

**Proceedings of the International Women's Day  
2008(IWD) Celebrations**

**Theme: PROMOTING PEACE AND FINANCING FOR GENDER  
EQUALITY “*Peace Wears Face Of a Woman*”.**

**Held on March 8<sup>th</sup>,2008**

**Venue: UGUNJA TOWN**

**Submitted by Ugunja Community Resource Centre**

**Compiled: Jacquelyne Onyango and Roselyne Ngoye  
UCRC- Advocacy and Networking Programme**

**Edited by : Damas Ogwe  
UCRC – Information and Community Media**

## Background

The International Women's Day (IWD) is a global activity being marked annually on the 8<sup>th</sup> March. The day is marked as an act of solidarity in which women express their potentials while at the same time reflect back to issues of to a tradition, culture and sexual segregation which represent decades of struggle for equality, justice, peace and development. The celebration therefore is marked to underscore the need for a more equitable society while acknowledging the achievement and steps women have taken to spearhead development.

As these celebrations are marked in Kenya, the post election violence is a thing that cannot pass without mention. Though the December 2007 general elections made history with highest number of women elected in parliament, the violence as evidenced had a far reaching impact on women both directly and indirectly.

The hosting of the celebration by **Ugenya Peace Forum Committee and Ugunja Community Resource Centre** in Ugunja therefore did not just serve as a platform to share the gains and highlight the challenges, it is also a radical departure from the known venues and areas for such activities to domesticating the initiative at the grass root level. The activity can be thus summarized as: *a major day of global celebration for economic, political, and social achievements of the woman. It is a day of reflection on challenges, barriers and taking initiatives towards future achievements to ensure equality and equity for all women in all aspects of their life.*

## PROCESSION:



Women had a gathering at Kinda Kolalo petrol station ground after which they had a procession from that venue to Ugunja main junction then back to the starting point.

(Women in procession as they sing Wamama msilale)

## OPENING PRAYER



Rev. Charlton Ocholla leading Morning Prayer)

This was led by Rev. Charlton Ochola of the Anglican Church of Kenya and also the chairperson of Siaya District Peace Committee. He began by sharing that it was a great day for women especially when it was the time for healing and reconciliation from the post election violence. According to the book of **Luke 1:39**, Rev. Charlton's theme was mainly based on women. The theme of the reading, '**Mary visits Elizabeth**' He urged the crowd to consider the following phrases

- ❖ If you want to perform a difficult task employ a man
- ❖ If you want to perform an impossible task employ a woman



Mrs Francisca Ochura

He supported the above two phrases by giving an example of the story of Samson and Delilah, Adam and Eve. He added that women have an intuitive mind hence urged them to be in frontline of development and to work together with men and more so be instruments of peace. "Let people not pay evil for evil but instead should overpower evil by doing good." Apart from Rev. Charlton, Mrs. Francisca Ochura of Mariwa Community Learning Resource Centre together with Rose of Gem Constituency peace Forum shared a word of encouragement from the book of Genesis about the creation of man. Men should not abuse women but should work together as God's creatures.

## PRESENTATIONS (ENTERTAINMENT)

### 1. Tembea Youth Centre



They had a teaching on family affairs. Through their play, it came out clearly that children have equal rights to education. They also went ahead to involve the audience in the play by asking them how beneficial it was to educate a girl child. In response to that, women mentioned that **“educating a female is to educate the whole community but educating a male is educating one family!”**

(Tembea youth centre on the stage)

### 2. Ugunja Lake Region Gospel Singers



Songs:  
**“Tunawakaribisha wageni, Mungu baba turehemu and Kata tembe yuoro nalami.”**

Ugunja Lake Region Gospel Singers entertaining the guests.

### 3. Support Group.



St Paul’s Support Group women members voluntarily came out to let others know that they were HIV positive. Through their play, they urged others to go for HIV Test to know their health status for being Positive was not the end of life.

Being HIV positive is not the end of life

## TESTIMONIES.

There were testimonies from different returnees' affected by the 2007 post election violence. The returnees who spoke were previously resident in the following towns in Kenya

- ❖ Nakuru
- ❖ Naivasha
- ❖ Nairobi
- ❖ Eldoret
- ❖ Limuru
- ❖ Kericho
- ❖ Kikuyu



There were written notices for members of my community in that town that were scattered in the streets giving us a period of one week to leave with all their properties. When it was one day to end the period of time that they were given, the conflict was on and it was run to save your life.

*Judith Achieng, Thika*



*Eunice Awuor(Left)*

She was displaced from Naivasha, Karakta estate. Our men and sons were pulled out of houses and mercilessly butchered. After going to the police station, our attackers forced way into the police station claiming that Hon. Raila was disturbing them.

Eunice stayed for a week in the camp, then left for home through Suna Migori, Kisumu and then to Ugunja.



*Florence Atieno Otieno  
Nakuru,*

*Anastasia Were  
Naivasha*





***Jane Odera. Nakuru***

Jane was displaced from Nakuru pondamali.

She narrates how she saw people being killed and burnt.

These bodies were then eaten by dogs and actually painful to on look that. It was so heartbreaking for her as a mother witnessing sons and daughters killed. She stresses more that its only women who undergo labor pain.



***Rosemary Okel***

Rosemary was working within the Municipal of Naivasha and got a letter on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January to leave town as she came out of office. Before doing that, a group claiming to be members of an outlawed tribal sect visited her house and one of the sons was forcefully circumcised and bled a lot. She was forced to flee without hesitating.



***Floice Aoko***

It's satirical to see Floice appeared in a smiling face. She mentioned that despite the fact that religious sectors mentioned the issue of not paying evil for evil, at any time, place and situation, the pain and agony she has gone through will not easily be forgotten

## SPEECHES

### AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT

#### Eunice Auma

Eunice began by saying that everybody has a God given talent and need to put this in use. She went ahead and gave a teaching on organic farming that was use of a local plant called 'akech' which is cut and kept in a cool place. When planting time comes, it is used as manure. She also advised on use of the locally available manure along the fences. Why was Eunice doing this? For those not able to acquire fertilizer be informed.

### MAENDELEO YA WANAWAKE

#### Mrs. Rebecca Aluodo

Rebecca is the Chair person of Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Alego Usonga Constituency. She narrated to the audience an incident where she lost a total of ELEVEN relatives in Naivasha who were burnt down. She stressed that Men should give women the opportunity to realize and exploit, mentioning that no one has a burden like a woman.

On the issue of Post election violence, Rebecca urged the participants by saying,

- ❖ If you are holding on to the past hurts and pain ----- Let it GO
- ❖ If you are holding onto some thought of evil revenge --- Let it GO
- ❖ If you keep judging others to make yourself feel better----Let it GO
- ❖ If you are stuck in the past as God is trying to take you to a new level in Him—Let it GO
- ❖ If you are feeling depressed -----Let it GO
- ❖ Let the past be the past and forget the former things.

According to her understanding of the word Mother, Rebecca explained fully the meaning of the word MOTHER.

**Motivator**  
**Organizer**  
**Teacher**  
**Educator**  
**Healer**  
**Receiver**

Rebecca added that women must rise to be expectations and be peace makers of the country. Women condemn violence of any type, be it on women, children, youths and men.

She concluded that women should form their own groups so as to share and discuss their strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities available for them to take more active role in the issues and decision making processes which affect their lives.

## COUNCILLOR UMALA WARD



### Councillor Mary C. Ajwang',

The chairperson of Ugunja Town Planning Committee lamented that this was a great day for the women all over the world and thanked the Siaya Peace Forum team for having thought it wise to bring the Siaya District Event to Ugunja. Since this was a first public address to such a function after being elected as chairlady of Ugunja Town Planning

Committee, the Councillor felt great to co-host the participants in this event and wished them a peaceful interaction within the town.

As per the days' theme, she first of all thanked His Excellencies President Mwai Kibaki and Hon Raila Amollo Odinga for signing in the historic National Reconciliation Accord. Besides the two, Mary also congratulated Hon. Kofi Annan for chairing the successful mediation process. She also recognised the presence of Hon. Graca Machel for participating in the Mediation process which gave her the title **“an African mother and daughter.”**

She added by appreciating Kenyans for electing women into political leadership which has raised the number from 18 -23 in parliament. That was a great achievement for women and called upon the rest of them to rise up to the challenge.

Mary also mentioned some of the challenges that had been experienced in Ugunja Town:

- ❖ Increased number of widows and orphans after loosing the Increased hunger due to food shortage.
- ❖ Poor health status in cases of HIV/AIDS, Sexual violence, mulnutrition, trauma etc.
- ❖ Poverty.
- ❖ Family separation.
- ❖ Lack of shelter and land disputes.
- ❖ Harassment in transport system.

She commended the good work that had been done by various stakeholders in restoring peace in Kenya especially t grassroots level and urged them to continue working towards long term goals and activities in a team work spirit.

Mary's vision as the Chair person of Town Planning in Ugunja Town:

- ❖ An open door policy which allows all stakeholders to come and work to promote development in the area,
- ❖ To expand women friendly services e.g. Space for business, emergency response programmes, networking with women development partners etc.
- ❖ To promote children education by encouraging development investors to join the town.
- ❖ To improve water and sanitation programmes,

Marry concluded by appealing to all Partners to join her in achieving the goals in collaboration efforts. She ended by appealing to men and youth to treat women with respect and avoid violent acts and join Kenyans in Peace building of the nation.

## UGUNJA TOWN COUNCIL CHAIRMAN



### Leonard Komo

Let us all arise and observe one minute silence to honor the dear lives of women who perished in the cruel hands of death due to post election violence of 2007. THE D.O, D.S.D.O, ADMIN., NGO'S ALL DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. I welcome you to this town. As we mark this auspicious day, my council is privileged and honored to host all of you in Ugunja Town this 8<sup>th</sup> March 2008. You are all aware that this event is being celebrated world wide to promote peace and also create and plan conflict free environment for women in the world. We also mark this day with all concerned parties in the world to break the undue men

dominance over women.

My council is proud today to associate with all Women of various cadre, (mighty and the low) we recognize all the women who have broken the dominance especially in areas of education, politics, economics, and social life. Some of those great women have bridged the gender parity and equaled men in all areas even in challenging fields' e.g. scientific research and innovations.

This has heralded my council to audit women activities within Ugunja municipality and found that women of Ugunja have worked very hard to equal men in all the day to day activities in both formal and informal sector activities and businesses.

Ugunja Town today has greatly benefited a lot from continuous women expansion of supply of raw materials and goods in our main market and it's satellite markets. My council also recognizes that women are truly the pillars of our revenue base. In the wake of this, my council has always involved women in council activities e.g. involving them in the drafting of the council strategic plan 2005/2011, preparation of LASDAP activities and also sponsored few women groups in accordance with the Government policy in the promotion of Co-poverty programmes in our council

Ladies and Gentlemen, as we emerge from political crisis and take a path to healing the nation, we remember the many vulnerable and defenseless women who died for a cause they did not do and likely did not understand, we salute for the many of them and their children who struggled to live normal life. My council in this regard has earmarked series of programmes to uplift the standards of women in areas of education by offering bursaries to girls in both primary and post primary learning institutions, the council will promote and empower women in all areas in which it will deem it fit to finance in accordance to millennium development goals agenda. It will undertake programmes and implement policies to encourage gender equalities facilitate construction of health facilities in four council wards mainly to favour women in business, health centres, and village

## DISTRICT SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE



### **Ruth Alumasa**

The District Social Development Officer Mrs. Ruth Alumasa thanked the Siaya Peace Forum team for planning to have this celebration in Ugunja. She then shared on need of women empowerment and stressed need for them to come out, of the tendency of inferiority complex.

Ms Ruth then informed the women about the Women Enterprise Fund and said the money is already at the treasury desk so this was the time for them to send their applications. Application Forms were at the District Officers Office and chiefs offices. Besides that she said the maximum amount to be loaned was 50,000 and grace period is one month.

The participants were again made aware of some changes in the office, that is registration fee of groups is 1000/ while renewal is 100/ and of Community Based Organizations is 5000/ while renewal is 500/.

Lastly, the officer noted need of the disabled persons to identify themselves. The government wants to have their data and soon their identification cards will be produced. Also in terms of services, they will be given first priority.

She requested participants to welcome returnees home and urged the NGO'S to come out and join the Peace and Reconciliation Committee

## **C.E.O UGUNJA COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE**



**Mr. Pius Aggrey Omondi presenting the total number (1954) of the returnees that had submitted their names in the data collection list within Siaya District.**

Mr. Aggrey begun by recognizing the presence of, DO, DSDO, Chairman Ugunja Town Council, Councilors, Chief, other leaders and invited guests for joining the women in observing their special

day which was celebrated internationally. Though the day was a celebration day, it was also a day to recognize the fellow Kenyans who were affected in the post election violence. He noted that it was sad and sorrowful to hear that innocent women and children were the most victims of the violence, on flashbacking an incident of a woman who was left with **ten children and had nothing at hand, there was also an incident of a woman whose sons' private part was cut and she was forced to eat.**

He went ahead and shared about the formation of the peace committees in Siaya and Kisumu District by appreciating their sheer work particularly the collection of data and urged the returnees who had not registered to do so as soon as possible since that would help in distribution of any available resources for them. In addition to all, he called upon the trauma counselors and any other person to rise up and respond to such situation.

Besides that, he urged parents who reject their sons and relatives who might have lost their jobs and properties due to the incident not to do so since it was not their wish for all the skirmishes **“East and West Home is Best”**

He appreciated the Ugunja Town Council for providing space where a pillar would soon be placed. It would indicate that the women had a meeting on the International Women's Day and agreed to promote peace. This place would remain as a remembrance area of our Siaya District Returnees and all who suffered and lost their lives during the post election chaos

In summarizing his speech, Mr. Aggrey recognized the below bodies for their positive respond towards the post election violence in peace building process

- Friends
- Religious
- Societies
- Groups
- Individuals
- Business community
- Asif from Gem
- Samco Traders

Next he said community had many institutions but the problem they had not developed the best method on how to approach situations of raping cases and other sexual offenses.