



**NGO written statement to 68<sup>th</sup> CEDAW Session, Geneva  
October 23<sup>rd</sup>-November 17<sup>th</sup> 2017  
KENYA**

Thank you Madam Chair,

Our organization would like to bring to your awareness 3 issues;

1. Fistula and its impact in society
2. Child marriage
3. Female Genital Mutilation

1. Women and girls with obstetric fistula cannot afford sufficient medical care during delivery. Most experience prolonged labor, develop paralysis and lose their children during birth. Many are ostracized by the society not able to attend social, religious and development gatherings. They fear to be divorced. They are predisposed to high levels of mental imbalance; loneliness, anxiety, depression, low self-concept and other stress disorders. The corporal consequence of fistula is foul smell of constant flow of urine and or stool and related physical ailments such as urinary infection, to buy pampers is an economic dilemma.

**We request the committee to urge the government to conduct constant grassroots sensitization and awareness campaigns and provide nationwide free treatment for obstetric fistula.**

2. In March 2014, the parliament adopted the Marriage Act 201. Some girls are forced into early marriage. since the bodies are not fully developed, 10% undergo prolonged labour and as a result develop fistula. Some are uneducated to make the difference between stomach-ache from labour pains. The government provides to take patients to the hospital. But this does not always guarantee treatment. One example, a 13-year girl, the fourth wife of a 70-year-old man declined to undergo fistula repair. Sobbing *she said, "I cannot be treated because my husband will divorce me"*. Efforts to talk to the husband failed too. This is violence against girls, despite the Kenyan law on children's right, many perpetrators go un-punished.

**We request the committee to urge the government to make education mandatory for girls.**

3. Kenya banned Female Genital Mutilation through the law ACT No. 32 of 2011. Nevertheless, due to FGM, 10% women have complications during delivery and a result develop fistula. Most of these come from the pastoralist communities and those along North-eastern counties both making up to 38% of persons who suffer fistula. Many of the harmful cultural practices go unreported. There is lack of disaggregated data on such case for effective implementation.

**We ask the committee to urge the government**

- **To develop monitoring and reporting mechanisms by providing disaggregated data and eliminate the harmful cultural practices.**
- **To punish the perpetrators as a preventive measure.**
- **To put in place proper curative measures by providing accessible equipped health care facilities and trained paramedics.**

Thank you Madam Chair.

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Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, in special consultative status with ECOSOC