

## PRESS RELEASE

### **KEBS approves new standards for accessibility for persons with disabilities**

**Nairobi, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022 ...** In a quest to address challenges experienced by physically challenged persons, the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) has approved new standards addressing accessibility to spaces and provision of requirements for safe practices in industrial work places in order to promote and maintain the highest degree of physical, mental and social wellbeing of workers.

Approval of these new set of standards for accessibility will enable people living with disabilities and the elderly to go about their duties and activities without the help of aides. The standards address support and assistive products for vision, hearing and physical disabilities and ensure that older persons and persons with disabilities can actively participate in daily life with ease.

The new approvals hinge on a multitude of barriers that persons with disabilities face towards their achievement of rights and inclusion in development. "In this holistic view of accessibility, challenges that a person with disability may face in relation to employment may include inhibition in accessing employment, inaccessible transportation, inaccessible buildings, inaccessible workspace and inaccessible human resource policies, among others," said Lt Col (Rtd.) Bernard Njiraini, Managing Director, KEBS.

"Accessibility is a precondition for the full realization of the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities in society and development," said Lt Col (Rtd.) Njiraini, adding that safety of human and environment is of paramount importance not only in Kenya, but across the world.

Noting that accessibility can be understood as the provision of flexible facilities and environments, either virtual or physical, to accommodate each user's needs and preferences, Lt Col (Rtd.) Njiraini observed that new approved standards are primed to ensure that persons with disabilities can access places, spaces, item or service that is easily approached, reached, entered and exited from on an equal basis with others.

Following the recent approvals, Kenya joins many countries which have put in place access teams to help organisations improve the accessibility of its services, buildings, and information that range from consulting persons with disabilities; identifying and prioritizing the work that needs to be done to improve accessibility; to sharing what they learn about accessibility among themselves and with other staff.

Persons with disabilities face many barriers that hinder full and equal access to their enjoyment of full social inclusion. The challenges they encounter is often exacerbated with the settings they live and work from and, whenever crisis grips communities, they suffer the most said Lt Col (Rtd.) Njiraini. "People living with disabilities have a right to a comfortable workplace, and comfortable social amenities such as schools, hospitals and places of entertainment." Lt Col (Rtd.) Njiraini stressed.

The five standards approved by KEBS in essence will address the needs and requirements of persons living with disabilities, emphasizing on their social, economic and political inclusion as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

According to Esther Ngari, the Director for Standards Development and Trade, the newly approved standards ranging from KS ISO 17069:2014; detailing elements of accessible design, such as application of braille on signage, equipment and appliances, to KS ISO 19028:2016 - Information contents, figuration and display methods of tactile guide purposes to ease informational barriers, which prevent access for persons with disabilities.

For accessibility in specific contexts, the new standards will identify barriers and generates practical approaches to dismantling them is the core requirement of accessibility and is fundamental to each and every aspect of the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities. According to the new approval relating to accessible design, Ngari observed that the standards will improve access to buildings and enhance the principle of universal design in built environment.

“This move will also ensure that persons with disabilities are fully integrated into all aspects of socio-economic through provision of flexibility in the way people are able to interact with physical environments such as buildings, roads, transportation, and various indoor and outdoor facilities such as schools, housing, medical facilities, sporting venues and workplaces,” she explained.

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#### **Notes to the Editor:**

To access a full list of the Standards approved or confirmed by the National Standards Council, please visit the KEBS website [www.kebs.org](http://www.kebs.org) under what we do < Standards development.> Gazetted Standards or using the link - [https://www.kebs.org/index.php?option=com\\_phocadownload&view=category&id=40&Itemid=134](https://www.kebs.org/index.php?option=com_phocadownload&view=category&id=40&Itemid=134)

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#### **About KEBS**

Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) is a statutory body established under the Standards Act (CAP 496) of the laws of Kenya and is a member of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). KEBS' mandate is to provide standardization and conformity assessment services

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