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## PRESS STATEMENT

### THE IMPACT OF THE KENYA MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS, PHARMACISTS AND DENTISTS' UNION (KMPDU) – STRIKE ON WOMEN AND GIRLS

The Federation of Women Lawyers in Kenya (FIDA Kenya) is deeply concerned about the country wide Doctors strike that has persisted for 41 days since 15th March 2024. The ongoing strike, has caused widespread disruption in healthcare services across the country impeding access to health care services especially for marginalized and vulnerable groups. Media reports indicate that thousands of patients seeking medical services have been left unattended in public hospitals across the country. Furthermore, emergency medical services have been suspended in public hospitals posing a risk to the lives of many Kenyan's seeking medical services. This disruption has disproportionate effects on women and girls who continue to bear the brunt as primary caregivers. Furthermore, the strike continues to pose a risk to many women seeking maternal services. This is evidenced by reports of a surge of expectant mothers turned away or waiting for delivery in public hospitals including the Kenyatta National Hospital left unattended.

The right to the highest attainable standard of health is a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution under Article 43(1) (b). The limitation of this right jeopardises individual well being and undermines the overall public health system. Limited access to the right to health exacerbates existing disparities in accessing healthcare because it disproportionately affects those who are already disadvantaged. Furthermore, it undermines broader efforts to achieve sustainable development goal 5 on gender equality especially in a country where women bear the primary responsibility for health.

Noting that the state has the primary responsibility to respect, promote, protect and fulfil human rights, FIDA-Kenya calls **upon the government to prioritize the resolution of the ongoing doctors strike and to mitigate the interrupted delivery of healthcare services across the country.** Furthermore, FIDA-Kenya **urges the government of Kenya to address the underlying issues driving the healthcare workers strike such as the contentions surrounding the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) of 2017/21. FIDA-Kenya also urges all parties involved to act in good faith to find an amicable solution to the impasse that continues to endanger the lives of Kenyan's and poses a grave risk to marginalized and vulnerable groups including women and girls.**

FIDA-Kenya therefore calls for urgent action to end the doctor's strike. In the event that the strike is not resolved and provision of healthcare services normalised with immediate effect, FIDA Kenya **SHALL** take legal action against any duty bearer found culpable.

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