



PRESS RELEASE:

KEPSA FOUNDATION AND LIGHT FOR THE WORLD KENYA SIGN MOU TO PROMOTE DISABILITY INCLUSION IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Nairobi, Kenya – 10th July 2024: KEPSA Foundation and Light for the World Kenya have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) aimed at fostering collaboration to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities within the private sector. This partnership seeks to establish a comprehensive framework for both organizations to explore and develop initiatives that will champion disability inclusion and empowerment.

The five-year MOU will focus on the following key areas;

1. **Partnership Development:** Both organizations will collaborate on identifying and developing specific partnership opportunities. This includes initiatives such as capacity-building, research, internships, work placements, business opportunities, knowledge sharing, and joint initiatives.
2. **Inclusion and Empowerment:** The MOU emphasizes promoting inclusive labor market practices and business value chains, ensuring accessibility, skills development, and raising awareness through campaigns.

During the event, Gloria Ndekei, Executive Director of KEPSA Foundation, highlighted the importance of addressing the needs of vulnerable populations through mainstreaming disability inclusion and empowerment programs. *"As the social arm of KEPSA, the Foundation seeks to create a holistic approach to business development. We aim to enable businesses to participate in global programs focused on social issues across various sectors. These efforts are aligned with responsible investment principles, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) goals. Addressing the needs of vulnerable populations helps stabilize the business environment, consumer behavior, and investment patterns."*

While noting the paradigm shift brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic on the importance of embracing flexible work arrangements, Ms Ndekei further noted that *"The role businesses play in improving the employability and entrepreneurial skills of persons with disabilities is paramount. Organizations can embrace inclusive work arrangements through accessible spaces, preferential reservations, affirmative action, sign language interpretation, and braille facilities, thus enhancing equity for persons*

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with disabilities. A Disability inclusion toolkit for the private sector would be a great enabler for mainstreaming PWDs at the workplace. KEPSA Foundation, therefore, commits to promote dialogues with Private Sector members to contribute to the socioeconomic wellbeing of Persons with Disabilities."

Daniel Oloo, Light for the World Kenya Country Director, emphasized the importance of building strategic partnerships and building on established foundations to contribute to the disability and socioeconomic agendas. *"We commit to bringing technical assistance to the private sector through a twin-track approach. This approach aims to enhance the capacity of persons with disabilities to compete equitably in the labor market while driving systemic changes in the socio-economic environment to promote an inclusive labor ecosystem."*

"This includes building the capacities of the government and the private sector to implement reasonable accommodations, facilitating employment and market connections for persons with disabilities, improving access to information, and strengthening the advocacy efforts of persons with disabilities. We aim to demonstrate, through evidence and data, that persons with disabilities have the potential to excel in all sectors of the economy," he added

Samwel Odawo, Disability Inclusion Advisor at Light for the World Kenya, reiterated, *"Disability inclusion is a process that requires a collaborative approach to make inclusion a reality. The trajectory is changing as the world experiences technological advancements, thus the need to focus on a rights-based approach. Disability inclusion is anchored on key frameworks such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)."*

To kick off this partnership, KEPSA Foundation will provide internship opportunities for graduates of Light for the World Kenya for a period of one year for skills development, workplace experience, increased confidence, and to prepare them for employment. This partnership, therefore, marks a significant step forward in promoting disability inclusion and empowerment within the private sector, aligning with global efforts to create a more inclusive and equitable society.

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About KEPSA Foundation:

KEPSA Foundation is a legal entity and the social arm of KEPSA, registered under the Trustees Act in Kenya whose mission is to provide the private sector platform for the socio-economic transformation of Kenya while strengthening the business environment and the competitiveness of its private sector. The primary purpose of the Foundation is to ensure a year-on-year strengthening of the private sector platform for socio-economic transformation by hosting and facilitating its own and other institutional projects. Its focus is on social issues in sectors aimed at improving the business environment through key principles of responsible investments and SDGs and Environment Social and Governances goals.

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The Foundation addresses social issues through four priority areas: Women & Youth Empowerment, Leadership & Childcare, Climate Change & Sustainability, and Governance & Community Outreach/Partnerships and Networks.

About Light for the World:

Light for the World is a global development organization headquartered in Austria, Vienna. We contribute to improving health systems, enabling education for all, and amplifying the voices of people with disabilities in the workplace and beyond. In short: we break down unjust barriers to unlock the potential in all of us!