My Reflection on the International Women's Day on 8 March 2026

Over thirty years since the 4th women conference in Beijing, we celebrate this year's International Women's Day, themed, **"Advancing Rights, Justice Action for all women and girls. "Give to Gain,"**. This theme is profound. In this context, to "celebrate" means the actual acknowledgment and recognition of the vital positions that women play in the national security setup, ranging from women in uniform to peace builders in civilian society.

This celebration and acknowledgment also call us to action, and this is encapsulated in the second part of the theme, "Give to Gain." This is a reframing of the International Women's Day celebration to a doctrine of giving, which means the commitment to the removal of barriers and the creation of opportunities through mentorship and strategic leadership positions to ensure that women are included in all facets of national security.

The gain that we seek through this strategic giving is substantial and directly related to the national defence strategy. This is because a security setup that includes all the perspectives and capabilities of all the people is more innovative, more capable and more representative of the people that it is supposed to defend. For me, this is a personal commitment, and I hope that it is for everyone; to build a more secure and prosperous future for all Kenyans through the ability to leverage the full potential of all people. By giving to gain women's full participation in our national security sector, we are not simply celebrating women. Rather, we are building a national defence strategy that is better and stronger for all Kenyans.

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