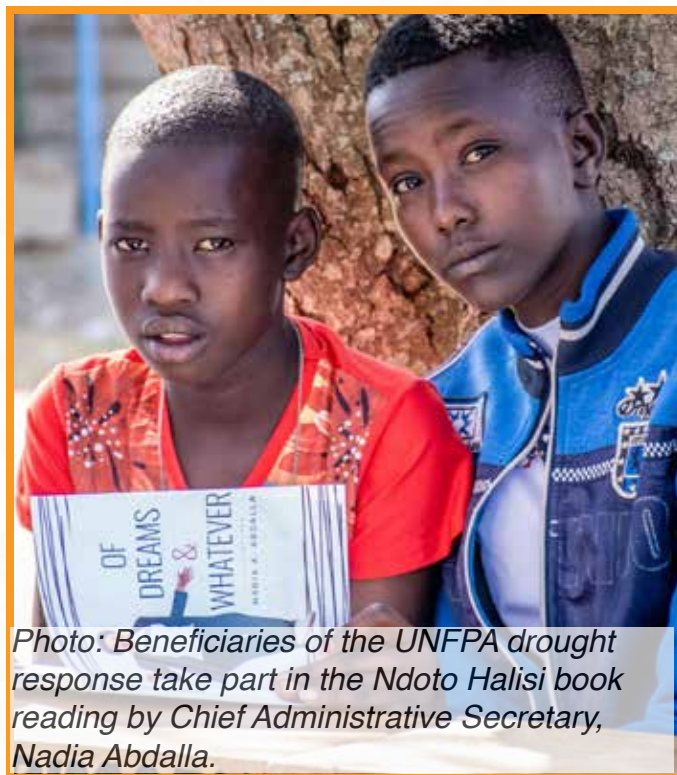
drought on their health and wellbeing. The initiative operates as a women-led community-based organization working towards educating and empowering girls within the Maasai community, advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as menstrual health and hygiene management. The UNFPA team led by Country Representative, Dr. Ademola Olajide, who was joined by Chief Administrative Secretary (CAS) in the Ministry of ICT, Innovation and Youth Affairs, Ms. Nadia Abdalla, visited Malkia Initiative to hand over laptops that will be used to strengthen the organization's capacity to deliver services to women and girls.

The team also met with young girls at the Olorum Primary School who are part of Malkia Initiative's mentorship and empowerment programme. The girls were provided with UNFPA dignity kits that contain essential supplies to help women and girls maintain proper hygiene during crises such as the ongoing drought. The girls were encouraged to seek help from Malkia Initiative and the local authorities when faced with the risk of FGM and other harmful practices such as child marriage. Addressing the girls, Dr. Olajide urged them to stay the course and complete their education, in order to achieve their personal goals.



“Young girls can achieve anything they set their minds on, but they need the support of society, particularly in protecting them from retrogressive practices such as FGM.” Dr. Olajide emphasized on the importance of involving men in the fight against FGM, as they are often regarded as the custodians of culture.

CAS Nadia Abdalla led the girls in a reading session where she shared excerpts from her book “Of Dreams and Whatever,” which tracks her journey as a girl from a marginalized community who rose to become the youngest female appointed to the role of Chief Administrative Secretary. She donated copies of her book to the young girls, calling on them to be bold and disciplined in their approach to life so as to realize their own dreams. She applauded the Malkia Initiative for the good work done in mentoring girls to become leaders of today.



*Photo: Beneficiaries of the UNFPA drought response take part in the Ndoto Halisi book reading by Chief Administrative Secretary, Nadia Abdalla.*



*Photo: Beneficiaries of the Of dreams and whatever book, and Dignity kits pose for a photo with Dr, Ademola Olajide and Chief Administrative Secretary, Nadia Abdalla, in Kajiado County.*



## New UNFPA Youth Advisory Panel inaugurated



*Photo: Incoming and outgoing members of the Youth Advisory Panel, take a picture with Dr. Ademola Olajide during the handover session in Nakuru County.*

Adolescents constitute 24% of Kenya's population and number approximately 9.2 million according to the Kenya Population and Housing Census (2009). They represent the future of the nation and can spur the country's development agenda if the right investments are made in their health, education, protection and economic engagement. UNFPA Kenya Country Office works towards three transformative results namely; zero preventable maternal deaths, zero family planning and zero gender based violence and all harmful practices including FGM and Child Marriage. to ensure that young people are included in the transformative results agenda, and as a demonstration of UNFPA's commitment to young people's empowerment and their rights in accordance with basic human rights principles, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Youth Strategy, there was a felt need to involve young people through an advisory platform.

The Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) was established in Kenya in 2014 with 10 members representing

three UNFPA priority counties of Nairobi, Kilifi and Homabay, and special interest groups such as young people living with disabilities and those living with HIV. The membership has expanded over the years to include additional counties comprising Narok, Kitui, Lamu, Mandera, Isiolo, Marsabit, Migori and Wajir, Samburu, West Pokot, Elgeyo Marakwet, Baringo and Turkana, including refugee camps. The need to bring on board other special interest groups like youth in humanitarian settings also called for the expansion of the structure.

The establishment of the Youth Advisory Panel attests to UNFPA's vision and conceptual shift, moving away from working for young people, to working in partnership with young people in the spirit of meaningful youth participation. UNFPA Kenya organized a two-day induction and orientation workshop from 16th to 19th November 2021 in Nakuru County, with the outgoing and incoming members of the Youth Advisory Panel. The workshop was an orientation session for the new YAP



members on UNFPA as an institution, its strategic plan and its 9th Country Program (2018-2022), and to build the capacity of YAP members on the adolescents' sexual and reproductive health landscape in Kenya; disseminate the YAP's terms of reference and code of conduct, develop an annual work plan for 2021-2022, and facilitate a handover from the old YAP members to new YAP members, including appointing new leadership. The training was facilitated by Dr. Ademola Olajide, Country Representative; Kigen Korir, Adolescents and Youth Specialist; Caroline Murgor, GBV Gender Advisor; Mukiza Mwenesi, Digital Strategist; and Faith Osore, Programme Assistant, Adolescents and youth.

The new YAP leadership includes young members who have exemplary strengths in various thematic areas that link to UNFPA's mandate such as policy and advocacy on SRHR, FGM/GBV, mental and menstrual health, disability mainstreaming, electronic and print media engagement on reaching young people. Leshan Kereto was appointed Chairperson of the new panel, deputized by Ms. Patricia Mativo. The team also comprises Brain Ochieng as

Secretary, while Yaquob Hussein and Laureen Kamuya lead Communication and Digital Media Advocacy.



*Photo: Leshan Kereto, HSC, The Youth Advisory Panel chair makes remarks during the inauguration of the new panel.*



*Photo: Dr. Ademola Olajide, hands over a prize to Patricia the incoming Deputy Chairperson of the Youth Advisory Panel during the handover in Nakuru County.*



## Adolescent girls in Kibera inspired to dream big through the #NdotoHalisi Initiative



The 6th of February presented a perfect opportunity for adolescent girls in Kibera, the largest informal settlement in Kenya to be challenged to dare to dream, irrespective of the challenges they were facing.

Under the stewardship of the Chief Administrative Secretary in the Ministry of ICT, Innovation and Youth Affairs, Ms. Nadia Abdalla, adolescent girls had an opportunity to share their experiences and learn the tips of navigating the ups and downs of life, guided by her book titled "Of Dreams & Whatever", rolled out through the #NdotoHalisi Campaign, which stands for a perfect dream.

The #NdotoHalisi Campaign seeks to empower and amplify voices of young girls from marginalized regions and enable them realize their dreams. The campaign focuses on giving young girls a different chance and a new perspective on life, including embracing themselves, exploring their gifts and appreciating themselves. The initiative that is supported by UNFPA, is a campaign

set to tell the story of transformative change from the perspective of a girl from a marginalized community who dared to dream, and believe in her dreams that eventually came true.

The inspirational event began with the girls sharing their experiences growing up in challenging circumstances with lack of basic needs, limited education opportunities, gender based violence, lack of role models, challenges in accessing health care, and lack of access to menstrual health products, being prominent.

The Chief Administrative Secretary then took the opportunity to read sections of the book with the girls focusing on her experiences growing up in a blended family set up; the opportunity that catapulted her to her role as a Chief Administrative Secretary which happened following her inspirational letter to the youth of Kenya that captured national headlines; friendship and the Dos and don'ts, and finally, dreams and the need to dare dream without the limitation of the background



that one comes from.

Media personality Ms. Janet Mbugua was the surprise guest at the event. She shared her experiences scaling up the heights of journalism, including the initial lack of belief among industry players about her abilities to be a TV anchor. She challenged the girls to believe in themselves and not to allow their situation or what people say to be a deterrent.

The UNFPA Representative, Dr. Demola Olajide, reiterated UNFPA's commitment to supporting young people, especially girls, to realize their potential. He pointed out some of the impediments that the girls should take cognizant of, such as teenage pregnancies and child marriages which could stand in the way to realizing their fullest potential. The session ended with a handing over of the inspirational books to the girls.



*Photo: Mwanaaisha Juma listens keenly to remarks made by the chief guest, Ms. Nadia Abdalla during the book reading session.*



*Photo: (left to right) Chief Administrative Secretary, Nadia Abdalla, Janet Mbugua and Dr. Ademola Olajide, during the book reading and mentorship session at the Polycom Development Centre in Kibera.*



## Global Disability Summit: Kenya commits to promote inclusive sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls with disabilities



*Photo: Participants of the Global Disability Summit 2022 in Kenya.*

The Global Disability Summit (GDSII) took place on 16th and 17th February 2022 co-hosted by the Governments of Ghana and Norway, and the International Disability Alliance. The vision for the GDS is 'Promoting Equality', including fighting against stigmatisation and discrimination.

UNFPA Kenya supported the State Department for Social Protection in bringing together stakeholders from Kenya to collectively follow and virtually participate in the summit from a central location in Nairobi. The Summit was addressed by high level officials including the Prime Minister of Norway, the President of Ghana, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, heads of UN organizations and representatives of multilateral development banks, the private sector, organizations of persons with disabilities, civil society organizations, and academia. In her address, UNFPA Executive Director, Dr. Natalia Kanem, emphasized the intersectional challenges that women and girls with disabilities face and which must be addressed, including gender-based violence, low access to SRH services, and the persistent stigma and discrimination.

The Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Public Service, Gender, Senior Citizens Affairs and Special Programmes, Prof. Margaret Kobia, addressed the Summit on the second day, highlighting the progress that Kenya has made in advancing the rights of persons with disabilities. Participants at the summit reaffirmed the Charter for Change adopted by the 2018 London Global Disability Summit, as well as their commitment to ensuring that political will and leadership generate lasting and meaningful change for persons with disabilities.

Approximately 1,300 commitments were made by representatives from all stakeholder groups, distributed across five thematic areas. Kenya made a total of 19 commitments, with UNFPA committing to strengthen the capacity of the health system in Kenya to provide inclusive sexual and reproductive health services, especially to women and girls with disabilities; to strengthen programs on gender-based violence against persons with disabilities; and to empower women and girls with disabilities on their rights to sexual and reproductive health.



## Youth mark International Condom Day



*Photo: Youths display condoms in Nanyuki, Laikipia County.*

The International Condom Day (ICD) is observed on the 13th of February every year, one day before the Valentine's Day. ICD promotes awareness on safer sex practices in a fun and creative way, while encouraging people to use condoms as one of the effective ways of preventing Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and unintended pregnancies.

On the 13th of February 2022, all roads led to Nanyuki, where partners including Pathways Policy Institute, USAID, Down town, Rotaract Club Nanyuki and UNFPA, came together to commemorate the ICD 2022 under the theme: "Chat Check In, together with the youth of Laikipia County".

The event brought together over 100 youth and other stakeholders who engaged in the day's activities that included a sensitization and awareness session on the benefits and use of condoms, as well as a bike ride that would see the youth sensitize neighboring communities within a 10km radius of the Downtown Nanyuki grounds, where the commemoration took place.

The day's activities began at 10:00 am with an

interactive session on condom use and the role of condoms in preventing STIs, HIV and unintended pregnancies. After the hour-long session, it was time for community sensitization that saw the youth participate in a 15 Km bike tour through various informal settlements and health care centers in Nanyuki to not only empower the neighbouring communities on the use of condoms but also distribute condoms as a way of encouraging safer sex practices. A condom blowing exercise was carried out thereafter as a way of breaking stigma on condom use. The commemoration ended with key remarks from various policy makers and partners in attendance.

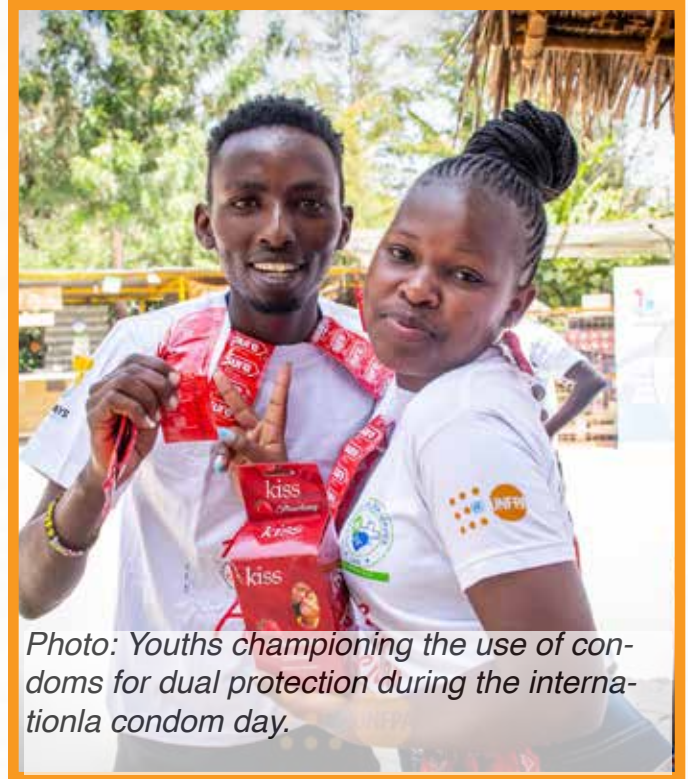
The ICD celebrations contributed significantly towards advancing the UNFPA mandate of ensuring zero unmet need for family planning and zero new HIV infections. Evidence continues to show inconsistency in condom use especially among sexually active young people. This is evident in the high rates of adolescent pregnancies in the country where over 300,000 adolescent girls between the ages of 10-19 years become pregnant every year. It is also manifested in the high rates of new HIV infections among young people aged



between 15 and 24 years, who contribute to half of the all adult HIV infections in the country.

UNFPA works to support access and uptake of condoms and the broad spectrum of contraceptives by ensuring a steady, reliable supply of quality family planning commodities; strengthening national health systems; advocating for policies that are supportive of family planning; and gathering data to support this work.

Multi-faceted partnerships and innovative initiatives are necessary for maximizing the triple dividend that comes with consistent and correct use of condoms i.e. prevention of STIs, HIV, and unintended pregnancy for a secure future. UNFPA has previously worked with icons such as Stanley Ngara, the King of Condoms, and Brenda Alwanyi, the Queen of Condoms to reinforce the message of condom use in humanitarian settings, including refugee camps.



*Photo: Youths championing the use of condoms for dual protection during the international condom day.*



*Photo: Youth participate in condom blowing to demonstrate the unlimited solutions that condoms provide.*



## Addressing gender-based violence in the Boda Boda (motorcycle) industry



*Photo: Dr. Ademola Olajide and Mr. Kevin Mubadi, Boda Boda Safety Association of Kenya, display their helmets donated by UNFPA Kenya during the National Reforms on Boda Boda Sector Forum held at Kenya School of Government.*

With an extensive footprint of over 1.4 million riders across the country, boda boda (motorcycle) operators are an integral part of the public transport system in Kenya, serving thousands of commuters and helping move goods from one place to another. In a recent video that went viral on social media, a female motorist was assaulted during a traffic incident in Nairobi which involved boda boda riders. The incident further exposed the problem of gender-based violence and sexual harassment that is prevalent in Kenya's public transport sector.

UNFPA partnered with the Boda Boda Safety Association of Kenya (BAK), the Ministry of ICT, Innovation and Youth Affairs, and the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government to bring together more than 300 boda boda riders from across the country to address key challenges that the sector faces and sensitize members on prevention of sexual and gender-based violence. Dr. Fred Matiang'i, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, and Mr. Joe Mucheru, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of ICT Innovation and Youth Affairs, pre-

sided over the meeting which explored reforms needed to streamline the boda boda industry for creation of a safer and more profitable ecosystem, and elimination of gender-based violence in the public transport sector. "Reforming the boda boda sector is a critical public policy decision that the Government has made, and we are willing to work with all partners to ensure that order and safety are restored," said Dr. Fred Matiangi. CS Joe Mucheru urged the boda boda riders to embrace inclusivity and actively take part in driving a productive agenda in the country.

A study by UN Women, Kenyatta University and the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) reveals that more than 80 percent of women in Nairobi have witnessed harassment, including sexual and emotional abuse while using public transport. The findings showed that 42% of the respondents had witnessed or experienced verbal forms of sexual harassment which included indecent touching, suggestive comments, abusive language, or jokes that made victims feel offended.

"Boda boda riders are a mirror to the challenges



faced by society. The sector has been able to provide employment for young people, a majority of whom are male,” said UNFPA representative, Dr. Ademola Olajide. “This is why UNFPA has partnered with the State Department for Gender to promote the participation of women in the sector, and to promote gender responsiveness amongst the riders.”

In a session led by representatives of national women’s rights organizations, participants were sensitized on the various forms of sexual and gender-based violence, as well as resources available for survivors. Wanjiru Kamanda from the Federation of Women Lawyers -Kenya (FIDA-K) urged the boda boda riders to support women and girls in tackling cases of GBV in their communities by speaking up and taking action against the vice.

UNFPA has been working with the boda boda leadership to strengthen focus on gender equality and women empowerment while mainstreaming SRH issues among the industry actors, including the riders themselves. UNFPA supported the BAK

to develop a “Strategic Framework to Elevate the Women Chapter of the Boda Boda Safety Association of Kenya”. The framework is anchored on four objectives: enhance participation of women in the boda boda sector and in the leadership structure of BAK at all levels; identify unique opportunities for the economic empowerment of women within the boda boda industry; strengthen/promote economic empowerment of women in the boda boda industry through improvement in skills and access to financial services; and strengthen the capacity of BAK to promote the health and well-being of women in and out of the boda boda industry.

Kevin Mbadi, who sits at the helm of the Boda Boda Safety Association of Kenya, underscored the resolve to transform the industry into a productive and safe business ecosystem through collaboration and partnership with State and non-State actors. He applauded UNFPA as having embraced the boda boda fraternity despite the challenges that they face in the informal sector, including infiltration by criminal elements who tarnish the reputation of hardworking and honest riders.

“Our industry has grown tremendously over the years and continues to offer employment opportunities for young men and women who have become key drivers of national development. But we also recognize the presence within the industry of ill-intentioned elements who are bent on subverting the viability of the sector. In collaboration with Government agencies, we will ensure that sanity precedes profit in the industry, said Kevin Mbadi, at the meeting convened with support from UNFPA.



*Photo: Cabinet Secretaries, Dr. Fred Matiangi and Joe Mucheru, showcase helmets donated to them during the National reforms on the Boda Boda Sector Forum*



## UNFPA Deputy Executive Director Programmes visits Kenya Country Office



*Photo: UNFPA Deputy Executive Director Programmes, Ms. Diene Keita (centre in green) with the UNFPA Kenya Country Office staff.*

UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (DED) Programmes, Ms. Diene Keita, was on a visit to Kenya to take part in the Africa Senior Women Leaders' meeting. Ms. Keita created time during the mission to meet with staff of the Kenya Country Office to discuss progress in implementation of the 9th Country Programme as it comes to a close in June 2022. Ms. Keita hailed the Kenya Country Office team under the leadership of Dr. Ademola Olajide for the stellar performance that marked implementation of the 9th Country Programme. She urged the team to cull out lessons learned and best practices so as to sustain the tempo of transformative results as the transition to the 10th Country Programme unravels. Ms. Keita emphasized the importance of strengthening existing strategic partnerships, noting that Kenya is a frontrunner in technology and human capital capacity.

Staff members shared the various initiatives by the Country Office, as well as some of the innovative approaches that have been adopted to ensure delivery of life-saving sexual and reproductive health

information and services during the Covid-19 pandemic. These include partnerships to reach the furthest behind, such as engagements with disability rights organization, This-Ability Trust, working with grassroots and community-based organizations in ending female genital mutilation, as well as the new innovative financing mechanism, the Adolescents Sexual and Reproductive Health Development Impact Bond. This is one of the current great examples of UNFPA's bold initiative to move from funding to financing of programmes.

The UNFPA Representative, Dr. Ademola Olajide, assured the DED-P that the Kenya Country Office is obligated to continue raising the bar in upholding the rights of women and girls and other vulnerable groups. He attributed the tremendous results achieved over the 5 years to the team work, dedication and sense of corporate ownership of the vision of the Country Office by all staff. The Representative underscored that Kenya is a country of extreme and multilayered



diversities, including aspects of climate change such as drought and floods almost occurring concurrently, but UNFPA has consistently demonstrated the agility to navigate these and sustain fidelity to achieving transformative results.

The DED-P lauded the Kenya Country Office for scaling unprecedented milestones in policy and advocacy work. She cited the atmosphere of camaraderie and warm rapport that the Representative enjoyed with the top leadership of the country as a great springboard for inroads into UNFPA's policy priorities. Quoting the African proverb that says "when the smallest of toes is sick the entire body pays attention" the DED-P emphasized that appreciation of every member of the team had a role to play in the achievement of the Country Office results. Ms. Keita recalled how on a mission in a conflict prone country a driver had saved her life from violent elements through sheer ingenuity and passion for his work.

UNFPA KCO staff were delighted to listen to the DED-P deliver an inspirational account of her career journey within the organization. It was evident that the DED-P had broken numerous glass ceilings to reach her present position and she is a compelling role model to women and girls seeking to carve a niche for themselves in the decision - making domain. Ms. Keita thanked the UNFPA leadership and staff in Kenya for making the organization a safe space for women and girls.

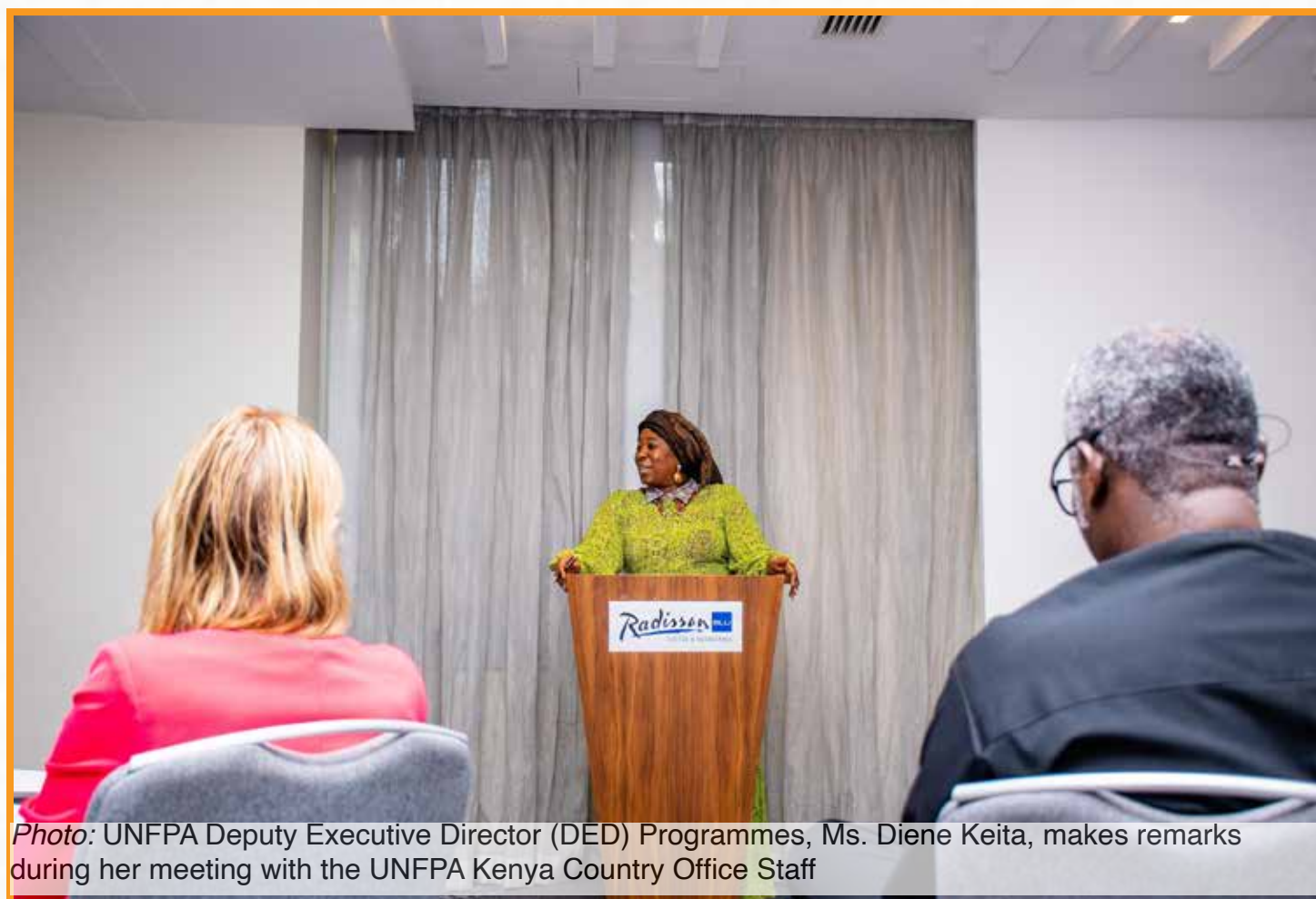


Photo: UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (DED) Programmes, Ms. Diene Keita, makes remarks during her meeting with the UNFPA Kenya Country Office Staff



## UNFPA Kenya office scoops Monitoring, Evaluation and Innovation awards at the regional leadership meeting



*Photo: Dr. Ademola Olajide, UNFPA Kenya Representative, and Ira Oveseen, International Operations Manager, receive an award from Dr. Bannet, UNFPA Regional Director.*

The UNFPA East and Southern Africa region leadership meeting was held in Johannesburg from 14 to 17 February, 2022. The annual meeting is an opportunity for the regional leadership to discuss and endorse the regional strategic direction for UNFPA in East and Southern Africa, and to take stock of achievements and lessons learnt in implementing UNFPA's mandate. This year's event also featured the regional excellence awards which are given in recognition and honour to deserving staff, teams, and units as a way of validating their excellence in all aspects of programme and operations management.

This year, the UNFPA Kenya country office was awarded the excellence in results based management, monitoring, reporting and evaluation. The country office team scooped first place jointly with the Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Uganda, Zambia and Eswatini teams. The award is given to country offices with the highest programme results as measured through milestones achieved, fast and effective submission of annual and quarterly reports, as well as a high rating of evaluation reports.

UNFPA Kenya was also awarded third place in the innovation champion category for the country office's initiative in exploring an innovative approach to programme financing. The office is the lead agency in the implementation of the Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health (ASRH) Development Impact Bond in Kenya. The bond is the first of its kind within the United Nations community and this demonstrates UNFPA Kenya's strong capacity to engage and convene different partners which included UN agencies, government, NGOs and the private sector towards a common vision. The ASRH Development Impact Bond was approved for funding in the 1st round by the Joint Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Fund to the tune of \$ 7 million.

The 2022 Regional Leadership Meeting was the first to take place in person since the COVID-19 pandemic began and was attended by Deputy Executive Director (Programme) Diene Keita, Deputy Executive Director (Management) Ib Petersen (attended remotely), Director of the Policy and Strategy Division Arthur Erken, Regional Director a.i. Bannet Ndyabangi, and Deputy Regional



Director Beatrice Mutali along with country office representatives, assistant and deputy representatives, and colleagues from both the headquarters and the region.



*Photo: Many families affected by the floods were displaced from their homes.*



*Photo: UNFPA East and Southern Region leadership during the Leadership meeting held in Johannesburg, South Africa.*



## We Salute Dr. Ademola Olajide for the Illustrious Service!



*Photo: Dr. Ademola Olajide, UNFPA Kenya Representative, greets His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta of the Republic of Kenya during the Kenya Ni Mimi launch at Bomas of Kenya.*

The UNFPA Representative, Dr. Ademola Olajide, is a cherished name in Kenya. Few people, including Kenyan nationals, have traversed the country and embraced its kaleidoscopic rendition of cultural richness like Dr. Ademola. His footprint is elaborately discernible from the scintillating beaches of Lamu to the dazzling vibrancy of Kisumu. He has dined with those at the apex of the Kenyan society and danced with ordinary Kenyans across the breadth and length of the pulsating nation. His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta prefers calling him ‘our friend Olajide’, a clear affirmation of Dr. Ademola’s cordial dalliance with the people of Kenya.

Dr. Ademola arrived in Kenya in 2017 when the country was in the throes of fiercely contested general and presidential elections that threatened national stability and the development trajectory. The 2010 Constitution and the Kenya Vision 2030 were still in the formative decade of implementation while UNFPA was in the homestretch of executing the 8th Country Programme. The watershed moment of the ‘handshake’ between the President and his hitherto formidable political ri-

val, former Prime Minister Raila Odinga, the redefining of national development priorities to focus on the ‘Big Four Agenda’, and the transition to the 9th UNFPA Country Programme were thus the corner beacons that framed Dr. Ademola’s tour of duty.

Endowed with inimitable programming insights gained across the globe and indefatigable energy, Dr. Ademola has captained the UNFPA Kenya Country Office team to deliver the 9th Country programme with sterling performance across the bundle of the three transformative results: zero preventable maternal deaths, zero unmet need for family planning and zero gender based violence and harmful practices. Salient achievements during Dr. Ademola’s tenure include Kenya hosting the ICPD25 Nairobi Summit, the Kenyan President committing to end FGM by 2022, and the Generation Equality Forum commitments.

The last five years have seen UNFPA contribute to innovations in SRH and GBV service delivery in collaboration with stakeholders. Innovations such as HealthStrat, Wheels for Life, and supply chain management models in collaboration with



the Coca Cola company have attested to UNFPA's leadership in ensuring maternal health and family planning are critical national priorities. The Kenya Country Office is pioneering within UNFPA the shift from financing to funding programmes through initiation of the ASRH Development Impact Bond (DIB). ensuring youth, persons with disabilities, refugees, persons affected and infected with HIV, and other

A passionate champion of the leave-no-one-behind mantra, Dr. Ademola has been instrumental in ensuring minorities are part of the march towards attainment of agenda 2030. The Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) is a signature illustration of how UNFPA can resonate with the aspirations and choices of young people across multiple dichotomies.

Dr. Ademola has presided over re-imagining the Kenyan narrative when the country experienced multiple and intersecting emergencies over the last five years. In the midst of cataclysmic events such as cyclic floods and drought, locust

infestations, Covid-19 and resource based conflicts, Dr. Ademola sustained the focus of the Country Office on building back better. Many communities in the country deeply appreciate his boldness to visit them at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic when they badly needed the assurance that it was not the end of the human race.

A person who exudes warm charisma and affability, Dr. Ademola has left an indelible footprint on Kenya. He was available to the young in their digital spaces and was accessible to the elderly in their labyrinth of folklore. He is endowed with the gravitas that curates dreams into the exhilarating reality of life. He will be sorely missed in the city and will be fondly remembered in the villages. Veni, vidi, vici!



*Photo: Dr. Ademola Olajide, UNFPA Kenya Representative, displays a placard to end gender-based violence.*





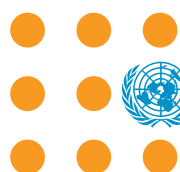
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