

(The following is a reproduction of the remarks made by H.E. Mr Mwai Kibaki, President, Republic of Kenya, at the launch of "Progress of the World's Women 2005: Women, Work & Poverty," 16 September 2005.)

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**NOTES FOR HIS EXCELLENCY ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH BY THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN (UNIFEM) OF THE REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE WORLDS WOMEN 2005, FRIDAY 16TH SEPTEMBER, 2005**

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Executive Director of United Nations Development Fund for Women,

Hon. Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I feel most honoured to participate in the launch of the Report on the Progress of the World's Women 2005.
2. It is indeed a special occasion. It marks the 5th anniversary of the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the 10th Anniversary of the Beijing Platform of Action.
3. In the interim period, a number of developments have taken place to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women. However, in some areas glaring disparities still persist especially in education and employment of women in the formal sector.
4. The launch of this landmark report gives us ample opportunity to reflect and consider ways of addressing the challenges confronting us.
5. I note that the report indicates that women are more likely than men to be in the informal employment sectors leading to decreased financial security. These include agriculture, domestic workers, casual wage workers and industrial outworkers.
6. In addition, economic growth and trade liberalization have adversely impacted on informal workers who are the majority of workers in developing countries. Even within employment categories, women's hourly and monthly earnings are generally lower than men's.
7. May I take this opportunity to congratulate the Executive Director of UNIFEM and her staff for their effort in producing this timely report. I believe it will serve as an important reference document. The recommendations contained therein, especially the targeted interventions, will help us advance our agenda for gender equality and empowerment.
8. I concur with the sentiments expressed in the report that it is imperative for Government and policy makers to pay attention to employment to ensure the eradication of poverty.
9. In my own country, my Government has put in place specific legislation aimed at improving the status of our women. They include the:
  - Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.
  - Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation.
  - National Policy on Gender and Development, among others.

10. In the education sector, policy reforms have been initiated to provide an enabling environment for ensuring equality. Universal Free Primary Education has resulted in an increase in the enrolment of girls. Affirmative Action has also been implemented in University admissions since 2003.
11. I am happy to inform you that the constitution proposed by my Government seeks to entrench laws that protect and enhance women's rights. I am confident that the Article on Women's Human Rights will give further impetus to the empowerment of women.
12. Equally important, are my Government's efforts in spearheading a National Women's Programme of Prevention, Advocacy and Support on HIV/AIDS. We have, with the support of our development partners, improved access to affordable Anti-Retroviral medicines to lessen the burden on women who are the primary care givers.
13. Finally, as we mark this important occasion, I reaffirm the resolve and commitment of my Government to continue working closely with UNIFEM to "make poverty history".

Thank You.