

## **PRESS STATEMENT**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **Kisumu County becomes 2<sup>nd</sup> County in Kenya to launch SGBV policy**

December 5, 2019

The County Government of Kisumu has developed and launched a comprehensive policy framework designed to eliminate sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) at the local level, making it the 2<sup>nd</sup> County in Kenya to achieve this feat. The policy seeks to address SGBV incidences in the county and promote gender equality by setting up systems that will protect, prevent and respond to these violations whenever they occur.

It borrows heavily from national, regional and international laws that Kenya subscribes to and was informed by the need to respond to widespread SGBV violations. Kisumu County is indeed among devolved units that have a particularly high prevalence of SGBV incidences. For instance, the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (2014) reported that 39.2 percent of pregnant women in the County had experienced physical violence. In 97 percent of these cases, the violence had been perpetrated by the women's intimate partners.

While SGBV violations in Kisumu County have previously been linked to certain cultural beliefs and traditions, post-election violence as well as socio-economic status of the vulnerable groups, their prevalence calls for the need to create local interventions and solutions. In this regard, the launch of the SGBV policy is a welcome relief as it will provide homegrown, multi-faceted remedies that will address these human rights violations.

The policy calls for the prioritization of SGBV-responsive interventions including the allocation of sufficient financial and human resources geared towards supporting activities that will redress these violations. It further creates mechanisms that will support survivors of SGBV while ensuring that SGBV laws are fully enforced at the local level. Besides this, the policy brings together state and non-state actors in a bid to enhance accountability, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of programs directed towards ending SGBV.

The policy acknowledges that SGBV violations affect women and girls disproportionately, but speaks for the human rights of both genders and will be implemented at County, sub-County and ward levels. It further notes that orphans and vulnerable children, persons with disabilities, youth, sexual & gender minorities, and the elderly are also vulnerable to SGBV.

Through the policy, the County government of Kisumu will establish SGBV steering committee and technical working groups which will flow from the County to the ward level. The steering committee will provide strategic policy direction towards the implementation of relevant SGBV laws, policies and mobilization of resources for SGBV protection, prevention, response and coordination initiatives.

Lastly, the Kisumu County SGBV policy will work by complementing the Constitution of Kenya (2010), the Sexual Offences Act (2006), the Children's Act (2001), the Penal Code (2009), the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2011) among other national, regional and international laws.

## **Ends**

### **Editor's notes**

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### **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](http://www.equalitynow.org).

### **About KMET**

Kisumu Medical and Education Trust (KMET) is a non-governmental organization based in Kisumu established to promote quality health and education services across Kenya. KMET is committed to serving underserved communities in the spheres of maternal, child and family health. KMET operates in 35 of the 47 counties in Kenya as well as regionally in East and Central Africa.