SDG Kenya Forum and EDAN Community Dialogue
Meru, Tharaka Nithi, Isiolo and Samburu Counties
Methodist Church of Kenya Bio-Intensive Agricultural Training Centre
24th November 2016

Over 120 persons with disabilities, older persons, youth as well as rural marginalized women and men from Isiolo, Meru, Tharaka Nithi and Samburu counties met at the Methodist Church of Kenya Bio-Intensive Agricultural Training Centre in Meru for a community dialogue on leave no one behind. This community dialogue held on 24th November 2016 was organised by the SDG Forum Kenya and hosted by the Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN).

Leave no one behind is the underlying principle driving the implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), pillars of the new international development framework Agenda 2030. This framework seeks to build on the work started by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In order to ensure that vulnerable groups largely made of older persons, persons with disabilities, youth, rural marginalised men and women are not left behind as was the case with MDGs, the SDG Forum Kenya, has this time sought to ensure they start engaging early with the SDGs. It is in light of this that the forum has undertaken to raise their awareness on SDGs by holding a series of community dialogues around leave no one behind in various counties in Kenya. The Meru dialogue was the third in the series.

The results of the dialogues will feed into the other processes initiated by the SDG Forum Kenya geared towards forming a strong base for advocacy on ensuring these vulnerable groups are mainstreamed in the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs by the Kenya Government.

The participants of this dialogue were reminded of the MDGs and introduced to the contents of Agenda 2030, why the framework and what it means to them. They were informed of what the Government has done so far since the framework came into place and the next steps. They were engaged on discussions around leave no one behind which helped them understand that they have a role to play and need to engage with the implementation of the SDG. From the discussions, the participants identified their main role as holding both the national and county government accountable in the process of implementing the SDGs. Participants felt that they have a duty to know their rights and demand them from the government. They agreed that there is need to raise awareness to the others in the community on SDGs.

Having understood the contents of SDGs, the participants in group discussions, answered the following questions:

1. Who is left behind in community development;
2. What progress has been made by the government;
3. What challenges they face in participating in development;
4. What they think is the solution to development.

Summary of Group Discussions
Who is left behind and contributing factors
1. Women
   - Not economically empowered
   - Face gender discrimination
   - Culturally disadvantaged
   - Low levels of education
   - Sexual and domestic violence
   - Not given space in leadership and politics

2. Person with disabilities
   - Low awareness of their rights
   - No opportunities to nurture their talents
   - No level playing ground in politics- A lot of political violence which they cannot keep up with
   - Stigmatization
   - Low self esteem
   - Poverty
3. Youth
   - Drug abuse
   - Unemployment
   - Lack capital
   - Poverty
4. Refugees
   - Stateless hence no identification documents therefore no rights
   - Poverty
   - Sexual abuse
5. Children
   - Child abuse
   - poverty
6. Boy child
   - Neglect
   - Traditional beliefs
   - Focus is more on the girl child
7. Indigenous people
   - Neglect
   - Poverty
   - Low levels of education
8. Older persons
   - Their opinions not regarded/considered
   - Rural- Urban migration of the young people
   - Burden of taking care of orphans
   - Inaccessibility to services limited

2. Development/Interventions/Progress made so far

Infrastructure
- More Roads
- Water infrastructure laid down in some areas

Security
- Police posts in some areas
- Local administration facilitated to carry out their work through issuance of motorbikes to ease mobility

Education
- More schools especially ECD classes and teachers employed
- Free Primary Education

Health
- More dispensaries to offer health services
- Availability of Mobile clinics
- Dialysis free- Medical cover especially on dialysis

Women and Youth, Older persons and Persons with disabilities Empowerment
- Empowerment funds and programmes-Uwezo Funds, women fund, youth funds, disability fund, NYS
- Social protection

Leadership and Governance
- Devolution
- Representation of various vulnerable groups in parliament- women, youth and persons with disabilities

Information and communication
- media freedom , media access, local channels

3. Challenges to development

- Poverty
- Poor infrastructure-roads
- Insecurity- cattle rustling
- Poor health services
- Illiteracy and lack of education
- Droughts
- Homelessness leading to street children and families
- Inaccessibility to information and communication

- Stigma
- High dependency syndrome
- Corruption
- Retrogressive cultures and beliefs
- Domestic and sexual violence
- Discrimination
- tribalism and ethnicity
- poor leadership and governance

4. **Solutions/What needs to be done**

- Improved service delivery by government
- Improved Infrastructure
- Public participation in national and county government processes like budgeting
- Awareness raising on the rights and existing programmes for different vulnerable groups
- Policies to protect the rights of the vulnerable to be developed and implemented. Their input to be sought
- Civic education on government policies
- Friendly and barrier free environment for all

- Improved access to justice
- Special programmes for economic empowerment for different groups
- Discourage bad cultural practices
- Equitable distribution of resources
- Diversification of economic activities
- Gate crushing government development activities
- Public accountability
- Good governance and leadership
- Food security
- Employment opportunities
- Maintenance of peace in conflict areas

Next Steps

The participants agreed to:

1. Raise awareness on SDGs to rest of community members
2. Familiarise themselves with county planning process and participate
3. Participate in development initiatives at county levels
4. Demand for their rights and hold government accountable through monitoring of development