

**Executive Director, Gender and Disability
Development Centre,**

Vice Chancellors,

**Managing Directors and CEOs from different
Institutions,**

Public and Private sector employers,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and gentlemen

Good evening,

I am honored and privileged to join you tonight as we celebrate the 9th Annual Equality and Inclusion Awards.

Let me begin by commending the Gender and Disability Development Centre and your partners, for organizing this remarkable event and finding it useful to bring together Government and private sector stakeholders, to reflect on the achievements made on gender and disability mainstreaming in public and private workplaces.

I believe this is the beginning of the appreciation process for institutionalizing Gender Equality and Disability friendly and responsive policies.

Tonight, we celebrate excellence, resilience, and inclusivity—values that define our shared vision for a better Kenya. As we honor the achievements of organizations that have championed equality and inclusion, let us also reflect on some of our nation's strides in advancing gender equity and disability inclusion.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Government's commitment to disability inclusion is equally steadfast, recognizes the invaluable contributions of persons with disabilities, and is determined to ensure their full and equal participation in society. Kenya's Constitution remains a beacon of hope, with its categorical commitment to gender equality under Article 27 and disability inclusion under Article 54.

The Persons with Disabilities Act of 2003 provides a legal framework for the rights and welfare of persons with disabilities. The Act has been reviewed to align with the Constitution of Kenya, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the realities of the present times. ~~The Persons with Disabilities Bill, 2023 when passed into law, will transform the disability agenda in our country.~~ In addition, the State Department has finalized the development of a Persons with Disabilities National Policy, which will provide strategy direction, services, and programmes for persons with

disabilities, while according to them an inclusive environment conducive for the enjoyment of their right to life, freedoms, liberties, and pursuit of happiness.

Distinguished guests,

The Government has continued to implement various policies and programs that are geared towards disability inclusion and gender equality, to improve the livelihoods and economically empower persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups.

*E.g. National Development for PWD.
Special Needs Education, Inua Jamii cash transfer for PWD.*
Programs such as the National Development Fund for Persons with Disabilities support income-generating activities and skills development. *initiatives of AGPO - women & F; uwego.*

Initiatives such as the Special Needs Education program ensure that children with disabilities receive quality education tailored to their unique needs. Furthermore, partnerships with stakeholders have strengthened technical and vocational training opportunities for persons with disabilities.

The Inua Jamii cash transfer program, targeting persons with disabilities, older persons, and other vulnerable groups, continues to provide much-needed support to the vulnerable populations in our country.

The implementation of affirmative action measures has increased the representation of women in political, economic, and social leadership. Through initiatives such as the Women Enterprise Fund, Uwezo Fund, and the Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) program, the Government has enabled thousands of women to access financial resources, build businesses, and contribute meaningfully to the economy.

I am glad to note that the Government and the private sector have recognized the importance of affirmative action for vulnerable and marginalized groups within the workplace and have continued to engage the Gender and Disability Development Centre as a Professional Society to try and bridge the existing gaps and ensure equality for these groups.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In February 2018, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection established an Inter-Agency Coordination Committee (IACC) comprising state and non-state actors including organizations of Persons with Disabilities. The main role of the IACC is to promote multisector collaborative action, directed at the inclusion of disability concerns in all mainstream development policies, programmes, and projects. The State Department of Social Protection has made great progress in reporting disability inclusion initiatives through the Inter-Agency

Coordination Committee. I am happy to note that it will be celebrated and awarded today.

The progress we celebrate today would not have been possible without the collaboration of various stakeholders. Public and private institutions, civil society organizations, and international partners have played a pivotal role in advancing the gender and disability inclusion agenda. Your efforts to champion diversity, create inclusive workplaces, and advocate for equitable policies, demonstrate the power of partnerships in driving sustainable change.

Distinguished guests,

As we honor the outstanding organizations that will receive awards tonight, I urge all of us to remain steadfast in our commitment to equality and inclusion. Let us inform ourselves on what the law says about gender and disability, dismantle systemic barriers, and take an individual proactive role in ensuring not just mechanical compliance with the law, but also inculcating a culture of respect and inclusivity for all persons in national development, to ensure that no one is left behind.

I urge public and private institutions to scrutinize their human resource composition and implement measures ensuring inclusivity and equality. Together, we can build a Kenya where

every individual, regardless of gender, ability, or background, has the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

As I conclude, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the award recipients. Your dedication to fostering inclusivity and diversity is an inspiration to us all. To the Gender and Disability Development Centre, thank you for leading this important cause and for organizing this celebration of excellence.

Tonight's event inspires us to redouble our efforts toward creating a just, inclusive, and equitable society.

Lastly, I take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a prosperous year 2025.

Thank you, and God bless.