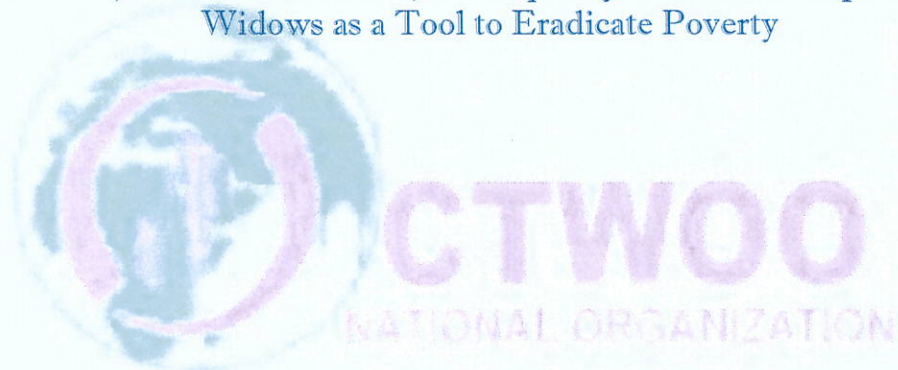


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# REPORT ON COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW) 68, IN NEW YORK ON 12TH MARCH 2024

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Widowhood, Self-determination, and Equality: Financial Empowerment of  
Widows as a Tool to Eradicate Poverty



APRIL 17, 2024  
REPORT PREPARED BY; COME TOGETHER WIDOWS AND ORPHANS  
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## INTRODUCTION

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body dedicated to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, which was established by ECOSOC resolution 11(II) on June 21, 1946. Generally, CSW plays a vital role in documenting the realities of women's lives worldwide and shaping global standards on gender equality. In CSW 68<sup>th</sup> session in 2024, the Kenyan Government was represented by Hon. Aisha Jumwa (Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Gender, Culture, The Arts and Heritage) who actively participated, demonstrating a strong commitment to advancing women's rights and addressing gender disparities both Nationally and Internationally.

Hon. Aisha Jumwa participated specifically in the side event entitled "Widowhood, Self-determination, and Equality: Financial Empowerment of Widows as a Tool to Eradicate Poverty," which took place on **March 12, 2024**, at **Conference Room D in New York**. Her presence and engagement at this event underscored her dedication to addressing the financial challenges faced by widows and her commitment to promoting Equality and Self-determination among this vulnerable demographic.

## MAIN HIGHLIGHT

During the CSW, CS Aisha Jumwa delivered a profound speech addressing the challenges faced by widows in Kenya. She notably acknowledged Come Together Widows and Orphans Organization as a leading advocate for widows' rights, playing a crucial role in advancing gender equality. CS Jumwa highlighted the milestones achieved by the organization, attributing them to the strong partnership and collaboration with the Global Fund for Widows.

She addressed the plight of widows in Kenya, citing statistics from the 2022 Kenya Demographic House Survey, which estimates 2.8 million widows in the country, with 7 out of 10 widows heading their families. Widows face challenges such as limited healthcare, lack of knowledge about inheritance and property rights, and are often vulnerable to social and economic hardships. They also experience stigma and discrimination, leading to emotional and psychological harm.

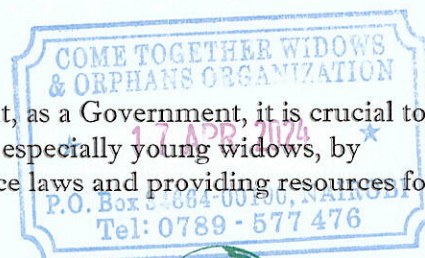
CS Aisha Jumwa mentioned that research from the Global Fund for Widows and Come Together Widows and Orphan Organization steered by Executive Director Dr. Dianah Kamande reveals that a significant percentage of widows are young, with many having multiple children to care for. This underscores the intersection of vulnerability and responsibility that these women face, navigating single parenthood and financial insecurities.

## CONCLUSION

In her conclusion CS Aisha Jumwa emphasized that, as a Government, it is crucial to recognize and address the specific needs of widows, especially young widows, by empowering them with knowledge about inheritance laws and providing resources for



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economic independence. This commitment is essential for advancing gender equality, ensuring justice for all, and securing a brighter future for widows and their children.

Through collaborative efforts and policy initiatives, Kenya's involvement in CSW contributed significantly to promoting the empowerment of widows and shaping global gender equality standards. In the CSW68 Agreed Conclusions "*Dismantle Discriminatory financial practices that hinder the financial independence of women, including requirements mandating women to have a male cosigner to access financial services and ensure women's legal capacity and equal rights with men to conclude contracts, regardless of marital status; as well as protect the rights of widows within inheritance regimes and with regard to the allocation of marital property*" We are grateful that widows are featured and therefore calling for collective responsibility.

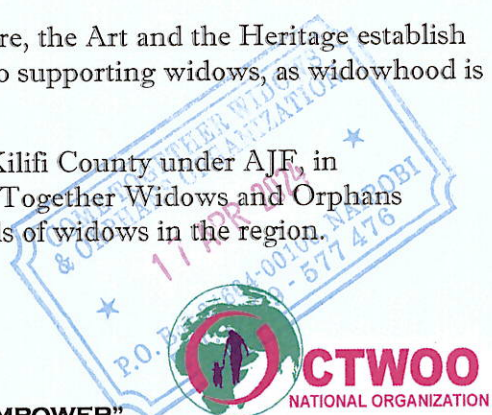
### **RECOMMENDATION**

Following the insightful discussions and commitments made during the CSW 68 event, we strongly recommend implementing the following actions to advance the rights and well-being of widows in Kenya:

1. Launch a comprehensive public information campaign focused on protecting women's rights, preventing disinheritance, discrimination, and harmful practices that lead to widows' impoverishment. This campaign should prioritize marriage registrations for all marriages, secure inheritance rights, and work towards eliminating or criminalizing violent burial rites.
2. Promote these measures actively in the lead-up to International Widows' Day, celebrated annually on June 23rd, to raise awareness and garner support for widows' rights and empowerment.
3. Collaborate with the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics to conduct a formal survey specifically targeting widows in Kenya. This survey should gather disaggregated data on widows' demographics, challenges, and needs, providing crucial insights for informed policymaking and targeted interventions.
4. Propose Kenya's leadership in drafting the world's first United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) resolution on widowhood, in partnership with the Global Fund for Widows (GFW). This resolution should focus on addressing systemic challenges faced by widows globally and advocating for their rights and dignities at an international level.
5. Develop a comprehensive Widows Resource Manual for the widows in the entire Country.
6. Advocate for the development of a standalone policy on widows within Kenya, in addition to the existing provisions outlined in the Kenyan Constitution.
7. Propose that the Ministry of Gender, Culture, the Art and the Heritage establish partnerships with organizations dedicated to supporting widows, as widowhood is a globally significant concern.
8. Initiate a Support Program for widows in Kilifi County under AJF, in collaboration with Global Fund and Come Together Widows and Orphans Organization to effectively address the needs of widows in the region.



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9. Emphasize dedicated efforts towards domesticating Widows' Resolution to ensure effective implementation and enforcement of policies that safeguard the rights and well-being of widows across Kenya.

DR. DIANAH KAMANDE HSC,



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR- CTWOO



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