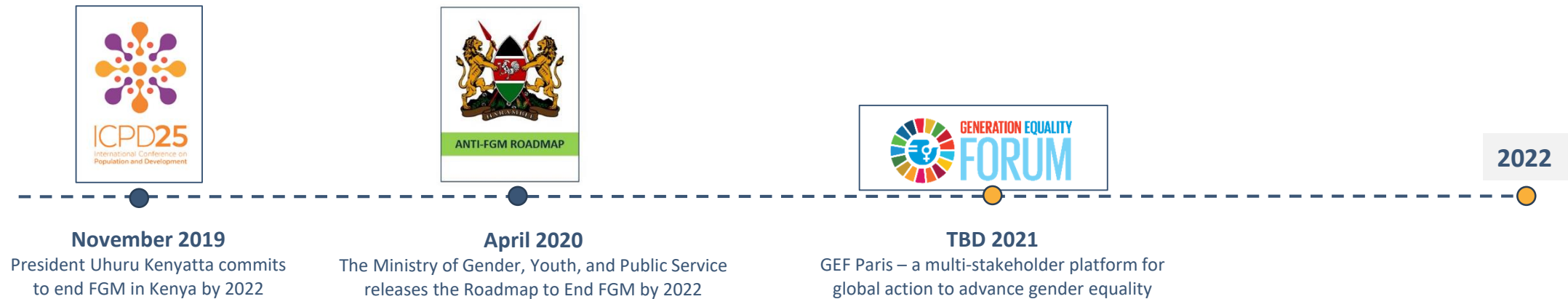


# Kenya Gender Advocacy Action Plan

Mobilizing support for gender equality amid COVID-19 and advocating for demonstrable progress to  
against GBV, particularly FGM, in the lead-up to GEF 2021

# Over the past six months, there have been two “critical moments” in Kenya’s march to end FGM by 2022

UN Women’s **Generation Equality Forum (GEF)** provides the next major opportunity for the Government of Kenya to demonstrate progress towards its goal and reinforce its commitments



## However, the global COVID-19 pandemic will make it difficult to sustain GOK’s focus on FGM and GEF in the short-term



- In mid-March, Kenya became the first country in East Africa to confirm a COVID-19 case
- An uncontained outbreak would overwhelm Kenya’s healthcare system and cause severe economic contraction
- The entire government is focused on designing and implementing a coordinated healthcare and economic response
- Other priorities will be on the back-burner until the virus is fully contained – Q3 2020 at the earliest
- **Near-term advocacy must emphasize the COVID-19 response and relief efforts** to gain government attention or support
- Strong collaboration during the near-term crisis can set the ground-work for more targeted advocacy down the line



# Proposed Gender Advocacy Timeline

Given the current context, BMGF and its gender grantees in Kenya will adopt a two-phased approach to advocacy on gender equality over the next 12 months in the lead-up to the Generation Equality Forum in Paris.



## Phase I: Covid-19 Response Advocacy

- Joint Advocacy Campaign for gender equality considerations to be mainstreamed in GOK's response to the pandemic
  - Will demonstrate willingness to support GOK on its most immediate priority, the COVID-19 response
  - Will draw linkages from COVID-19 to GBV and demonstrate importance of constant mainstreaming of gender issues

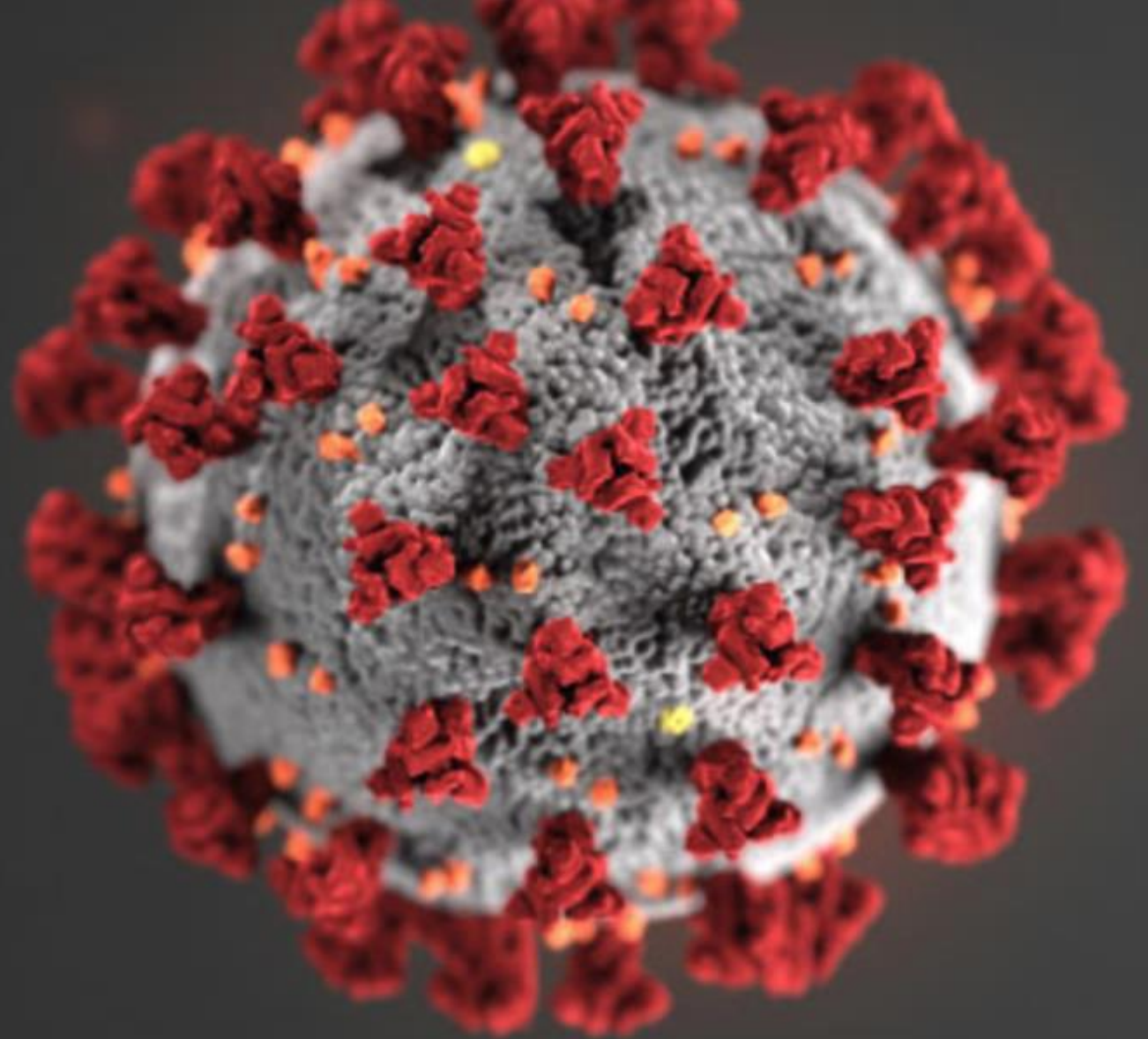
## Phase II: FGM/GEF Focused Advocacy

- BMGF-led high level advocacy for strong GOK participation and commitments in Paris
- Continued partner advocacy around mainstreaming gender into COVID-19 relief measures
- Grantee support of key Anti-FGM Roadmap objectives and activities
- ASG to identify potential investments to support target outcomes/implementation of Anti-FGM Roadmap
- ASG will continue to play convener and aggregator role to encourage collaboration, targeted messaging, and progress toward shared objectives

## Generation Equality Forum : The Goal

- Active leadership by Kenya on the GBV Action Coalition
- High-level political participation at GEF Paris in July.
- **TBD** – Announcement of strengthened GOK commitments, such as a
  - Gender-mainstreamed medium-to-long term COVID-19 response
  - More robust National Gender Equality plan
  - Demonstrated progress on Anti-FGM Roadmap



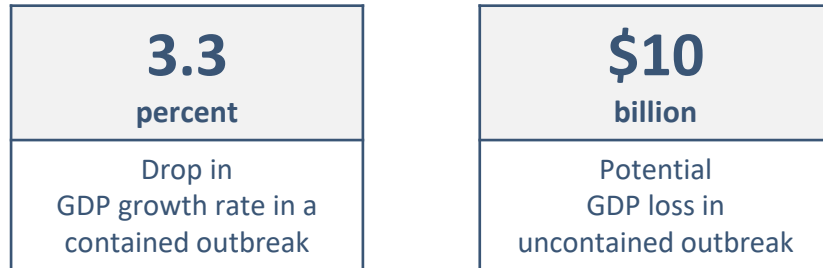


# Phase I: COVID-19 Response Advocacy

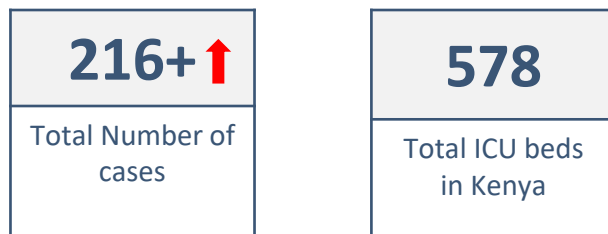
# The COVID-19 response will dominate the Government of Kenya's attention over the next few months

## THE CHALLENGE

The Kenyan economy was already grappling with slow economic growth and liquidity challenges prior to the pandemic. Kenya is bracing for economic stagnation over the medium term.

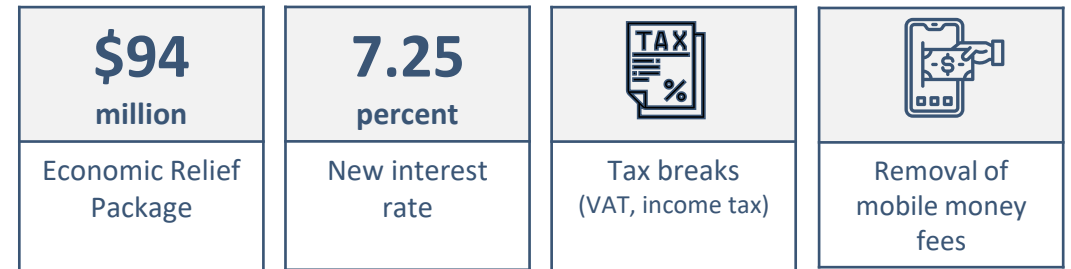


As things stand, the Kenyan healthcare system is not equipped to handle an uncontained outbreak








## GOK RESPONSE

Kenya has rolled out a few economic responses to cushion COVID-19's blow to the economy



Kenya has also mounted a heavy healthcare response which is predicated on limiting the virus' spread before it turns into a major outbreak and limiting its unintended effects

-  21-day inter-county mobility restrictions and dusk-to-dawn curfews
-  GBV hotline
-  Ban on international travel
-  Isolation centers in each county
-  Suspension of UNHCR repatriation and resettlement activities





# Kenya's COVID-19 response is amplifying deep-seated gender inequalities

Lockdowns instituting mobility restrictions and school closures are impacting women and girls. In addition, the government is redirecting healthcare spending towards its COVID-19 response.



## Gender-based Violence

- 30% increase in domestic violence since COVID-19 began
- Reported increases in FGM as more births are taking place at home



## Sexual and Reproductive Health

- Spikes in maternal mortality as women less able to access healthcare due to travel restrictions
- Teens receiving sanitary pads at school now have limited access
- Higher risk of teen pregnancy as kids are at home with limited to no access to contraceptives
- Costly healthcare response could put pressure on SRH budget



## Women and Care Work

- Emphasis on handwashing has increased work for women to source water
- Closing of schools has increased childcare demands disproportionately on women, also raising mental health burden

# Kenya's COVID-19 response is amplifying deep-seated gender inequalities

Reduced economic activity, in both the formal and informal sectors, is also having a disproportionate impact on women



## Women in the Workforce

- Women are disproportionately affected by job loss: 60 percent of jobs lost in Kenya thus far were held by women. The travel industry has been hit particularly hard
- Loss of work and limited resources is driving women into greater debt



## Women in Informal Economy

- Women (petty traders, smallholder farmers, etc.) make up a significant portion of the informal economy and will suffer most acutely from near-term mobility restrictions and anticipated reductions in consumer spending over the medium-term

# Suggested Advocacy Approach

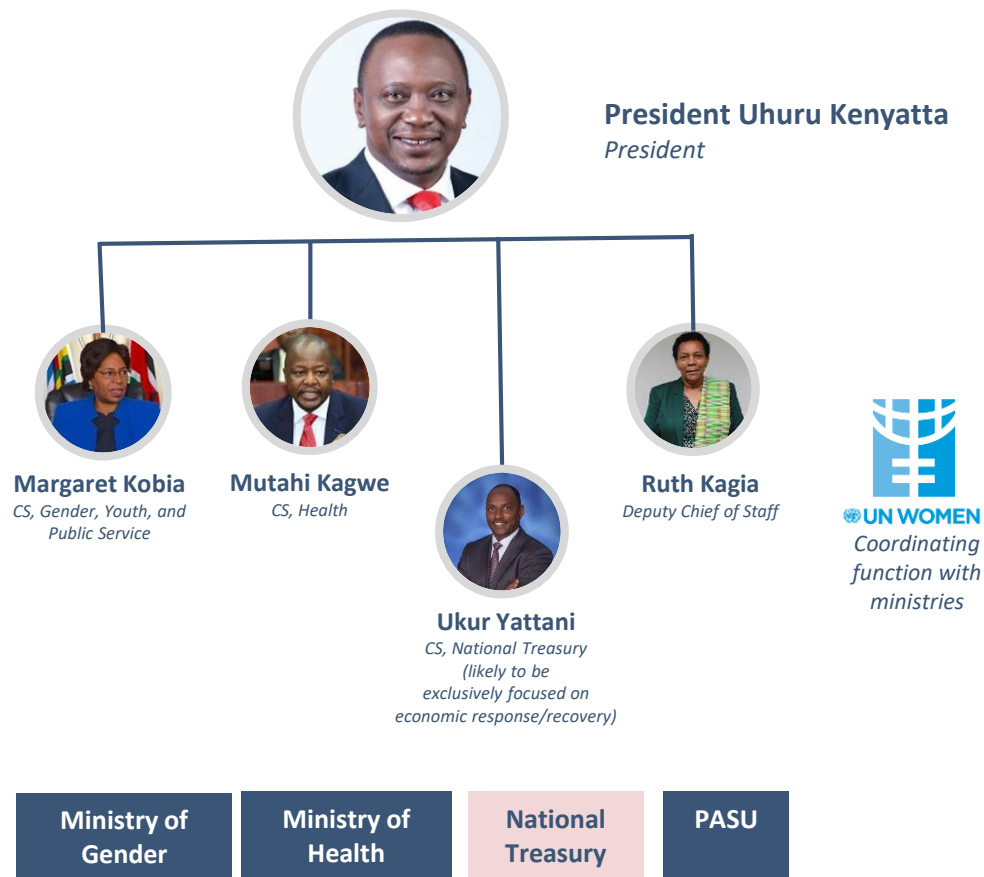
In pursuit of a gender-mainstreamed response to COVID-10, the gender ecosystem will need to pursue **multi-track advocacy** – focused on high level political leadership as well as working level influencers and bureaucrats at relevant departments and ministries.

**1 High level advocacy** at the Presidency and with the Cabinet Level should be led by BMGF leveraging:

- the high-level voice of the co-chairs with President Kenyatta
- strong relationships with senior leadership at the Policy and Strategy Unit (PASU) in the Office of the President and across relevant ministries

**2 Working-level advocacy** with PASU and relevant departments and ministries such as the State Department of Gender Affairs, can be led by the ecosystem’s bottom-up advocacy leads, as appropriate.

**3 Gendered analysis of COVID-19’s impact** to be carried out by relevant gender grantee (TBD) and fed through both channels. This will inform GOK efforts to better target long-term relief and response efforts.



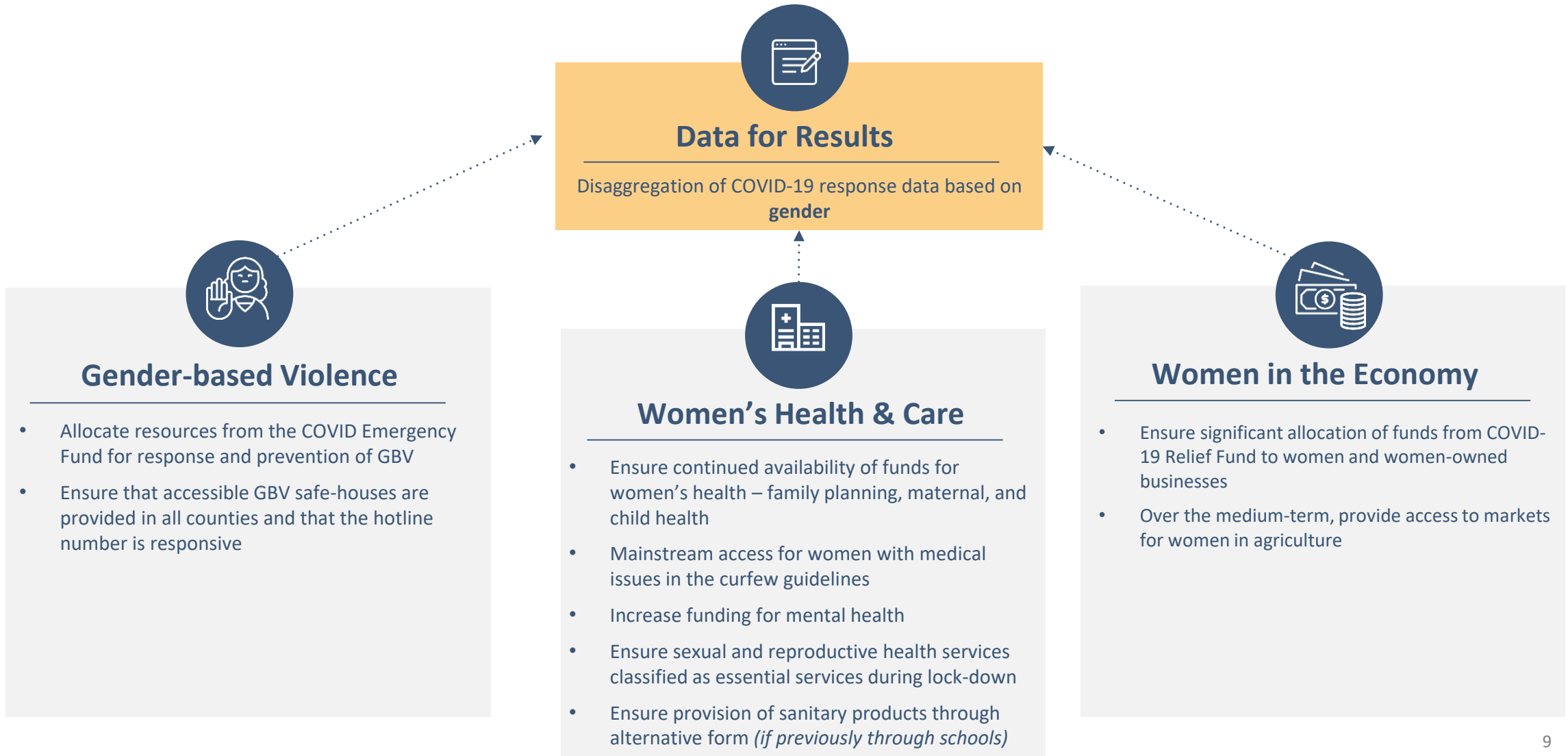
Advocacy Partners could include:





# The importance of a gender-inclusive COVID-19 response should be reiterated through both channels

To gain traction, the entire ecosystem will need to constantly **reinforce priority asks** with potential to have outsized impact for women as part of GOK's COVID-19 response. We recommend the following priorities:



# Next Steps

It will be important to move quickly to engage the government of Kenya on these priorities, as GOK responses to COVID-19 are quickly evolving with the crisis. We propose the following action items:

- 1 Map partner interventions in COVID-19 response**

ASG will engage the gender ecosystem to understand where and how BMGF's gender grantees and partners are already supporting GOK's COVID'19 response
- 2 Share near-term advocacy possibilities and get issue-specific feedback/buy-in from partners**

Beginning at the grantees convening on April 17, ASG will socialize the proposed advocacy asks with BMGF's grantees to understand where partners think there can be progress and what issue areas (data, GBV, women's health, women in the economy) partners are well-placed to engage on.
- 3 Begin near-term advocacy push with partners & ASG**

The gender ecosystem will begin engagement and advocacy with relevant members of the government. ASG will provide guidance on appropriate stakeholders to engage for each priority issue area.



