

As we celebrate International Women's Day, we recognize that inclusion is not just a principle—it is a powerful driver of progress, innovation, and sustainable development. Inclusion is not solely a women's issue; it is an economic, security, and leadership imperative. When women have a seat at the table—whether in boardrooms, national security, or finance—we witness stronger economies, more resilient societies, and safer communities. This is not merely about fairness; it is about unlocking the full potential of our nations.



Today, women remain underrepresented in leadership, with only 25% of parliamentary seats globally and just 28% of managerial positions held by women. In Kenya, women-led enterprises contribute over 20% to GDP, yet they face significant barriers in access to finance and market opportunities. The evidence is clear: when we invest in women, we accelerate economic growth and drive inclusive development.

In line with this year's theme, "Accelerate Action," it is time to move beyond discussions and translate commitments into measurable impact. Inclusion requires more than initiatives. It demands urgent and bold action. Progress must be matched with decisive implementation, policies, and accountability. As leaders, we must cultivate a mindset that challenges biases, dismantles systemic barriers, and nurtures female talent. This means championing policies that facilitate gender equity, investing in mentorship and leadership programs such as the National Defence College (NDC), Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), and Women in Trade Initiatives, which equip women with the skills and networks to lead at all levels.

Finally, let us not wait for opportunities—we must create them. Let us drive forward together, accelerate action beyond today, and shape a future where growth, resilience, and shared prosperity are a reality for all.



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