



Multi-stakeholder Meeting to Combat Online Harassment of Women Human Rights Defenders and Women Politicians in Kenya

25th-27th October 2023

Background

The rise of digital platforms and social media has provided numerous opportunities for women human rights defenders (WHRDs) and women politicians in Kenya to raise awareness, advocate for their causes, and mobilize support. However, they face specific challenges related to online harassment, threats, and gender-based violence, undermining their safety, well-being, and effectiveness. Currently, online harassment is on a high level in Kenya. Recognizing the urgency and importance of addressing these issues, a multistakeholder meeting is being convened to bring together state representatives, WHRDs, women politicians, and tech sector platforms to develop strategies to combat online harassment in Kenya collectively .

Objectives

The main objectives of the multistakeholder meeting are as follows:

- To assess the current landscape of online harassment and gender-based violence faced by women human rights defenders and women politicians in Kenya.
- To identify the underlying factors contributing to online harassment and analyse their impact on WHRDs' and women politicians' ability to carry out their work effectively.
- To share best practices and innovative approaches from tech sector platforms, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to mitigate online harassment and promote the empowerment of women.
- To develop a comprehensive strategy and action plan that outlines practical steps for preventing and responding to online harassment of WHRDs and women politicians in Kenya, including potential suggestions for new regulation and policies.
- To foster collaboration and partnerships among state representatives, WHRDs, women politicians, and tech sector platforms for sustained efforts in combating online harassment and promoting gender equality.

Participants

The multistakeholder meeting will involve the following participants:

- State Representatives: Government officials from relevant ministries, including representatives from the Ministry of ICT, Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, Ministry of Public Service, Gender and Affirmative Action , and Office of the Attorney General and Department of Justice.
- Women Human Rights Defenders: Representatives from women's rights organizations, human rights defenders working on gender issues, and WHRDs who have experienced online harassment.



- Women Politicians: Elected women representatives, political party representatives, and women politicians advocating for gender equality and women's rights.
- Tech Sector Platforms: Representatives from major social media platforms, online service providers, and tech companies operating in Kenya.
- Civic-Tech organisations: Representatives from the start-up community in Kenya focusing on building social media platforms.
- Influencers/content creators with more than 100k following
- Academia, persons from universities and think tanks focusing on digitalisation and human rights.
- Civil Society Organizations: Representatives from DanChurchAid's Partners in Kenya, local and international civil society organizations working on women's rights, digital rights, and online safety.
- International Partners: Representatives from international organizations, donor agencies, and diplomats supporting initiatives related to women's rights, online safety, and gender equality.

Meeting Structure and Agenda

The multistakeholder meeting will be conducted over a period of two days. The agenda will be structured to allow for meaningful discussions, sharing of experiences, and development of concrete strategies.

Deliverables

The following deliverables are expected to be achieved through the multistakeholder meeting:

- A comprehensive strategy and action plan outlining practical steps for preventing and responding to online harassment of WHRDs and women politicians in Kenya. This plan should incorporate legal, policy, and socio-cultural dimensions and consider the unique needs and perspectives of these women.
- Enhanced understanding of the specific challenges faced by WHRDs and women politicians in the digital space and in public life, including online harassment, threats, and gender-based violence.
- Increased collaboration and partnerships between state representatives, WHRDs, women politicians, and tech sector platforms to combat online harassment effectively and promote the empowerment of women.
- Increased awareness and capacity of all stakeholders to address online harassment and promote gender equality through shared knowledge, best practices, and innovative approaches.



Reporting and Follow-up

Following the meeting, a short report will be prepared, documenting the discussions, outcomes, and recommendations. The report will be shared with all participants and relevant stakeholders for feedback and further action. A dedicated working group comprising representatives from state institutions, WHRDs, women politicians, tech sector platforms, and civil society organizations will be established to oversee the implementation of the strategy and action plan, with regular progress updates and evaluations.

The draft strategy and action plan coming out of the conference would be a potential contribution to the 2023 UN Social Forum that takes place on 2 and 3 November 23 and UN IGF 23 from 8–12 Oct 2023.

Furthermore, recommendations could also be shared at the Future Summit in 2024 and thereby contribute to the Digital Global Compact.

Confidentiality

All participants are expected to adhere to principles of confidentiality and data protection during the multistakeholder meeting. Sensitive information shared by participants should not be disclosed without the consent of the relevant individuals or organizations.