



JOINT COMMUNIQUE

The inaugural women in procurement and supply chain conference with more than 250 participants from 85 private and public body corporates.

Women from the Supply chain industry, hosted by the Office of the Women's Rights Advisor and the Kenya Institute of Supplies Management, met at the Lake Naivasha Resort in Naivasha, Nakuru County, from 2nd-5th 2–5, 2024. The meeting was convened to the theme “ Raising the Bar: Enhancing Inclusion, Business Opportunities, and Leadership for Women in Procurement and Supply Chain.

The conference brought together a diverse array of stakeholders, including government officials, supply chain management experts, women in business, academicians, and civil society representatives, to exchange insights, share best practices, and identify actionable recommendations. Building upon the discussions and outcomes of the conference, we hereby present the following statement that will help the country raise the bar in procurement and supply chain management.

We, the women in procurement and supply chain management, acknowledging the strides we have made in the industry and noting the government's fight against corruption, we call upon state agencies to support women's economic empowerment by working alongside His Excellency the President's call on zero tolerance to corruption.

In the spirit of the 2/3rd Gender Rule provided for by the Constitution of Kenya 2010, we call for all boards to increase the representation of qualified women in procurement and supply chain management on boards.

We equally ask the government to develop an AGPO policy that entails crafting a comprehensive strategy to realize the program's overarching goals. This policy will offer directives on executing the program's long-term objectives effectively.

We acknowledge that most of the communication channels used (Public Procurement Information Portal (PPIP), newspapers, notice boards, and institution websites) are inaccessible to women in rural areas, we therefore urge the government to use all means to ensure that women in rural areas have access to the information required for them to fully participate in the supply chain industry.

We ask the government to increase the budget allocation for financial institutions such as the Women Enterprise Fund that specialize in providing loans to women and female youth, thereby augmenting the available funds. In addition, the government should track the uptake of the Hustler fund with the view of increasing the allocations for women entrepreneurs.

As the office charged with advocating for women's rights in all sectors, we call upon the Office of the Women's Rights Advisor to advocate for

- 1) The implementation of policies that promote gender diversity and inclusivity in business, particularly in procurement and supply chain roles.
- 2) Budgetary allocation to include funds for research and development to close the gap on missing data challenges within the supply chain industry.
- 3) Payment of AGPO suppliers within 60 days of invoice receipt in compliance with the Public Procurement and Disposal Asset Regulations, 2020.
- 4) The digitization of tender documentation to facilitate the seamless completion of documents by AGPO groups.

- 5) Conduct a comprehensive review of existing policies and legislation, ensuring they are updated to accommodate and regulate advancements in technology.
- 6) Ensure the provision of adequate social protection measures for women, for example, the provision of creches in all organizations, mental wellness and menstrual and menopausal leave.

Noting the unique challenges that women face especially sexual harassment in awarding of tenders, we ask the office of the Women's Rights Advisor to push for sexual harassment policies in all public and private entities. This will allow women to compete on a level playing field and make the Supply Chain Industry safe for women, youth and PWDs.

While Kenya has policies that have attempted to address the challenges that women face especially through AGPO, we urge the government to make a requirement that all entities make annual gender-segregated data to the office of the women's Rights advisor on big-ticket tenders offered. This will help us track the 30% AGPO allocation and eventually push it to a higher percentage.

As industry players, we commit

To create mentorship and training programs tailored to the needs of women in procurement and supply chain management, providing them with the necessary skills and guidance to excel in their careers.

To foster a conducive environment for women by providing access to resources, networks, and funding opportunities.

To ensure ethical sourcing practices and adherence to labor rights, environmental standards, and corporate social responsibility principles across supply chains.

To encourage transparency and accountability in supplier selection processes and foster partnerships with ethical suppliers and stakeholders.

To embrace emerging technologies, such as blockchain, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things (IoT), to enhance transparency, efficiency, and traceability in procurement and supply chain operations.

To invest in digital infrastructure, skills development, and innovation hubs to foster a culture of innovation and digital literacy among procurement professionals.

To encourage the adoption of circular economy models, green procurement criteria, and sustainable product design throughout the procurement lifecycle.

