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# EMPowerHer



2026

*Empowering Women. Shaping Policy. Driving Change.*

# Chair's Remarks

March, recognized as International Women's Month under the theme "Give to Gain," provided a strong platform to advance women's leadership and gender equality. Kenya's women legislators used this period to drive key legislative and policy actions across economic growth, healthcare, governance, and environmental sustainability, demonstrating that inclusive leadership delivers practical results.

In Parliament, women leaders advanced bills and motions that strengthen accountability, expand opportunity, and respond to citizen needs. A key emphasis was on elections and women's political participation, ensuring women play a central role in decision-making and governance processes.

At the community level, Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) initiatives convened women, youth, and persons with disabilities in Homa Bay through targeted workshops. Participants in micro and macro enterprises built capacity in financial management, enterprise development, and public participation, enhancing their ability to access opportunities and engage in budgeting processes.

The KEWOPA Strategic Plan Midterm Review provided an opportunity to assess progress and refine priorities. Focus areas now align with critical and emerging issues, including the care economy, climate change, and gender-responsive governance, strengthening delivery and positioning the Secretariat to achieve measurable outcomes by 2027.

Engagements on maternal and newborn health, alongside gender-responsive budgeting, reinforced the need for stronger accountability and oversight, particularly in bridging the gap between policy commitments and service delivery.

Going forward, KEWOPA will prioritize implementation, strengthen legislative influence, and deepen partnerships to ensure sustained impact across women's political participation, economic empowerment, the care economy, and climate action.



Hon. Leah Sankaire, MP  
Chairperson, KEWOPA

# Bunge Highlights

## Driving Change Through Action: Women Legislators at Work

In March, during International Women's Month, this highlights summary captures how Kenya's women legislators are transforming the policy landscape through decisive action and thoughtful leadership. Their work brings attention to pressing issues, strengthens accountability, and ensures that governance reflects the needs of all citizens. By championing meaningful reforms, they are shaping a future where public policies are more inclusive, equitable, and responsive to society.



### **Hon. Irene Mayaka - Sports (Amendment) Bill (NA)**

The Sports (Amendment) Bill (National Assembly Bill No. 5 of 2026), sponsored by Irene Mayaka, was introduced for First Reading in the National Assembly on March 11, 2026, marking the formal start of its legislative journey. The Bill seeks to amend Kenya's existing sports law to strengthen governance and accountability within sports organizations, enhance athlete welfare through better protections and standards, and improve the regulation and management of sports federations. It also aims to address persistent challenges in the sector such as mismanagement of funds, weak institutional oversight, and gaps in talent development systems, positioning it as a key reform effort to professionalize and modernize the country's sports ecosystem.



### **Hon. Hamida Kibwana – Nuts and Oil Crops Development Bill, 2023**

This Bill, currently at the Committee of the Whole House stage, aims to formalize and strengthen the nuts and oil crops value chain in Kenya by providing a regulatory and institutional framework for production, processing, and marketing. Notably, it integrates gender inclusion by proposing the two-thirds gender rule in board appointments, while also creating economic opportunities for farmers, especially women in agribusiness.



### **Hon. Karen Nyamu – Autism Management Bill, 2025**

The Bill, currently at the Committee Stage, focuses on establishing a structured national framework for autism care, including early diagnosis, access to therapy, public awareness, and institutional support systems. It addresses critical gaps in healthcare and education by advocating for standardized interventions and support for families, promoting inclusion and dignity for persons living with autism.

# Bunge Highlights



## **Hon. Veronica Maina - Motion on Mainstreaming Gender Perspectives in Legislative and Policy Processes.**

This motion anchors itself on Article 27 of the Constitution, advocating for equality and non-discrimination by ensuring that all laws, policies, and budgets undergo gender analysis. It seeks to operationalize the two-thirds gender rule while addressing systemic gaps where legislation fails to respond to the specific needs of women, men, and marginalized groups, ultimately strengthening inclusive governance.



## **Statement by Hon. Tabitha Mutinda on Healthcare Urgency and the NYOTA Programme.**

Hon. Tabitha Mutinda called for the immediate resolution of issues affecting nurses, emphasizing that they are the backbone of the health sector and that without them, the country cannot secure a healthy future. She urged county leadership to act swiftly to address these concerns and safeguard the well-being of citizens. In the same breath, she commended the NYOTA programme, noting its focus on expanding employment opportunities and fostering enterprise development among Kenyans. She lauded the government's efforts, under President William Ruto, to drive economic empowerment and job creation through such initiatives.



## **Hon. Mary Wamaua - Motion on Sustainable Management and Valorization of Avocado Processing Waste**

Hon. Mary Wamaua's motion on sustainable management of avocado waste urges the government to address environmental and public health risks caused by poor disposal of processing by-products like peels, seeds, and pomace, particularly in major producing regions. It calls for a clear policy and regulatory framework, investment in waste-to-value solutions such as biogas and biofertilizers, and support for research and training, framing avocado waste as both a pollution challenge and an economic opportunity within a circular economy.

# KEWOPA Mashinani

## Advancing Economic Empowerment in Homa Bay



Access to finance and influence over budgeting remain central to expanding economic opportunities. The Strengthening Parliamentary Leadership for Transformative Action (SPALTA) Phase II workshops in Homa Bay County delivered targeted outcomes to strengthen enterprise growth and financial inclusion.

Day One focused on building business capacity among women entrepreneurs, youth, and persons with disabilities. Participants focused on strengthening financial management skills, improving understanding of savings and credit, and developing structured, growth-oriented business plans. Awareness of financing opportunities and government procurement processes increased, positioning enterprises to access formal markets.

Day Two deepened engagement on financial inclusion, policy awareness, and mentorship. Collaboration with the Institute of Public Finance (IPF) strengthened understanding of financial products and credit access.

The two day workshop aimed at strengthening the participants' understanding on Gender-Responsive Budgeting improved, alongside skills to track public expenditure and advocate for increased investment in economic empowerment.

Further, sensitization of the NPWEE policy linked enterprise development to broader policy frameworks. Public participation emerged as a key pathway for influence, with commitments to engage in local budgeting processes. Mentorship with women leaders and private sector actors strengthened networks and practical support systems.

The result is stronger capacity, informed advocacy, and improved positioning of enterprises to grow and compete.



# KEWOPA Secretariat Strategic Plan Midterm Review



The KEWOPA Secretariat held a Strategic Plan Midterm Review Workshop to evaluate progress on strategic objectives covering political leadership, legislative strengthening, gender equality, and institutional capacity. The workshop provided a platform to examine performance against key milestones, review financial management, and analyze emerging political, social, and economic trends affecting implementation of the KEWOPA SP 2023 - 2027

The secretariat engaged in thematic group discussions and conducted in-depth analyses across strategic pillars, shared findings, and identified priority areas for intervention. This process highlighted successes, gaps, and opportunities for scaling impact and improving institutional effectiveness.

The workshop also focused on strategic repositioning. The secretariat discussed aligning priorities with the evolving political landscape and donor focus areas, including climate, care economy, and gender equality initiatives. They developed a detailed action roadmap outlining responsibilities, resources, monitoring indicators, and accountability mechanisms to guide implementation for the remaining SP period.

The outcomes reaffirm the KEWOPA Secretariat's commitment to strengthening women's leadership, legislative influence, and organizational sustainability while ensuring measurable results across the country. A review with KEWOPA Members and stakeholders is scheduled to validate progress and align on next steps.



# Highlights & Engagements

## Strengthening Inclusive Budgeting

Efficient public finance systems must reflect the needs of all citizens. A two-day workshop on Gender-Responsive and Inclusive Budgeting convened stakeholders to advance more equitable and accountable budgeting processes.

In collaboration with partners including GLEM and the Girl Child Network, discussions focused on integrating gender-responsive approaches across the budget cycle, from planning to implementation and accountability.

Key priorities included stronger institutional coordination, practical tools for implementation, and improved use of data to guide resource allocation. The role of Parliament in aligning public spending with citizen needs remained central.

The workshop also reviewed draft Gender-Responsive Budgeting guidelines, contributing to more transparent and inclusive public finance systems.



*Participants listen in on gender-responsive and inclusive budgeting.*

## Advancing Maternal and Newborn Health

Progress in maternal, newborn, and adolescent health depends on systems that are trusted, accountable, and responsive. At the International Maternal Newborn Health Conference 2026 side event, policymakers and partners examined how to strengthen these systems and ensure commitments translate into real outcomes. Hon. Beatrice Elachi CBS and Hon. Bernard K. Kitur engaged stakeholders on the policy and financing shifts required to close the gap between budget allocations and service delivery.

Hon. Elachi highlighted the need for practical systems that reflect lived realities, including support for mothers balancing illness and caregiving. She also stressed the importance of building trust with adolescents through safe, youth-friendly spaces that uphold dignity and inclusion.

Hon. Kitur pointed to gaps in facility-level tracking, weak enforcement mechanisms, and limited parliamentary follow-up after budget approval. A consistent message emerged: sustainable financing, effective oversight, and inclusive systems are critical to improving outcomes for mothers, newborns, and adolescents.



*Hon. Beatrice Elachi speaks on strengthening maternal and newborn health systems.*

## What Women Want Summit 4.0: Strengthening Women’s Leadership and Influence



*Hon. Crystal Asige speaks on advancing women’s leadership and influence.*

The What Women Want Summit 4.0, held under the theme “Bold, Visionary, Capable, Unstoppable,” convened women leaders, changemakers, and allies from across Kenya and beyond to engage on leadership, resilience, and the power of vulnerability. During the opening ceremony, Crystal Asige called for unity over division, mentorship over rivalry, and collective empowerment among women to drive change.

At the closing plenary, KEWOPA Executive Director Mercy Mwangi delivered a keynote on “Delivering What Women Want,” focusing on the role of Parliament and women parliamentarians in advancing women’s priorities. She noted that women leaders are positioned to translate women’s needs into policy and action.

In closing, she emphasized the need for women leaders to stay connected to communities and to advocate boldly for laws, resources, and accountability that deliver impact.

## Advancing Women’s Leadership: Highlights from the 2026 Women Legislators Conference

Women’s leadership and representation are essential for inclusive governance and effective decision-making. At the Women Legislators Conference 2026 convened by the County Assemblies Forum (CAF), KEWOPA joined women leaders from across the country to address opportunities and challenges in leadership. Key issues included personal branding, cyberbullying, the impact of AI in the digital space, and limited access to financing. Leaders emphasized self-belief, use of technology, creation of platforms, and active participation in public forums. Hon. Susan Ngugi urged women to stand out, serve diligently, and amplify their voices, noting that the time for women’s leadership is now. The conference reaffirmed affirmative action as a right to address barriers and called on all 47 County Assemblies to advance legislation that strengthens women’s participation and representation, including in committees. Hon. Pamela Njoki Njeru and Controller of Budget Margaret Nyakango emphasized the need for gender-responsive budgeting. Participants were challenged to focus on impact, navigate the political space with confidence, and drive change.



*Hon. Susan Ngugi speaks at the women legislators conference.*

## Advancing Gender Parity: KEWOPA Highlights the Role of Policy and Perception



*Panelists discuss progress and challenges in achieving gender parity in Kenya.*

Kenya’s progress toward gender equality in political representation remains steady but incomplete. At a panel on the Gender Scorecard and Two-Thirds Gender Rule, hosted by the Association of Media Women in Kenya and the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, KEWOPA Legal Fellow Daniel Murakaru urged stakeholders to address both policy and perception. Women’s representation in Parliament has reached 23%, below the constitutional threshold, while countries like Rwanda have surpassed the two-thirds benchmark. Murakaru emphasized the media’s role in highlighting the achievements of women leaders, from legislation to community initiatives, to reshape public perception and foster support for gender parity. Elevating women’s leadership visibility is critical to dismantling stereotypes, building public trust, and advancing the two-thirds gender rule.



### Kenya's Legislators Are Among the Leading Parliamentarians Across Africa Championing the Fight to Save Mothers and Newborns.

Members of Parliament from Kenya are at the forefront of efforts across Africa to improve maternal and newborn health. Hon. Benard Kitur (MP, Nandi Hills) and Hon. Beatrice Elachi (MP, Dagoretti North) joined fellow legislators and health leaders on 24 March 2026 for a high-level parliamentary side event held alongside the International Maternal and Newborn Health Conference (IMNHC) in Nairobi. Convened at the sidelines of the IMNHC conference, SASA Alliance and partners, hosted this side event titled Shaping the Future of MNCH: Country-Led Policy and Financing Dialogue—brought together MPs, government commissioners, civil society leaders, and health advocates from seven Sub-Saharan African countries, placing parliamentary leadership at the centre of discussions on reducing preventable maternal and newborn deaths.

During the session, key findings emerged: across participating countries, the problem is not the absence of policy or funding—it is the failure to deliver. Approved health budgets are not reaching service delivery points. Facilities run out of medicines. Maternity wards operate without reliable supplies. And mothers pay the price. In Kenya alone, an estimated 15 mothers and 92 newborns die every single day. Domestic health financing averages just 4–8% of national budgets, well below the 15% commitment outlined in the Abuja Declaration. These are not abstract statistics—they represent a systems failure that parliaments have both the mandate and the power to address.

#### What Parliaments Must Do

Parliamentarians at the dialogue emphasized that the legislature has a critical and underutilized role in closing this delivery gap. Three immediate priorities were identified: scrutinizing health budget execution, not just approvals, to ensure timely disbursement; championing the ring-fencing of MNCH and family planning allocations within national budgets; and legislating for civil society participation in accountability processes so that communities can hold governments to their commitments.

#### A Call to Action

Parliaments must move from passing commitments to enforcing them. As Hon. Beatrice Elachi noted, “Devolution and decentralization have added complexity to health service delivery — and it is the legislature that must ensure no county, no community, and no one is left behind.”

The SASA Alliance invites parliamentary champions across its seven countries—Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Uganda—to translate the dialogue's commitments into legislative action. Mothers and newborns cannot afford another cycle of pledges with



Accountability failure occurs between budget approval and execution particularly cash disbursement, grants tracking, and facility-level autonomy.

Hon. Benard Kitur  
Nandi Hills Constituency MP.



Society often judges women and men differently but true leadership means focusing on results and not on stereotypes.

Hon. Linnet Chepkorir,  
Bomet County MP.



Devolution and decentralization have added complexity to health service delivery and it is the legislature that must ensure no county, no community, and no one is left behind.

Hon. Beatrice Elachi  
Dagoretti North Constituency MP.



There is urgent need to reform recruitment processes to guarantee fair, inclusive and meaningful opportunities for persons with disabilities. The outdated and discriminatory requirements continue to unjustly exclude capable individuals. The arbitrary standards must be reviewed to reflect equity, dignity and inclusion.

Hon. Gladys Boss  
Uasin-Gishu County MP.



Democracy is strongest when women's voices are not the exception but the norm.

Mercy Mwangi  
KEWOPA ED



Leadership for many women begins with the community asking what will bring real change to people's lives.

Hon. Phylis Bartoo  
Moiben Constituency MP.



Business is a journey of learning and growth; the right guidance and planning can turn challenges into opportunities. Today's knowledge empowers me to not only improve my business but also share these lessons with others

Mary Atieno  
Resident, Homabay County



Women make up nearly half of the global population, yet hold only about 27.5% of parliamentary seats worldwide

## Member Spotlight

### HON. PROF. PHYLIS BARTOO: DRIVING EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Hon. (Prof) Phylis Jepkemoi Bartoo is a Kenyan legislator and scholar, currently serving as the MP for Moiben Constituency in the 13th Parliament of the Republic of Kenya. She is also a member of the Executive Committee of the Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA). She's an active member of both the Departmental Committee on Education and Research and the House Rules and Regulations Committee, where she plays a vital role in legislative oversight, policy development, and enhancing parliamentary governance.

Driven by her passion for education and research, Prof. Bartoo advocates for policies that expand access to quality education and promote solutions rooted in research. Her academic background allows her to turn knowledge into action, crafting legislation that addresses pressing societal needs and fosters inclusive national development.

In Moiben Constituency, her education-focused initiatives have led to tangible results. She has launched a school lunch program aimed at schools in informal settlements, significantly improving attendance, retention, and concentration in classrooms for children from vulnerable households. Additionally, through NG-CDF, she has uplifted many schools by building modern facilities such as libraries and laboratories, along with renovating classrooms, ensuring that learners have a conducive environment for their education. Prof. Bartoo also ensures that bursaries are distributed fairly across all wards, making education support accessible and helping to bridge gaps among learners in the area.

Her work goes beyond just education. She strongly believes in empowerment and inclusion. Through the #BonganaBartoo Youth Programme, she provides youth groups and individual entrepreneurs with essential business materials and seed funding, helping them to generate income and achieve self-reliance. Alongside fellow women parliamentarians, she spearheads the #WezeshamamalnuaJamii Programme, which empowers women across Moiben Constituency, boosting household incomes and community resilience.

Hon. Bartoo, has worked to create job opportunities and promote rural electrification and improved road networks, making it easier for women, young people, and persons with disabilities to participate in the economy and enhance their livelihoods.



**Hon. Phylis Bartoo**  
MP, Moiben Constituency

# Snapshots



We extend our sincere appreciation to our esteemed partners for their invaluable support, collaboration, and commitment.

**United Nations Agencies**

UN Women

**Government Institutions and State Agencies**

Parliament of Kenya, State Department of Gender, National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC)

**Development Partners and Bilateral Agencies**

Global Affairs Canada, Royal Danish Embassy

**Research and Policy Institutions**

Institute of Public Finance (IPF), African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs (ACEPA), Centre for Parliamentary Studies (CPST)

**Civil Society Organizations and Networks**

Uraia, CREAM, ICJ, FIDA, Centre for Multiparty Democracy (CMD), CRAWN Trust, Health NGOs Network (HENNET), ELGIA Africa

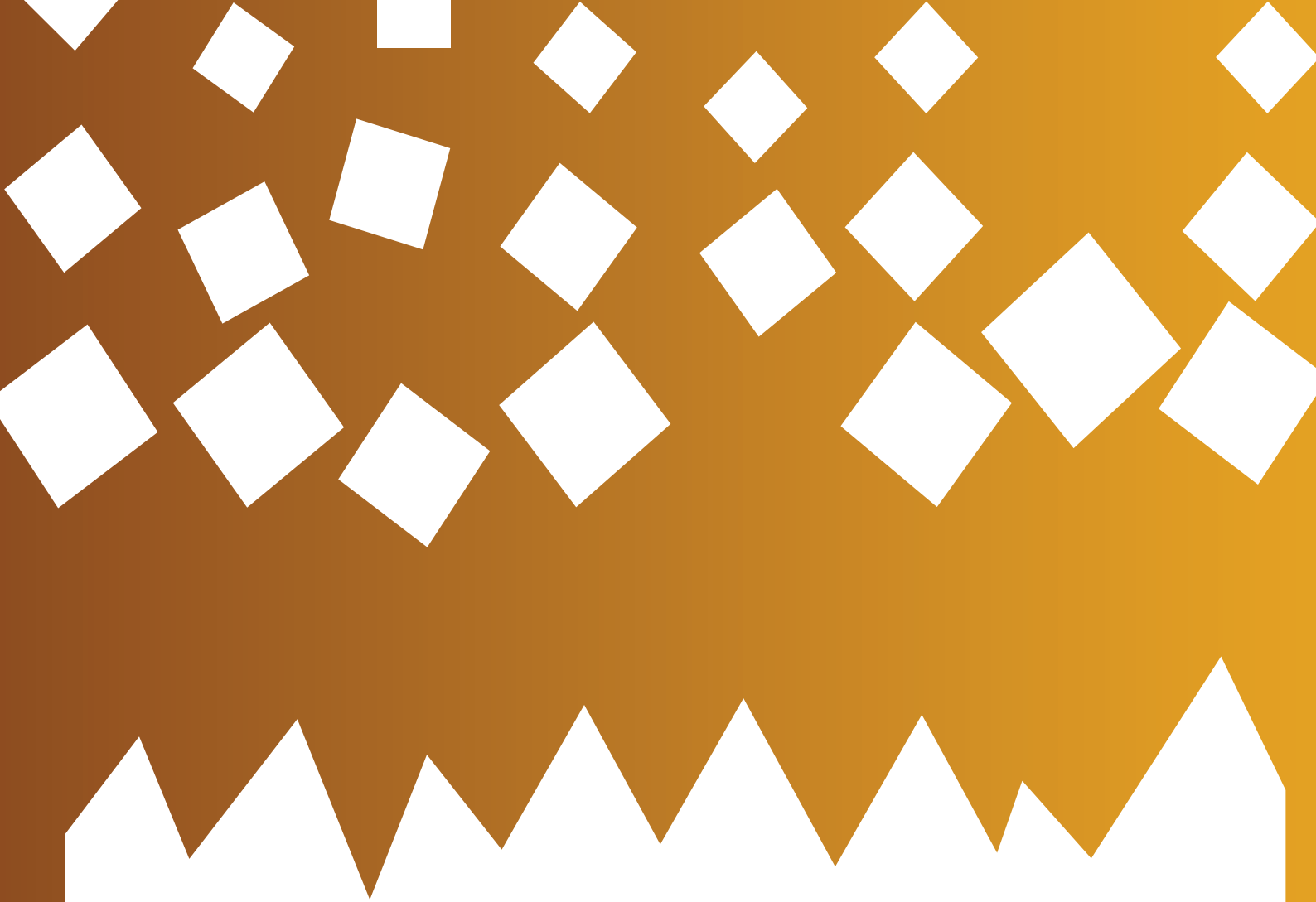
**Professional Associations / Parliamentary Caucuses**

Kenya Paediatric Association, Kenya Young Parliamentarians Association (KYPA)

**International NGOs and Implementing Partners**

Oxfam, Journalists for Human Rights (JHR), Jhpiego, Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD-Kenya), Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS)

We value each partnership and remain committed to strengthening these collaborations in advancing our shared goals.



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