



PRESS RELEASE

NAIROBI, 6 MAY 2022

We MUST ENSURE Gender Equality in the August 2022 General Elections

The Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA-Kenya) is a non-governmental, non-partisan, non-profit making organization established in 1985 with a mission to promote women's individual and collective power to claim their rights in all spheres of life. FIDA-Kenya is a membership organization with over 1,500 women lawyers and law students committed to the creation of a society that is free from all forms of discrimination against women in Kenya. The organization works towards addressing challenges facing women's access to their social, political, and economic rights.

FIDA-Kenya has been working in a collaborative program with other partners to advance **SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women**. This is aimed at the prevention and elimination of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against women and girls and strengthening women's leadership and women's participation in decision-making.

FIDA-Kenya has also been championing the Vote A Dada initiative towards the 9th August 2022 General Elections. This initiative is a campaign aimed at supporting women's political participation across the electoral cycle, including through coordinated efforts with partners. The main focus of the campaign is the achievement of the two-third gender rule premised in the Constitution of Kenya 2010 and pronounced severally through the Judicial rulings and advisory.

We advocate for bridging the gender gap in the executive, Parliament- National Assembly and Senate as well as the 47 County Assemblies through the advocacy work we have done over the last five years post the General Elections in 2017 training female aspirants, initiating legal and policy reforms engaging electoral institutions in strategy meetings and litigating in electoral disputes resolutions. All this is to advance the realization of gender parity in the outcome of the 2022 general elections.

We pronounce the good governance principles that the framers of the constitution calibrated in its framework and call upon all the electoral management institutions to do the same. This is especially now that a general election is imminent and are cognizant of the fact national prosperity, and stable peace will only be achieved when our institutions are democratic as well as representative of all groups in the society including women as well as men, minorities as well as majorities, the dispossessed as well as the affluent.

We are aware of the many obstacles to women's equal participation in elections, including gender stereotypes, electoral-related gender-based violence, technology-assisted violence against women politicians, psychological and traditional barriers, and inequalities in education, training, and resources.

We should be alive to the fact that investing in, credible institutions will result in a ripple effect that yields multiple benefits, not only for individual women, but also for families, communities, and countries. Studies show that increasing women's participation in politics leads to greater investments in education and companies with female board representation boast higher returns and less corruption. Research also suggests that gender balance in the political sphere promotes gender balance in the workforce, which invariably will positively impact Kenya's GDP growth in concert with the vision 2030.

Presently political party candidates and coalition partners are selecting their deputies and running mates in terms of the provisions of the law and the IEBC guidelines. This process should be gender-sensitive. **That is a woman Deputy president for all male-led presidential candidatures.** Choosing a woman to run for our nation's second-highest office, will be both a game-changer and strategic for a democratic nation such as Kenya.

We equally ask that where there is a male Governor aspirant there **MUST** be a woman deputy and vice versa.

We call upon political parties, coalitions, the IEBC, PPDT, the Registrar of political parties, and all political players to ensure equal access for women in all stages of the electoral process including considering the adoption of measures for increasing women's participation in elections through, inter alia, individual voter registration, temporary gender-specific positive actions and access to information, representation in bodies administering elections and as election monitors and observers, as well as encouraging political parties to involve women fully and equally in all aspects of their operations;

We ask all institutions managing and supporting the electoral process to ensure equal access for women to the voter and civic education, provide women candidates with full support, training, and financial resources, and eliminate discriminatory practices hampering women's participation either as voters or as candidates. Alongside this support, we call on all security agencies to mitigate pre-elections and post-election-related violence.

We call upon political parties to commit throughout the electoral process to ensure the inclusion and participation of special interest groups which includes women, persons with disabilities, persons with limited mobility and low literacy levels, and ensure campaigns are safe and democratic in liaison with law enforcement agencies to provide security to women and persons with disabilities who suffer most in the emergence of electoral violence.

We especially commend and support the decision by all the IEBC to ensure that the two thirds gender principle is implemented in the party lists presented by political parties following the recently concluded party primaries for the 290 constituencies. We, therefore, call upon all political parties in the country to ensure compliance with this rule, failure to which party lists should be rejected by the IEBC. This serves as a notice to political parties that we are ready to take legal action on this particular issue.

Nancy K. Ikinu



Chairperson

For further inquiries, kindly reach out to the PR/Communications Lead, Moses Okinyi on mokinyi@fidakenya.org, or call 0726989713.

