



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR
ON WOMEN RIGHTS

**SPEECH BY HON. HARRIETTE CHIGGAI, PRESIDENTS'
WOMEN RIGHTS ADVISOR DURING THE INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATIONS ON 8TH MARCH 2024 AT THE
KENYA REVENUE AUTHORITY HEADQUARTERS, TIMES
TOWERS.**

Theme: 'Invest in women: Accelerate Progress'

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen.

Happy Women's Day!

A woman is like a tea bag, you never know how strong it is until you put it in hot water.

1. It is with immense happiness and a profound sense of duty that I stand before you and with you today, for the empowerment of women in every facet of our society as we join hands and hearts in commemorating International Women's Day.

2. A day dedicated not just to celebrating the remarkable achievements of women but also to raising awareness against bias, taking action for equality, and driving gender parity.
3. Today's theme, "**Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress,**" is not just a call to action; it's a clarion call that beckons us to action - to **consider our roles**, both as **individuals** and as a **collective**, in forging a future where **gender equality** is not just an ideal, but a lived reality for every woman. This day belongs to **everyone, everywhere.**
4. **Globally**, the narrative is changing. Women are not only participants in the economy but are leading it. The global community is increasingly acknowledging that investing in women is synonymous with smart economics. Countries that have embraced women in leadership and economic participation are enjoying a surge in innovation and prosperity.
5. **In the African context**, the story is of resilience and potential. Despite facing historical disadvantages, African women are breaking barriers, with Kenya leading the charge. Our mothers, daughters, and sisters are turning the tides, proving that investing in women is not just about correcting a historical oversight; it's about unlocking a powerhouse of potential.

6. **Within Kenya**, this progress takes on a personal significance. Each one of us has a story to tell about a woman who has profoundly impacted our lives. From a personal perspective, my commitment to this cause has been unwavering. I have seen firsthand the incredible impact of investing in women's education, health, and leadership. Such investments create ripples that extend far beyond the immediate beneficiaries.
7. I have invested in women through mentorship programs, advocating for policies that protect and empower women, and supporting businesses owned by women. These efforts not only lift the spirits of the women they touch but also anchor the very soul of our nation.
8. Significantly, Our President, the nation's foremost champion on Women Rights will be in Embu County, together with other leaders to lead the nation in celebration, a testament to the great importance this Government attaches to the value of Women.
9. As part of the commitments to the women of Kenya, the Government established the Office of the Presidential Advisor on Women Rights to, among other things, co-ordinate Women Rights Initiatives.

10. This is in recognition of the fact that despite women constituting half of the population of Kenya, they remain grossly under-represented in the labour force, economic opportunities and leadership.
11. As the Presidential Advisor on Women Rights, I am tasked with coordinating initiatives that elevate the status of women. Despite women making up half of our population, their representation in the labor force, economic opportunities, and leadership is significantly lower than it should be. It is our responsibility to change this narrative.
12. On this International Women's Day, we gather to reflect on our achievements and, more importantly, to fuel our efforts toward women empowerment - a goal that remains at the core of the sustainable development agenda.
13. However, we must acknowledge the challenges and barriers that persist. As KRA positions itself to **ensure women empowerment**, it must reflect internally and ask: Are our practices fair? Are we inclusive? Is our workplace a microcosm of the empowerment we wish to see in society?

14. The Authority has the power to model what women empowerment should look like by setting standards within its operations and influencing policy beyond. You have the power to drive change through the demystification of tax matters.
15. Taxes are not just a fiscal obligation; they are a reflection of our societal values and priorities. By educating our citizens on tax laws and creating a transparent tax culture, we empower them to be informed contributors to our nation's progress.
16. In reviewing tax laws, we have the opportunity to make a significant impact on the lives of Kenyans. We must consider the gender implications of our tax policies and strive to create a system that supports women's economic empowerment.
17. Simplifying the tax code and making tax education accessible to all will ensure that everyone, especially women who have traditionally been left out of such discussions, can fully participate in our economy.
18. We are presented with sobering statistics. According to the UN Global Compact “**Women Empowerment Principles Global Trends**” report of 2018, that while Africa leads the global average on women’s representation on corporate board and

executive committee positions, at 25% (women) and 22% (men), the gender pay gap remains a glaring issue, women across the continent on average earn 32% less than men.

19. The situation is even more acute in northern and southern Africa, where men can earn between 200 and 500 per cent more than women. It begs the question – why does such inequality persist, and what can we do to address it?
20. It is essential to create inclusive spaces that value diversity, where all individuals feel respected and empowered. It is only with diverse voices in decision-making roles that we can achieve equitable and sustainable outcomes.
21. Organizations like the Kenya Revenue Authority have a pivotal role in addressing gender imbalances. KRA set an example by implementing policies and practices that allow women equal opportunities in employment.
22. Flexibility in work arrangements, support for parents and caregivers, and safe channels to report workplace harassment are measures that can create a more equitable environment.

23. I challenge the KRA to align with Sustainable Development Goal 5.5, which advocates for equal representation, participation, and leadership of women in business. I urge you to seek out and invest in women's economic empowerment and investment and advance gender equality.
24. Implement measures that enhance conditions for women workers, challenge gender stereotypes, and prioritize sourcing from women-owned businesses. In recruitment, attract top female talent and support them with childcare and generous leave policies.
25. Such initiatives will benefit not only women but the organization as a whole by reducing turnover and absenteeism.
26. When planning your Corporate Social Responsibility activities, allocate resources to impact the lives of women positively. Focus on critical sectors like health, water, agriculture, and education. Make deliberate choices to uplift the communities you serve, emphasizing the empowerment of women within these communities.
27. To the esteemed staff of the Kenya Revenue Authority, I call upon you to champion these changes. Your work does not just

collect revenue; it has the potential to shape a society that values equality, supports growth, and celebrates diversity.

28. Together, let's take actionable steps to educate, legislate, and empower. Let's make this International Women's Day not just a day of reflection but a day of commitment to action. Let us invest in women, streamline our tax systems, and in doing so, accelerate our progress towards a nation of inclusivity, equality, and shared prosperity.

29. As we mark this day, may we reaffirm our pledge to not only uplift women but also to build a Kenya where every woman can say, "I am recognized, I am supported, and I am proud to contribute to a tax system that acknowledges my role in society."

30. As I conclude, I invite you to reflect on the essence of celebrating International Women's Day. It is about more than just recognizing the journey we have taken; it is about charting a course for the future. The question before us is, what can the Kenya Revenue Authority do differently to foster gender inclusivity?

31. As we contemplate this, let us remember that our nation's full potential can only be realized with the equal participation of

women and men. It is not just about fairness; it's about embracing the diverse strengths that each gender brings to our society.

32. We are interdependent, and it is through this symbiotic relationship that we can achieve true economic growth and development.

33. Therefore, let us take this moment not only to celebrate but to commit ourselves to take tangible actions that will cement gender equality in our policies, our practices, and our daily lives.

34. The task ahead is great, but so is our resolve. Let us work hand in hand to build a Kenya that truly reflects the principle of equality, today and for all tomorrows to come.

35. A good leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder for consensus. We must hold each other's hand,

36. The President is the number one champion for women. We must embrace the space accorded by the President and align. Institutions must implement and align with the President wish which in my view is policy.

37. A leader takes people where they want to go, a great leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go, but ought

to go. Sometimes they make unpopular decisions but they are the right decisions.

38. The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things.

39. The place of young professionals in shaping society. I started my journey as a young professional. Those in the Law Society of Kenya will attest to the fact I started the young lawyers movement, by starting the committee to now my mentees being leaders within the structures of LSK, including the current President of LSK. I have always found myself as the youngest in the room, I started the journey to leadership early.

40. The journey to greatness is not an easy journey, has never been for anyone who has made it, and for the young people it shall not and never will be easy, you must find ways of navigating the challenges you face.

You must do what needs to be done! You must be successful!

Leadership is an action not a position.

Your boss is not your friend, let your hard and excellent work be the measure of the relationship.

41. Take risks and huge ticket risks because life is a risk in itself. The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.
42. With regard to self care, what policies do we have to enrich our personal lives? Incorporate a healthy lifestyle, eat right and exercise.
43. Don't dine with those who add no value in your life , dance and dine with those you aspire to be better and expand your network.
44. I commend KRA and its leadership for allowing women this space. We must nurture and invest in women and the youth. The young staff your time will come and if you want career progression move, move move and never get tired from shifting organisations. Why? Because your HR will tell you if you overstay in an organisation there is no difference between you and furniture.

45. I am keen to see and experience well balanced institutions cutting across board: ladies and gentlemen, gender mainstreaming is not a competition but complementary.

46. To my fellow Kenya's **Tulipe Ushuru Tujitegemee !**

Thank you and

Happy International Women's Day !