

## **H.E. AMB. JEAN KAMAU PARTICIPATES IN THE DIRCO WOMEN'S MONTH WEBINAR "GENERATION EQUALITY: REALISING WOMEN'S RIGHTS FOR AN EQUAL FUTURE"**

HE Amb. Jean Kamau was among guest speakers at the just concluded DIRCO Women's Month Webinar "Generation Equality: Realising Women's Rights for an Equal Future" on Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

The event that took place from 11:00 – 12:00 CAT was hosted by South Africa's Minister for International Relations and Cooperation, Dr Grace Naledi Mandisa Pandor. Other speakers at the event included HE Ms Candith Mashego-Dlamini, Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, HE Mairin Moreno, Ambassador of the Republic of Venezuela in South Africa, and HE Liubov Abravitova, Ambassador of Ukraine in South Africa.

This Webinar formed part of a series of activities marking the Women's Month in the Republic of South Africa.

The event highlighted the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic is having, particularly in relation to the reported increase in domestic violence and abuse.

The event also shone a spotlight on efforts aimed at overcoming the social and economic fallout of COVID-19, paying specific attention on the measures to support and protect women.

In her statement Amb Jean Kamau stated that at the centre of safeguarding Generation equality is a strong effective legal framework anchored in a progressive rights based constitution. Generation equality demands equal pay, equal sharing of unpaid caser and an end of sexual violence and all forms of violence against women and girls, access to health care and services that respond to women's reproductive health needs. Most importantly is the legal right to equal participation in political life. Strong legal frameworks that provide the constitutional frameworks and safeguards for equality accompanied by statutory legislation, national plans matched by adequate budgets and institutional frameworks that effectively deliver measures and interventions that ensure gender equality.

She shared the Kenya Governments recent efforts towards Gender equality, through the adoption of the Kenya National Gender and Development Policy in 2019. The goal of the policy is to "achieve gender equality and women's empowerment in national development so as to enhance participation of women and men, boys and girls, vulnerable and marginalized groups for the attainment of sustainable development". The policy sets, legislative and administrative measures to address the existing gaps in the realization of gender equality and women's empowerment.

Despite Kenya having a progressive Constitution that promotes gender equality and women's empowerment, gender inequality remains a key issue of concern in Kenya. The patriarchal social order supported by statutory, religious and customary laws and practices; and the administrative and procedural mechanisms for accessing rights have continued to hamper the goal of attaining gender equality and women's empowerment. Progressive provisions in law have not delivered gender equality in practice raising the need to develop a policy that addresses the variety of manifestations of gender discrimination and inequality.

On the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Amb Kamau noted that the lockdown measures have also curtailed access of much needed assistance to Refugee and IDP camps, where health and social facilities are already very precarious. Women, girls and children make up the majority in these situations and all efforts must be made to protect them. Women must also be involved actively and engaged fully in post COVID-19 reconstruction of communities and societies.

Foreign Minister Naledi Pandor in her remarks stated, "I think that including non-discrimination and equality in our constitution is a vital element in ensuring that Women's empowerment is kept top of the agenda"

Pretoria

17<sup>th</sup> August 2020