



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

SPEECH FOR COMMEMORATION OF INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD 2024

THEME: "Digital Generation, Our Generation"
DATE: Friday, 11th October, 2024
VENUE: Door Christian Fellowship Church, Ayany Estate, Kibera
TIME: 2.00pm – 4.30pm

Salutations

- Pastor Patrick Nyamai of DCFC;
- ABSA representative;
- Kanga Rasi - Head of Africa Region, Brave Movement;
- Corrine Ngurukie Yamo – CEO, Generation Kenya;

Congregants of this Church, our esteemed Girls present, Ladies and gentlemen;

1. Current statistics indicate that worldwide, one out of four girls is unemployed, uneducated, or untrained. This is in comparison to one in every ten boys. So, although we have reached a point where we recognize the International Day of the Girl Child, much still needs to be done to improve the lives of our girls.
2. This day is set aside annually to honor, celebrate and empower girls and young women worldwide. It is a day to acknowledge the importance, power, and potential of adolescent girls by encouraging the opening up of more opportunities for them.
3. Here in Kenya, we celebrate the day by spotlighting and taking stock of measures taken to address gender-based challenges that little girls face. These include poor learning opportunities, discrimination, child marriages, violence, and Female Genital Mutilation.
4. This year's theme **"Digital Generation, Our Generation"** is particularly significant for Kenya. We are witnessing a rapid growth and impact of technology in our society. The digital age has opened up unprecedented opportunities and new possibilities for our girls and young women.
5. On the one hand, the digital age provides them with access to education, information, and communication tools that were once unimaginable. Through the internet, girls get to

connect with peers, mentors, and role models from around the world. This enables them to expand their horizons and inspires them to reach for their dreams.

6. However, on the other hand, the digital world presents challenges for girls. Cyberbullying, online harassment, and the digital divide are just a few of the issues that hinder their progress. It is imperative that we create a safe and inclusive digital environment where girls can thrive.
7. Interesting fact. Out of the 2.2 billion people worldwide under the age of 25 who have no access to the internet, the majority are girls. The good news is that as of 2023, the gender gap in internet usage in Kenya has narrowed significantly.
8. While exact figures on the number of girls with internet access are not readily available, the Mobile Gender Gap Report 2023 by the GSMA indicates that 39% of Kenyan women use mobile internet, up from 36% in the previous year. This is a positive trend, but there is still room for improvement.
9. Kenya has in recent years witnessed a significant growth in the number and impact of digital hubs, mostly at the Ward level. Initiatives such as the Konza Technopolis, a planned technology city, and the establishment of a total of 1,450 digital hubs across the country are aimed at fostering a vibrant digital ecosystem.
10. This ambitious project is part of the Government's initiative to promote digital literacy, create jobs, and foster innovation. While many digital hubs are already operational, the goal is to have a comprehensive network across the country to ensure widespread access to digital resources and opportunities.
11. These hubs serve as catalysts for entrepreneurship and technological advancement. They provide a collaborative environment for startups, developers, and tech enthusiasts to connect, learn, and grow.
12. Did you know that many digital hubs prioritize empowering young people with digital skills? They offer training programmes, mentorship opportunities, and access to resources that enable youth to develop innovative solutions and contribute to the digital economy. I challenge the girls in this room to ensure they frequent the hubs nearest to them.
13. Here is why. Kenyan digital hubs are increasingly collaborating with international organizations, technology companies, and academic institutions. These partnerships provide access to expertise, funding, and global markets. These hubs also nurture a thriving startup ecosystem. Many successful Kenyan startups have emerged from these hubs, demonstrating the country's potential for innovation.
14. For example, one of the well-known digital hubs in Kenya, **iHub**, provides a collaborative space for startups, developers, and entrepreneurs. Another leading tech school, Moringa school, offers courses in software development, design, and data science.

15. Overall, as the digital landscape continues to evolve, these hubs are well-positioned to shape Kenya's future as a leading technology hub in Africa. And as we embrace the digital age, we must ensure that no girl is left behind. We must ensure these hubs are operational in rural areas. We must empower girls to become digital creators, innovators, and leaders.
16. Towards this end, I urge us to prioritize the following:
- a. We must prioritize the expansion of broadband internet connectivity to reach the most remote areas of our country. This will ensure that all girls have the opportunity to access online resources and participate in the digital economy and society.
 - b. Schools, community centers, and Non-Governmental Organizations should provide girls with training in digital etiquette, including coding, programming, and online safety. This will equip them with the tools they need to navigate the digital world confidently.
 - c. We must challenge traditional gender stereotypes and encourage girls to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). These fields are vital to Kenya's economic development and offer high-paying jobs and opportunities for innovation. Girls stand a better opportunity of ascending to leadership roles with such skills.
 - d. Cyberbullying and online harassment often have a devastating impact on girls' mental health and well-being. We must strengthen and implement laws and policies to protect girls from online abuse and promote a safe and inclusive digital environment. This includes raising awareness and providing support services for 'Technologically Facilitated GBV' victims.
 - e. Providing financial and technical assistance to women entrepreneurs, we help create new opportunities for girls and women to participate in the digital economy.
17. By addressing these challenges and opportunities, we will ensure that the digital generation is truly our generation. A generation where girls have the power to shape their own destinies, contribute to the development of our Nation, and create a more equitable and just society.
18. It is our duty and responsibility to ensure that all girls in Kenya have the opportunity to fully participate in this exciting and dynamic era. By working together, we must re-commit to empowering our girls, protecting their rights, and supporting their aspirations. Together, we can build a Kenya where every girl is bold, confident and has the opportunity to reach her full potential.

In conclusion,

When we invest in digital infrastructure, promote digital literacy, encourage girls' participation in STEM fields, protect girls from online harassment, and support women-led businesses, we create a more equitable and inclusive digital future for all.

Thank you.

Hon. Harriette Chiggai,
President's Advisor on Women Rights