

PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kajiado County becomes the first County in Kenya to launch anti FGM policy

December 5, 2019

Eight years ago, Kenya enacted the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2011), effectively banning and criminalizing the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). This law imposed tough penalties on perpetrators of FGM, prohibited cross-border FGM and barred medical care-givers from carrying out the act.

Since then, the country has continued to witness a steady decline in the prevalence of FGM with the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (2014) placing the national average at 21 percent among girls and women between the ages of 15-49 compared to 27 percent in 2008. Despite this, FGM is almost universal in some communities such as the Somali (94%), Samburu (86%), Kisii (84%) and Maasai (78%). This not only underscores the need for the development of homegrown solutions to end FGM but is also an illustration of the need for County governments to play their role in ending this harmful practice.

We are therefore happy and proud to announce that the County government of Kajiado has become the first County in Kenya to develop and launch a robust policy designed to end FGM at the community level. The policy, which is firmly grounded on the principles of gender equality, inclusivity and non-discrimination, provides the legal framework required to fast track the eradication of FGM at the County level by creating decentralized governance structures that will be cascaded from the ward level to the County level.

In addition, the policy provides systems through which multi-sectoral interventions geared towards accelerating the eradication of FGM in the County will be strengthened. These interventions will be anchored on coordination, networking, partnership and community participation and include:

- Community sensitization campaigns highlighting FGM as a human rights violation;
- The establishment of alternative sources of income for reformed cutters;
- Research and data collection at County level as a means of driving the management of FGM;
- Continuous community dialogues to ensure that no one is left behind;
- The establishment and equipping of rescue centers and safe houses for girls at risk of FGM and child marriage;
- The development of community-based surveillance systems to protect girls from the practice;
- Psychosocial support and mentorship programs will be offered to girls;
- Reconciliation and re-integration of rescued girls with their families and community; and
- Link FGM survivors to information resource centers and vocational training centers for access to information on sexual and reproductive health, skills development, and economic empowerment.

The Policy further calls for the creation of three management committees namely the County Anti-FGM Management Committee, Sub-County Anti-FGM Management Committees, and Ward Anti-FGM Management Committees. These committees shall serve at various levels with the County anti FGM

committee tasked with designing, supervising and coordinating programmes against the practice of FGM. It shall comprise of various county government officials, law enforcement agents, county level law makers, a representative of a non-governmental organization, a youth among others.

This policy will be funded through the County Government of Kajiado. The County shall allocate sufficient financial and human resources for the successful implementation of this Policy and will complement these funds with support from stakeholders, development partners, and the private sector.

Finally, the policy will be reviewed within a period of five (5) years and shall be subjected to a mid-term review within three (3) years as need be, considering the emerging realities associated with FGM.

Ends

Notes to Editor:

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About the Anti FGM Board

The Anti-Female Genital Mutilation Board is a semi-autonomous government agency that was established in December 2013 following the enactment of the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act, 2011. The functions of the Board as set out in Section 4 of the Act, includes designing, supervising and coordinating public awareness programmes against the practice of FGM; advising the Government on matters relating to FGM and the implementation of the Act; designing and formulating a policy on the planning, financing and coordinating of all activities relating to FGM and providing technical and other support to institutions, agencies and other bodies engaged in the programmes aimed at eradication of FGM.

About Equality Now

Founded in 1992, Equality Now is an international human rights organization that works to protect and promote the rights of women and girls around the world in the areas of Harmful practices including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Child Marriage, Discrimination in Law, Sexual Violence, and Trafficking. Equality Now combines grassroots activism with international, regional and national legal advocacy to achieve legal and systemic change to benefit women and girls, and works to ensure that governments enact and enforce laws and policies that uphold their rights. The organization's Equality Action Network is comprised of groups and individuals in more than 190 countries. www.equalitynow.org.

About Hope Beyond

Hope Beyond Foundation promotes SDG5 accountability in Kajiado County, Kenya pushing for equal opportunity for girls and women, including freedom from all forms of violence including FGM and child marriage. The foundation runs various programs including a rescue center, school, community training, women's empowerment, and clean water programs and climate change adaptation.

About Il'aramatak Community Concerns



Hope Beyond
Transitional Center



ANTI-FGM BOARD
Pamoja Tukomeshe
Uketaji



County Government Of
KAJIADO

ICC is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that was founded in September 2011, with the aim of addressing human rights and development concerns of Maasai pastoralist women and girls. ICC tackles girls access, retention and transition from primary to secondary level education, ending harmful traditional practices such as FGM and Child marriage, creating opportunities for income generating projects for women, advocate for inclusion of women in leadership and decision-making positions to reduce the level of poverty among Maasai women and girls and contribute to National development goals.