

**KENYATTA UNIVERSITY**



**Remarks**

**By**

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**Launch of the Campaign against  
Gender Based Violence &  
Sexual Harassment**

**Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2015**

-  **Deputy Vice-Chancellors;**
-  **Members of Senate;**
-  **Directors;**
-  **Staff;**
-  **KUSA Executive;**
-  **Students Present;**
-  **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

### **Good Morning.**

I am happy to join you today during the launch of this campaign to mark the campaign for eliminating Sexual Harassment and Gender Based Violence from Kenyatta University. We need to explore varied ways of “Creating safe spaces” that can protect the dignity and integrity of male and female students as well as staff. On behalf of the University, I wish to congratulate all participants who are in attendance; it is an indication of your commitment to eradicating this vice.

Gender Based Violence and Sexual Harassment are a gross violation of human rights. It is a multifaceted phenomenon with disastrous consequences upon men, women and girls and boys. Gender Based Violence and Sexual Harassment endangers people's health, survival and dignity. The social and economic costs occasioned by Gender Based Violence and Sexual Harassment place a substantial burden on society as a whole by significantly affecting development.

Therefore, preventing Sexual and Gender Based violence is a pathway that determines achievement of Kenya's Economic blue print, Vision 2030 as well as helping Kenyatta University to attain its goals of creating safe spaces for all. The learning institutions and the work place, being gendered spaces can also be an arena of violence.

Ladies and gentlemen there is no doubt that Gender Based Violence and Sexual Harassment has a negative impact on learning. Other consequences of Gender Based Violence and Sexual Harassment include disrupted education; absenteeism, school dropout, emotional or behavioral disorder and risk to health.

I acknowledge that violence against men and sexual harassment is on the increase in the society and at Kenyatta University as well. All forms of Gender Based Violence and Sexual Harassment are prohibited at Kenyatta University.

Like other countries in the world, Kenya's efforts to combat gender-based violence and sexual harassment are anchored on various international and regional instruments including the International Convention on the Elimination of all Form of

Discrimination Against Women, the Sexual Offences Act (2006) the Employment Act (2007) among others. The Government has also taken legislative policy and programmatic steps such as the long term development blue print, Vision 2030 which, among other key factors, recognizes that gender based violence should be addressed in order to reduce vulnerabilities.

In line with this, Kenyatta University developed a Policy on Sexual and Gender Based Violence in 2007 which was revised in 2013. The policy which is based on the principles of gender equity, equality respect for human dignity and non-discrimination aims at creating, a conducive learning and working environment for Kenyatta University community of staff and students. It proposes interventions of prevention, creating awareness and response to the vice and reporting mechanisms. The Centre for

Gender Equity and Empowerment has been mandated by the University management to implement the policy and contribute to making Kenyatta University a safe space for all.

Despite these efforts, there are a number of notable gaps which continue to hamper the fight against gender based violence and sexual harassment. Cases of sexual harassment between staff and students and among students are on the increase. It has also emerged that women are not the only victims of Gender Based Violence and Sexual Harassment, even male students and staff are being sexually harassed and abused. Men too are victims of many forms of violence primarily through other men.

We must remember that Sexual and gender based Violence affects the entire life cycle of women and men. At any point in their live they can be subjected to forms of violence such as the threat of sexual

assault, rape or incest. While boys are also at risk, the possibility that girls are raped or sexually assaulted is much higher than it is for their brothers. Furthermore, those inflicting violence on men and women are as diverse as are the opportunities to abuse. The perpetrators can be family members, those in positions of trust or power, or even strangers. Often women are confronted with interdependent and cumulative patterns of violence, when physical, economic and emotional forms of violence reinforce each other.

The fear of violence, including harassment, is not only a permanent strain on the self-esteem and confidence of women and men, it also negatively influences their mobility and access to resources, as well as their basic social, educational, economic and political activities. Violence against women and men has an intergenerational impact.

Indeed, men who witness and experience violence as children are more likely to use violence against their own spouses or children. By the same token, women who witness and experience abuse as children are more likely to become victims in their adult life.

Ladies and Gentlemen; Kenyatta University is resolutely committed to improving prevention and response to sexual and gender based violence through administration and implementation of the SGBV Policy.

The elimination of Gender Based Violence and Sexual Harassment cannot be successfully achieved without deliberate and conscious efforts to involve men and boys in prevention and response efforts. This is because Gender equality cannot be achieved by exclusive efforts



Through this launch this; I want to reiterate that Kenyatta University has a policy of zero tolerance to Sexual Harassment and Gender Based Violence. I want to inform all staff and students that perpetrators of sexual harassment and violence will be disciplined according to the existing policy. To the victims and survivors, I appeal to you to break the silence. Be assured that the University cares about you and does not condone sexual harassment and violence. However, through silence, you protect the perpetrator and abet the vice. To everyone, know that you have a responsibility to expose any form of abuse, you witness. We shall ensure that confidentiality is maintained in the process of responding to sexual harassment and violence. We also have mechanisms to rehabilitate the perpetrator.

I will end with the often quoted phrase that “All it

requires for evil to prosper is for good 'men' to say nothing.”

With these remarks, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is now my pleasure to launch the Kenyatta University Campaign against Sexual Harassment and Gender Based Violence.

May you all promote zero tolerance to sexual harassment and Gender based violence.

**Thank You.**