

## Women urged to apply for leadership positions

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Women folk were called upon to step up, take action and position themselves in leadership positions in society.

This was the gist of the 3rd Nation Leadership Forum whose topic was 'Kenya's Gender Dilemma' held on December 7, 2017 at the University of Nairobi.

The main panelists, the Cabinet Secretary, Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs, Sicily Kariuki, the Governor, Bomet County, Dr. Joyce Laboso, the Managing Director, Kenya Women Microfinance Bank (KWFT), Mwangi Githaiga, the General Manager, GlaxoSmithKline PLC, Debra Mallowah and the Executive Director of County Governance Watch, Kevin Osido. The University of Nairobi's Director, Institute of Development Studies, Prof. Winnie Mitullah and the Director, Institute of Anthropology, Gender and African Studies, Dr. Charles Olungah were part of the expert panelists.

"In this patriarchal society, we have been bought up to believe that certain things belong to girls. We need to deconstruct that," said the Cabinet Secretary, Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs, Mrs. Sicily Karuki. "The gender agenda is not an issue of dilemma. It is an issue that is engraved in the Kenyan constitution. It is not an issue of the girl-child vs the boy-child. The gender agenda is not about replacing one gender with another. It is about growing together. The boy child is not left behind because the girl child is moving forward."

"I want to encourage ladies out there to keep fighting. I am not a very outspoken person myself because I trained to be a lecturer but I got into politics and I kept encouraging myself that I can do

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this. I realized that it is in politics that decisions which affect us are made and that is why I fought to sit at that table," said Dr. Joyce Laboso, Governor, Bomet County.

Mr. Githaiga, emphasized the importance of empowering women economically. "KWFT endeavours to empower women since for a long time women have received limited services from the financial sector. KWFT encourages group lending, where women take up loans," he said.

Despite the conversation leaning heavily on women empowerment, the issue of the boy-child arose.

"Men have always perceived their role as providing money even if they are not physically present. That has changed and men need to redefine their role in family setup," said Mr. Githaiga.

"As we redefine the role of men, please let us encourage the boy-child to know that a man is supposed to smell like a he-goat," said the Member of Parliament, Rangwe Constituency, Lilian Gogo.

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