



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

Speech
Women in Manufacturing Gala Dinner held on
Friday 22nd March 2024
Serena Hotel,
Nairobi

Salutations

- Kenya Association of Manufacturers Board
- Women in Manufacturing Chair
- Kenya Association of Manufacturers Members
- Our celebrities tonight, Women in Manufacturing

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen;

1. I am excited to be part of this esteemed gathering, hosted by the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), as we recognize the vital contributions of women to our nation's industrial landscape.
2. Kenya has made significant strides in advancing women's rights and opportunities. The establishment of affirmative funds for **women-led companies and increased representation of women** in public and elected offices, attests to this.
3. Despite these achievements, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) and UN Women data published in 2020 shows that just **29% of women are considered empowered**.
4. Gender disparities still exist in various aspects of life, including education, healthcare, and employment. Women continue to face

barriers to full participation in the economy, hindering our nation's potential for inclusive growth.

5. Amid these challenges, there is still hope. The economic potential of women remains vast and untapped. For sure, there is hope by the women in manufacturing.
6. According to a research study titled '**Economic impacts of reducing the gender gap**' conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO), closing the gender gap in participation by **25 per cent by 2025** could increase **global GDP by 5.3 trillion dollars**.
7. Thus, empowering women economically not only benefits individuals and families but also drives the overall prosperity for our Nation.
8. In recent years, we have witnessed a growing recognition of the **importance of gender equality in economic development**. Initiatives aimed at promoting women's entrepreneurship, access to finance, and skills development have gained momentum, laying the groundwork for a more inclusive and prosperous future.
9. A look at the manufacturing sector shows women have historically been underrepresented.
10. A 2020 study conducted by **Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM)**, and supported by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) revealed that, **women accounted for only 17% of the formal manufacturing sector** in Kenya.
11. While this is a significant improvement from previous years, there is still ample room for progress. Increasing women's participation in manufacturing not only enhances diversity, but also brings **fresh perspectives and ideas to the table**.
12. As a country, our manufacturing sector is **largely agriculture based**, with **food processing and beverage manufacturing** alone contributing **40% and 48%** of manufacturing employment and GDP respectively.

Ladies and gentlemen;

13. Under the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), the Government is committed to promoting inclusive and sustainable industrial development. As part of this Agenda, **significant opportunities to empower women in manufacturing and unlock their full potential** as drivers of economic growth exist.
14. Through targeted interventions such as skills training, access to markets, and supportive policies, BETA seeks to create an **enabling environment for women to thrive in manufacturing**. By leveraging their talents and expertise, we can drive innovation, enhance productivity, and unlock new growth opportunities for the sector.
15. As the world strives towards achieving net-zero emissions, it is imperative to acknowledge that Africa, **despite contributing the least to carbon emissions**, faces the most severe impacts of climate change.

Given this reality, how can we, as women in manufacturing, ensure that our **practices prioritize environmental consciousness**?

Is there an opportunity for women in manufacturing to **trade in carbon credits**?

16. Let me pose another question. As women in manufacturing, are we ready **to tap into the opportunity to provide clean cooking energy innovations, practices and technologies**?

Women suffer more than men from **use of fossils fuels** due to longer exposure. This has affected their **health** and also increased their time spend on **unpaid care and domestic work**.

I am looking for women leading on the increased innovations and technologies on clean cooking energy for women and girls.

17. In line with global efforts to combat climate change and promote sustainability, **green manufacturing** has emerged as a key priority.

Therefore, women in manufacturing, we must strive to lead in practices and innovations that create climate adaptations solutions.

Women have a crucial role to play in this transition. As **natural caregivers and stewards** of the environment, women bring a unique perspective to **sustainable production practices**.

18. Encouraging women's participation in green manufacturing not only contributes to environmental conservation but also creates new job opportunities and markets. By embracing **eco-friendly technologies and practices**, we can build a greener, more resilient manufacturing sector for future generations.
19. **Access to finance remains a significant challenge** for women entrepreneurs, including those in the manufacturing sector. Lack of financial literacy and gender bias often hinder women's ability to secure funding for their businesses.
20. However, there is **reason for optimism**. Various financial institutions and development agencies are stepping up efforts to provide targeted financing and capacity-building support for women-owned enterprises.
21. Last year, in collaboration African Development Bank and African Guarantee Fund, **the Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa (AFAWA) Finance series** in Kenya was launched. This is aimed at increasing women's access to finance in the continent by bridging the **\$42 billion financing gap** for women-led and owned small and medium enterprises. AFAWA provides an opportunity for women to access up to 75% credit guarantee.
22. Furthermore, the Government has started the process of establishing a **Kenya Credit Guarantee Company** that will be a successor of the current Government Credit Guarantee Scheme.
23. By expanding access to affordable credit and tailored financial services, we can unlock the full potential of women in manufacturing and drive

sustainable economic growth. Kenyan women are known for their resilience and tenacity

Ladies and Gentlemen;

24. The Government has made commendable efforts in advancing women's rights and opportunities. We have seen enactment of gender mainstreaming policies and adoption of affirmative action programs.
25. Various Government initiatives have been put in place to advance women's financial independence and entrepreneurial endeavors. These include establishment of the **Hustler Fund to ring-fence resources** dedicated to advancing financial independence and entrepreneurial endeavors among women. Our active engagement at the county level ensures that the Hustler Fund effectively serves women while identifying and addressing any barriers they may face.
26. During International Women's Day celebrations, H.E. President Dr. William Ruto announced plans to improve funding for women by implementing changes to the Women Enterprise Fund. Over **Ksh 942 million** has already been disbursed to **1.4 million women through 53,000 women's groups**, providing them with access to affordable financial facilities.
27. The Government has **digitized processes and reduced middlemen** to streamline access to the Women Enterprise Fund for women entrepreneurs. This allows access to financial resources more efficient and effective for women seeking to start or expand their businesses.
28. The National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF) has seen an **increase in budgetary allocation to Kes. 2.9 Billion**, demonstrating our commitment to supporting women's initiatives across the country.
29. We have also signaled our commitment to **Gender Parity and Financial Empowerment** by pledging to establish the **first Gender Parity Accelerator in Sub-Saharan Africa**. This initiative aims to

foster a culture of entrepreneurship among Kenyan women and provide them with the necessary financial tools to shape their own destinies.

30. As we gather here tonight to celebrate the achievements of women in manufacturing, let us reaffirm our commitment to supporting and empowering women at every level of society. Let us initiate entrepreneurial mentorship opportunities for young girls and women.
31. Through initiatives like the **Women in Manufacturing program**, KAM has provided a platform for women to excel, innovate, and lead in an industry traditionally dominated by men.
32. As we talk about Women in Manufacturing, we have a big conference early next month, **Women in Procurement & Supply Chain Conference 2024**. I want to extend invitation to all. In addition, kindly **allow and support your women Procurement Officers to register** and attend. This is a forum that will bring together hundreds of Procurement Professionals and Supply Chain Practitioners under one roof. Let us partner and make it a success.
33. Moving forward, **my Office will further engage with KAM to develop partnership on a number of areas of mutual interest**. I know, within the Manufacturing sector we are still facing challenges, and more so, Women in Manufacturing.
34. Together, with KAM leading the charge, let us pave the way for a brighter, more equitable future, where every woman can thrive and succeed in the manufacturing sector and beyond.

It is do-able!

Thank you.