

## **WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP ADVOCACY RALLY (25TH NOVEMBER, 2015)**

The County residents have been urged to fully embrace the progress of women in capturing various elective positions they seek in the coming elections, as the whole County and the country by extension will gain from the equality of gender.

The clarion call has been made by various women leaders today during the Women and Leadership Advocacy rally held in Moi Stadium, Voi Sub County.

Led by Taita Taveta Deputy Governor Mary Ndiga and the County's First Lady Hope Mruttu, the leaders have reiterated that empowering women is more than a matter of rights but it was the right thing to do in order to achieve progress in all spheres of life.

“I am convinced that our County and the whole country will stand to gain tremendously if we fully embrace women and support them to capture various elective posts in leadership. Investing in women is the right thing to do, because the progress of women is progress for us all,” said Mary Ndiga.

The Deputy Governor further says the County Government is committed to promoting women’s full participation in all levels of decision making in the political, economic and public spheres. She added that Kenya’s robust Constitution has provided guiding lights to improve the status of women in the country and she says legislation of women-friendly policies is crucial to supporting women capture various elective positions.

“As a government we are committed to the formulation and implementation of policies and legislation that will help us realise our ultimate goal of gender equality,” said Mary Ndiga.

The County’s First Lady Hope Mruttu urged women to remain steadfast in seeking various elective positions despite the challenges they will face from their male counterparts.

“In any competition it is never easy to capture victory as everyone is seeking the victory but regardless of the challenges women have to come out in large numbers and contest for various leadership positions. Being steadfast in this endeavour will yield fruits coupled to the support we will give them,” said Mrs. Mruttu.

The First Lady further added that the various women in leadership positions should mentor others who would like to ascend to various positions so as to increase the number women in power.

“Currently we have a few women in power and the best thing they can do is to help in this initiative is to join us to pull up other women seeking such leadership positions. Mentorship works and it’s through this that we can achieve our goal,” said Mrs. Mruttu.

The First Lady further added: “The County Government of Taita Taveta recognises women to have capabilities of holding crucial leadership positions as it has appointed a good number of them in senior management positions. Also initiating programmes that are meant to empower women economically for instance the establishment of the DATU-SAWAZISHA kitty clearly demonstrates it recognises women to be key players in our society.”

Kisumu Deputy Governor Ruth Odinga who was the Chief Guest in the event urged the community help eradicate various problems facing the girl-child especially sexually related problems that have contributed women shying away from leadership.

“Our children are faced by a myriad of problems that have pricked their self-esteem thereby making them have a weak foundation in terms of education as some of them drop out from school. This has contributed to the current low number of women leaders, thus lets deal with this problem and at this stage so that in future we have more women leaders,” said Odinga.

Ruth Odinga insists that the few women holding elective positions make immense contributions in developing our nation more than is often acknowledged.

“The lack of a critical mass of women in political institutions is a major constraint for women politicians to effect significant and positive difference towards transforming the male dominated culture of politics but the few we are having are really giving their best,” said Odinga.

The rally marks the beginning of the 16 days of activism against gender based violence.

The event was graced by top County Officials among them the County Executive Committee Members, various renowned scholars from the County and the much celebrated gospel artiste Gloria Muliro.

