



THE JUDICIARY

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE AND PRESIDENT
OF THE SUPREME COURT OF KENYA

HONOURABLE CHIEF JUSTICE'S REMARKS DURING THE LAUNCH OF ECHO NETWORK AFRICA FOUNDATION – 6TH MARCH 2025

Members of the ENAF Board, Past and Present,

Honourable Cabinet Secretaries,

Honourable Governors and Deputy Governors,

**Honourable Members of the National Assembly,
Senate, and County Assemblies,**

The Great Women of Kenya,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon!

1. It is an absolute honour to stand with you today for the launch of Echo Network Africa Foundation (ENAF).
2. For over four decades, ENAF has been a trailblazer — shaping the future for women, amplifying their voices, and breaking barriers to create a society where girls and women don't just exist, but **thrive and lead**. Your relentless dedication to building a truly inclusive world, where **women claim their rightful place in every sphere of life**, deserves nothing less than celebration and applause.
3. The launch of Echo Network Africa Foundation (ENAF) marks a significant milestone in our **collective journey** towards achieving a more equal society where women and girls are empowered and enjoy their rights fully. I am confident that this launch is not just a celebration of progress made in empowering women but also a commitment to ensuring that women have tools

and necessary support to fully participate in all spheres of life.

4. It is heartening to know that the launch of ENAF is the beginning of a **long-term vision of expanding, scaling, and replicating the models of development** that the organization has employed to transform the lives of women and girls in Kenya and other countries in Africa.
5. Across the African continent, women and girls continue to face profound challenges that demand **bold action** — now. Shockingly, **nearly half of all women in Sub-Saharan Africa**, a **staggering 45%**, endure gender-based violence at some point in their lives. This is not just a statistic — it's a call to action.
6. That is why the launch of Echo Network Africa Foundation (ENAF) couldn't be more timely. ENAF is more than just an initiative — it's a powerful force driving the movement for women's

empowerment across Africa. It's a **beacon of hope, a catalyst for progress, and a vital piece of the puzzle** in building a future where every woman and girl can thrive.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. We all acknowledge that women and girls have been playing critical roles in shaping the development of our societies in Kenya, Africa, and the world generally. Their contributions span economic growth, governance, education, science, health, and social progress. Despite historical and systemic challenges, women have consistently demonstrated resilience, leadership, and innovation in driving positive changes politically, socially, and economically.
8. This means that recognition, support, and investment in women's empowerment is not just a moral imperative but also **a strategic move**

towards a more equitable and prosperous Africa and world.

9. Indeed, by removing barriers and opening up opportunities for women and girls, we can harness the full potential of half of our population, ensuring a brighter future for our country, continent, and the world. Therefore, women's empowerment and progress is progress for all of us – **when women thrive, nations flourish.**

10. Many of the critical building blocks for broadening opportunities for women and girls have been put in place. This means that the playing field has become significantly levelled and we are presently witnessing an increasing number of trailblazing women in public and corporate sectors. A new generation of women is presently redefining the heights that women and girls can scale in all sectors at national, regional, and global levels.

11. Right here in Kenya, we've witnessed history in the making. Women now hold pivotal leadership positions — from the Chief Justice and Deputy Chief Justice to the Chief Registrar of the Judiciary, President of the Law Society and, for the first time, the Attorney General. The 2022 elections gave us seven women Governors, up from just three in 2017 — a clear sign that **progress, though hard-fought, is possible**. These achievements are groundbreaking, inspiring, and incomparable.

12. But let's be clear — while these milestones deserve celebration, they are not enough. Progress has been uneven, painfully slow, and in many cases, **symbolic rather than substantive**. True empowerment is not about a few ticking box initiatives — it's about **tearing down the systemic barriers and deep-rooted inequalities** that have held women back for generations.

13. We must build a society where women thrive — where they have equal access to opportunities, resources, and leadership. We must be vigilant in safeguarding the hard-won gains made towards gender equality, and we must remain relentless in protecting women from all forms of violence — including the growing threat of technology-facilitated abuse. **The time for half-measures and token gestures is over.** The future we want — one where women and girls live free, thrive, and lead — is within our grasp. ENAF is here to help us build it, and together, we will make it happen.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

14. The work of ENAF will be pivotal in unlocking a future where African women not only realise social justice, but also rise as empowered changemakers — living fulfilled lives as active, valued, and indispensable members of society. ENAF's mission is not just about women — it's about building

stronger, more just, and more prosperous communities for all.

15. That's why it's our collective responsibility to rally behind ENAF — to support, amplify, and champion its vision and mission. When ENAF succeeds, millions of women across Africa succeed. And when women succeed, societies flourish, economies grow, and the entire continent rises.

16. In closing, let me remind us all — the future of women and girls in Kenya, across Africa, and around the world is not just their fight, it's our collective responsibility. Each of us holds a stake in shaping that future. **Together, we must create an environment where women are not just invited to the table, but where they lead boldly and participate fully in every sphere of life** — from politics to business, from innovation to community leadership, from science to the military.

17. Women's empowerment is not just about fairness — it's about unlocking the full potential of half of humanity. It's about driving progress, building stronger economies, healthier societies, and more just communities. And most importantly, it's about ensuring that the next generation grows up in a world where gender is not a barrier to success — but a wellspring of strength, resilience, and inspiration.

Thank you. God bless you all.

Hon. Justice Martha K. Koome, EGH
Chief Justice and President of the Supreme Court
of Kenya
