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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR
ON WOMEN RIGHTS

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RIGHTS, REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

**DURING THE WESTERN JURISTS ANNUAL DINNER
AND DANCE**

02 DECEMBER 2023

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NAIROBI



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Ladies and gentlemen.

Milembe vosi! Milembe khandi!

Good evening and welcome to the Annual Dinner and Dance of Western Jurists Forum (WJF), 2023.

Tonight is a special night, because, for the first time in the five years WJF has been in place, we are honored by guests drawn from a wide range of professions, outside the legal fraternity. This is a demonstration that WJF has come of Age.

1. As I look back, we actualized the dream of the Western Jurists Forum (WJF). Today more than ever, I want us to celebrate the spirit of togetherness. We have the full house in place including honorable members of the judiciary who have graciously graced this occasion.
2. We are gathered here to celebrate our shared commitment to the pursuit of justice for humankind. But we have also come to pay homage to the camaraderie that binds us, as members of the legal community. As the founder and Patron of WJF, it is indeed my great pleasure and distinct honor to stand before you tonight, because WJS members believed in me and the great initiative of our togetherness and service.
3. I am trully delighted and humbled to see so many distinguished faces in this room. I wish to salute my seniors, who have continued to support the vision of WJF. Away from this dinner, we have robust



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and constant engagements with senior advocates from the region, as well as with members of the Bench. You have all been very inspiring. I thank you.

4. WJF plays an important role in fostering a community of legal practitioners, dedicated to the service of justice and jurisprudence. It has also been instrumental in economic empowerment and networking for its members and to improving the reading culture among children in Western Kenya. We can only scale greater heights.
5. The portrait of the Western region remains grim, to say the very least, with the women and children bearing most of the social and economic burden. It should bother us to witness an unprecedented rise in Sexual and Gender Based Violence.
6. Drug abuse and alcohol intake is at an alarming rate. The question is, how do we, as professionals, support the region in fashioning change of behavior and bring back sanity and mend the social fabric? To do this, we must first accept that the society is broken. We have dropped the ball of values and virtues. We must begin a fresh search for lost values and virtues.
7. The human rights violations within the region are heavily pronounced. The catalogue is depressing: domestic violence, rape, oppression of widows, land disinheritance, defilement of girls and boys, teenage pregnancies, HIV and Aids infections, drug and alcohol abuse. It is distressing.



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8. The biggest question is where to place the blame. Do we blame it on poverty? Do we blame it on upbringing? Do we blame it on lack of awareness and cultural biases? Do we blame it on non-existence of community support systems? These are questions that I am grappling with. And I guess it is the same with everyone here tonight.
9. We, as lawyers and other professionals in the room tonight, must do something to mend and refashion our society. It is a God given calling to offer unsolicited societal help.
10. Giving back to the community is a calling to all of us. So far, I acknowledge, we have done commendably well. Yet, I urge us all to continue with the same spirit of providing *pro bono* services to the needy. Let us not tire to give legal awareness and support to the community.
11. The community is in need of our legal minds and skills to overcome the challenges that plague our society. I appeal to all of us not to tire from providing regular support as part of our **Individual Social Responsibility**, beyond to Corporate Social Responsibility). Only then can we change the narrative and embrace positive energy . we must always remember that good leadership is defined by those who show the way and allow others to grow. Leadership is selfless it has no Egos and pride. Leadership is next to Godliness and the reward is from God. Leadership is about sacrifices .
12. I want to pose these questions: Who are you? Who are we? What values and virtues do we espouse? Can we look inward both as



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individuals and a community and redefine our character, at all levels?

13. To the Young professionals, mine is to encourage all of you. The beauty of being a professional is that the life span of growth, has its own timing. To be an achiever, it takes a lot of discipline, respect and hard work. You must also be a person of character.
14. We must change this attitude, stop the characters who go behind peoples back to mess well fashioned programs most cases driven by greed and under hand dealings. We must discern the spirit of division, self-hate, jealousy and unwarranted competition. We must accept at any given time there is one leader and we must respect authority.
15. We must be joyous filled and with the spirit of positives. We must pull together and we must accept to be led. We must walk the talk as lawyers we must empower our women only then will we save the Society and the future generations to come.
16. As Professionals, we should be at the forefront of **Obulala** as a principle. There is power in coming together. This is key to enhancing collaborations and partnerships across the board. This helps us to pursue and scale up common transformative agendas and supportive mechanisms for all. Furthermore, it will help all of us to align with the government's economic plan and speak towards development and improving the livelihoods of the community.



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17. WJF remains a non-political entity; a social economic vehicle, that is our dream. Certainly that was the vision that I had when I put together the team that began WJF. **And it remains so.**
18. Many in this room have reached out wanting to join the leadership of WJF and with very good proposals on how we can grow the organization to greater heights.
19. As the founder, brand ambassador and Patron of WJF, I have listened to all the advice given by my mentors and senior advocates on matters governance and many of you are here tonight. I am truly grateful for your time and wise council.
20. I have gone ahead and drawn the governance structure of the organization. I have put in place the Board of Trustees which shall be the governing entity and the accountability entity including ensuring the Vision and Mission of WJF remains as is. This is largely advised by the question, what constitutes a good Board of Trustees, how can we improve the entity going forward.
21. The BOT shall comprise of :-
 1. Founder and Patron of WJF
 2. Three advocates of the High Court of Kenya of more than 15 years in practice
 - a. FCS Catherine Musakali



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- b. Grace Nyongesa . A senior Advocate Chair UASU and Lecturer
- c. Senior Counsel Dan Ameyo
- d. Judge of High Court of Kenya ; Dorah Chepkwony
- e. Academia: Justus Wabuyabo
- f. Two persons drawn from any profession with legal, communication and PR, HR, Strategy and Resource mobilization, Certified Accountant .
 - a. Kennedy Echesa Walubengu – Bachelors of Arts in Linguistic and literature
 - b. Josephat Namatsi Omutula – CPAK, Manager Internal Auditor and risk management

This team shall therefore be the custodian of WJF vision, and mission they shall be tasked to pull together and ensure all professionals are well aligned and largely help in designing an entity that out leaves us.

22. How do we pull together and support government on delivery? How do we align with the BETA plan and the women Charter and support the delivery of government services and plans and at the same time ensure that the society benefits? It is important that we align and give professional support where we can . Matters economic development and investment in our counties , climate



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change and food security, labour , health , nutrition and many more. The best disseminators of information and bearers of the vision are professionals. Let us participate and positively so.

23. WJF remains the most respected professional entity from Western. This is as a result of the showcased resilience and professionalism among the members, thus far. The membership is voluntary and all who share in the vision are welcome to join.

24. WJF belongs to all of us and each one of us must contribute. Ladies and gentlemen, allow me, once again, to thank you all for accepting to join this year's annual event.

If you must, remember ***“Nobody cares if you can’t dance well. Just get up and dance. Great dancers are great because of their passion.”***

25. I see we are all in our dancing shoes! Let us see the magic of the beautiful bones. Let us toast to great health and Wisdom. Merry Christmas to you all.

Thank You.