

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **LEADERS JOIN HANDS TO EMPOWER WOMEN**

The Kenya Women and Children Wellness Centre, in partnership with the Standard Chartered bank held a luncheon to celebrate the hundredth international women's day. Among those who graced the occasion were US ambassador to Kenya Michael Rannenberger, Her Excellency Ida Odinga and a host of other women leaders.

On his part US ambassador to Kenya Michael Rannenberger expressed support to women IN development, education, health and institution building. The US government has provided forensic services that would be used in the Wellness Centre. They will work together with the Kenya Police to collect evidence against sex offenders. This in turn would ensure that justice is seen to be done for those abused.

Her Excellency Ida Odinga noted that women, especially women in Africa are charged with heavy duties of taking care of the husband, turning a house into a home and, today's woman seeks education and a career. She advocated for workplaces to provide mothers the opportunity to breastfeed their new-born children. "Sometimes, due to demanding careers, women are not able to spend time with their children. I thank workplaces that offer mothers the opportunity to take care of their children while at work. I hope to see more workplaces giving such allowances instead of relieving the mothers of their duties." She emphasized the importance of mothers' breastfeeding their children, as this is the best source of immunity for the child.

Minister for Health and Public Sanitation Hon. Beth Mugo said that the 2010/2011 government budget for the health sector increased by 2 per cent to KES 41.5 billion. She added that health campaigns have shifted from Curative to Preventive and Promotive Health.

Gichugu MP and presidential aspirant Hon. Martha Karua noted that unemployed youth had hit the two million mark, although the number could be higher. She urged leaders to take time to mentor the youth and help channel the resource away from crime.

The Standard Chartered bank offered support towards the Kenya Women and Children Wellness Centre to help in the construction of an eye unit within the soon to be opened centre.

“The pillars under which the Michael Jordan Foundation has founded the Kenya Women and Children Wellness Center fit perfectly within our sustainability pillars. The pillars- Environment, Education, Humanitarian and Health - mirror the investments that Standard Chartered is making in partnership with Starehe Girls Centre in education; Kenya Wildlife Society in environment; the Save-a-Life Fund in humanitarian; as well as our flagship sustainability initiative- Seeing is Believing in health among many others,” he said.

The event saw women who have never been motioned recognized and appreciated for their efforts in making a difference to the community, in fields of environment, health, humanitarian and education. These are Lydia Nyambura, Doris Mayoli, Khadija Amar and Esther Njeri respectively. There was also a woman of the year award, which encompassed all four categories, which was handed to Grace Seneiya. In her speech, Mrs. Deloris Jordan, CEO of the James R. Jordan foundation commended the women for their self sacrifice in making a difference in the country. She called upon Kenyans to support their women, and that each person should play their part in the development of the society. She thanked all partners who would help see the wellness serving women and children in the Wellness Centre.

United States International University donated 10 acres of land towards the construction of the Wellness Centre. Vice-chancellor Professor Freida Brown took time to congratulate girls who had done well in the recently released Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education results. She pointed out the opportunities available for those seeking education. She also called for the shunning of unproductive traditions, “The Kenya Government has subsidized costs on fees and offered loan options for those who cannot afford school fees. In some of the more conservative communities, we still see girls being sold off to marriage. This is one backward tradition that should be done away with,” she insisted.

Entertainment from Atemi and Mumbi Kaigwa livened up the day as motivational speaker Jyoti Mukherjee gave words of wisdom to the attendees.

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