

KANCO

Healthy people, empowered communities

WEEKLY BULLETIN

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ANOTHER ONE!

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KANCO PROFESSOR ALLAN RAGI RECEIVES THE THE BIZZ EURASIA 2023 IN A COLOURFUL CEREMONY IN ASTANA, KAZAKHSTAN



FETED: Professor Allan Ragi flanked by World Confederation of Businesses (WORLCOB) Officials

Less than four months after receiving the International Socrates Award, Professor Allan Ragi was yet again honoured before the entire world for the impact that KANCO has continued to have in Public Health. This time it was the World Confederation of Businesses (WORLCOB) that placed another cro-

wn on Professor Allan Ragi and KANCO.

It gathers and recognizes leading businesses from different regions that contribute to the daily growth of their local economy and the world economy. The Bizz was created by World Confederation of Businesses

(WORLD COB), to offer to the global business community a range of benefits that further their development.

WORLD COB was founded in 2004 in Houston, Texas, in the United States of America. Its primary mission is to promote business development worldwide, recognizing and boosting the growth of leading businesses and businesspeople in every country through the special tools and services that it offers its members. It has approximately 3,500 members representing over 130 countries.

The Bizz Award takes place in three different cities each year, one for the Europe, one for Americas, and the one for the region of Asia, Middle East and Africa.

The award is intended to recognise the Business Excellence in small, medium and large companies because we believe that according to their proportions and capacities, they are capable to develop good business, worthy of recognition practices, and they end up being an example to follow for businesses in their community and internationally.

WORLD COB organisation recognises companies from around the world, and they currently have companies representing more than 130 countries.

This remarkable achievement could not have been possible without the relentless efforts and unwavering dedication of our incredible staff. Each and every one of you has played an invaluable role in KANCO's success story. It is your commitment, passion, and hard work that have propelled us to the forefront of

the healthcare sector.

Our management team, led by our visionary leaders, has provided the guidance and strategic direction necessary to steer KANCO towards success. Their visionary thinking, foresight, and innovative approaches have transformed challenges into opportunities, enabling us to make a significant impact in the lives of the communities we serve.

The Bizz Award recognises our organization's outstanding achievements across various areas. It highlights our unwavering commitment to delivering high-quality healthcare services, promoting HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness, and advocating for the rights and well-being of marginalized populations. Our comprehensive and holistic approach to addressing the healthcare needs of vulnerable communities has been acknowledged and applauded by the Bizz Award committee.

At KANCO, we have always believed in the power of collaboration and partnership. This award would not have been possible without the unwavering support and trust of our valued partners, donors, and stakeholders. Together, we have made a meaningful difference in the lives of countless individuals and communities affected by HIV/AIDS and other health-related challenges.

This prestigious recognition not only celebrates our past achievements but also serves as a catalyst for our future endeavors. It motivates us to continue pushing boundaries, striving for excellence, and exploring innovative solutions to meet the evolving innovative



Professor Allan Ragi makes his acceptance speech after receiving the Bizz Award.

solutions to meet the evolving healthcare needs of our communities.

As we celebrate this remarkable milestone, let us take a moment to express our gratitude and appreciation to each and every member of the KANCO family. Your hard work, resilience, and dedication have been instrumental in shaping our success. It is your unwavering commitment to our mission and vision that has earned us this well-deserved honor.

Let us use this achievement as a springboard to drive even greater positive change. Together, we will continue to make a lasting impact and improve the lives of those we serve.

Once again, congratulations to the entire KANCO team for this remarkable achievement. Let us take pride in this award and continue our journey towards transforming lives and communities.

NEWS

KANCO CONVENES ITS BOARD MEMBERS MEETING AND LUNCHEON AT ITS HEAD-QUARTERS



Prof Allan Ragi presents an award to KANCO Board Chair Reverend Father Firminus Shirima

In a moment of great pride and celebration, KANCO recently gathered its esteemed board members for a momentous occasion. During the luncheon, the organisation had the honor of presenting the prestigious awards received by our exceptional Executive Director, Prof Allan Ragi, to the Board Chair, Rev Fr Firminus Shirima. This joyous event not only recognised Prof Ragi's outstanding achievements but also served as a reminder of KANCO's commitment to excellence and transformative leadership in the fight against HIV/AIDS and related health challenges.

Prof Allan Ragi's accolades reflect his unwavering dedication, visionary leadership, and remarkable contributions to the field of public health and advocacy. These well-deserved awards are a testament to his tireless efforts in advancing KANCO's mission and making a lasting impact on the lives of individuals and communities affected by HIV/AIDS. We take immense pride in celebrating Prof Ragi's achievements, which have garnered in-

ternational recognition and reaffirmed KANCO's position as a leader in the sector.

The presentation of Prof Ragi's awards to Rev Fr Firminus Shirima, our esteemed

Board Chair, symbolises the collective success and shared vision of KANCO's leadership. It is a testament to the organisation's commitment to transparency, accountability, and the pursuit of excellence. By sharing this momentous occasion with the board members and staff, KANCO reinforces its values and ethos, fostering a sense of unity, pride, and determination to continue the vital work in improving health outcomes for vulnerable populations.

Prof Allan Ragi's achievements serve as an inspiration to all of us within the KANCO family and beyond. His exceptional leadership, innovative thinking, and unwavering commitment have been instrumental in driving forward our mission to empower communities, promote health equity, and advocate for the rights of those affected by disease. This recognition not only honors Prof Ragi's individual accomplishments but also serves as a catalyst for positive change and innovation within KANCO and the broader health sector.

While we celebrate Prof Allan Ra-

gi's outstanding achievements, it is essential to recognise that this recognition is not the culmination of our journey, but rather a milestone along the way. It reminds us of the collective responsibility we share in driving sustainable impact and transformative change in the fight against communicable diseases. The awards received by Prof Ragi underscore the importance of collaboration, partnerships, and the collective efforts of every individual involved in KANCO's work.

As we reflect on this momentous occasion, let us renew our commitment to KANCO's mission and vision. Let us harness this recognition as a catalyst for even greater achievements, expanded partnerships, and amplified advocacy efforts. Together, we can build on the foundation laid by Prof Ragi and continue to empower communities, reduce stigma, and improve access to comprehensive health-care services for all those affected by HIV/AIDS.



ENLIGHTENMENT

One of the most intriguing health facts is that laughter has numerous benefits for our overall well-being. It's not just a mood booster; it has actual physiological and psychological effects on our bodies.

When we laugh, our brain releases endorphins, which are natural feel-good chemicals that promote a sense of happiness and relaxation. These endorphins can help alleviate pain, reduce stress, and even boost our immune system. Laughing also increases blood flow and improves cardiovascular health by expanding blood vessels and enhancing oxygenation.

KANCO AND CEREB SET TO OPERATIONALISE THEIR MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING



THE RUBBER MEETS THE ROAD: KANCO and CEREB pose for a photo after their meeting

In a significant step towards driving positive change and fostering socio-economic development, KANCO and the Central Kenya Development Network (CKDN) recently convened a crucial meeting to discuss the operationalisation of their Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This partnership brings together the expertise and resources of both organisations to implement evidence-based interventions across the 10 counties in the Central Region Economic Bloc. With a shared vision for a cohesive, prosperous community, KANCO and CKDN are poised to make a lasting impact in sectors such as agribusiness and nutrition, healthcare, climate change adaptation, and governance.

The MOU between KANCO and CKDN is rooted in a shared commitment to promoting social, political, and economic development in Central Kenya. CKDN's vision of a cohesive and prosperous community aligns perfectly with KANCO's mission to improve health outcomes and empower communities. By collaborating on sector-based interventions, both organizations aim to enhance the welfare and harmony of the community, paving the way for a resilient and thriving Central Kenya.

To achieve their common goal, KANCO and CKDN have identified key sectors as drivers of sustainable development. These sectors include agribusiness and nutrition, healthcare, climate change adaptation, and governance. By focusing on these areas, the partnership aims to address critical issues and bring about tangible improvements in the lives of the communities they serve. Through

Through evidence-based interventions, KANCO and CKDN seek to foster economic resilience, enhance health outcomes, promote environmental sustainability, and strengthen governance structures.

The recent meeting between the staff members of KANCO and CKDN was a significant step in operationalizing the MOU and charting the way forward. The gathering provided an invaluable

platform for open dialogue, collaboration, and exchange of ideas. The participants explored various strategies to effectively implement sector-based interventions, leveraging the strengths and resources of both organisations. This meeting served as a crucial starting point for joint planning, coordination, and the development of an action plan that will guide future activities.

The collaboration between KANCO and CKDN is rooted in the understanding that sustainable development requires collective action and the pooling of resources. By combining KANCO's expertise in health and community empowerment with CKDN's focus on unified leadership and coordinated development, the partnership stands to achieve transformative results. The meeting emphasised the need to leverage synergies, foster innovation, and maximise the impact of interventions to ensure meaningful change at both the individual and community levels.

As KANCO and CKDN move forward, guided by their shared objectives and the operationalisation of the MOU, the partnership holds immense promise for the Central Kenya region. By focusing on evidence-based interventions and working in close collaboration with communities, local leaders, and other stakeholders, KANCO and CKDN aim to drive sustainable socio-economic development, improve the well-being of residents, and foster a sense of unity and shared prosperity.

NEWS

KANCO PARTICIPATES IN THE ENOMATASIANI MEDICAL CAMP, KAJIADO COUNTY

KANCO TRAINS CHVs, PEER EDUCATORS AND ADOLESCENTS ON TUBERCULOSIS PREVENTIVE TREATMENT ADVOCACY



Kajiado County Governor HE Martin Moshisho and Olkeri Ward Member of County Assembly Hon Steven Ngatho interact with KANCO staff during the medical camp

Over 1400 community members received various medical services, including Consultation, Testing and Diagnosis of various diseases (e.g., HIV/AIDS, TB, Diabetes and eye testing), Medication and Family Planning.

The medical camp, which was organised by the Kajiado County Government's Office of the Ward Administrator brought together key public health players from the region. These included medical institutions and Non-Governmental Organisations.

In the heart of every thriving community lies the collective well-being of its inhabitants. Ensuring access to quality healthcare services is a vital aspect of fostering a healthy and empowered society. One essential initiative that has proven to be a beacon of hope for communities worldwide is the establishment of medical camps. These temporary healthcare facilities, equipped with a diverse range of medical professionals and resources, play a pivotal role in addressing healthcare disparities and improving overall community health.

At the core of the significance of medical camps is their ability to bridge the gap between underserved communities and essential medical services. Many communities, particularly in remote or impoverished regions, lack access to healthcare facilities due to various socio-economic factors. Medical camps, however, bring healthcare professionals and resources directly to these communities, breaking down barriers of distance, cost, and transportation.

KANCO empowers communities.



KANCO staff pose for a photo after the training exercise

Tuberculosis Prevention Treatment remains of crucial importance in Kakamega County, as well as in any region affected by this infectious disease.

TB is a highly contagious disease caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. It spreads through the air when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. By implementing prevention measures and providing treatment to individuals with TB, the transmission of the disease can be reduced, thereby protecting the wider population.

TB is a potentially life-threatening condition if left untreated. Proper prevention efforts, including screening and testing, can identify individuals who are infected with TB but have not yet developed active symptoms. Early detection and appropriate treatment can prevent the progression of the disease and save lives.

Incomplete or inadequate treatment of TB can lead to drug-resistant strains of the disease. Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis (XDR-TB) are more difficult to treat.



Kajiado Member of Parliament Hon Onesmus Ngogoyo, Olkeri Ward Admin Samwel Muchiri and KANCO staff



WE AREN'T GETTING MAD ENOUGH ABOUT THE CORRUPTION AT THE NHIF



The recent revelations about the rearing of the ugly head of corruption at the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) should not be something that we should take lightly, especially at such a time when we are advocating for more funding on public health and the proper governance of health data.

Corruption is an insidious disease that erodes public trust, undermines economic growth, and hinders development. In Kenya, the National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) plays a crucial role in providing accessible and affordable healthcare to citizens. However, recent revelations of corruption within the NHIF have raised serious concerns about the mismanagement of public funds and the overall integrity of the institution. It is imperative that immediate action be taken to address this issue and restore faith in the NHIF.

Corruption in the NHIF not only squanders public resources but also directly impacts the quality and accessibility of healthcare services. Misappropriation of funds means that the intended beneficiaries, who rely on NHIF coverage for medical treatment, suffer the consequences. Essential medical supplies may be lacking, healthcare facilities may be inadequately equipped, and qualified health-

care professionals may be discouraged from working within the system. Corruption ultimately puts lives at risk and denies citizens their right to quality healthcare.

Yet, we will always hear of these scandals, do very little other than burying our heads in the sand, until the next scandal. Preposterous!

In the annals of injustice and betrayal, few offenses can match the audacity and cruelty of corruption in the public health sector. While Kenya's citizens continue to suffer and die due to a lack of proper healthcare, a sinister web of corruption has entangled the very institutions entrusted with their well-being. The time for anger has come. Kenyans must unite in a furious outcry against the rampant corruption that plagues our public health sector, as our collective rage can fuel the transformative change that is long overdue.

Every day that we tolerate corruption in the public health sector, more lives are lost. The consequences of this heinous crime cannot be understated. Mothers, fathers, children, brothers, and sisters are needlessly dying due to the embezzlement of public funds that were meant to save lives. It is an unconscionable act of cruelty that demands a thunderous and indignant response from a nation that values the sanctity of human life.

Kenyans, it is time to unleash your righteous anger! Corruption in the public health sector has reached alarming levels, betraying the trust of the very citizens it is meant to serve. The pervasive culture of graft not only robs us of our hard-earned taxes but also jeopardises our health, undermines healthcare services, and leaves the most vulnerable among us to suffer. It is high time we channel our outrage into demanding swift and decisive action against this corrosive menace.

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 P.O box 69866 – 00400 Nairobi – Kenya
 Telephone: 020 2323533/020 2434615/020 20323506/020
 2322657 0722 203344
 Email: kanco@kanco.org
 For opinion and feedback
 Please write to us
infodesk@kanco.org
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OPINION**WE MUST CURB INSTANCES OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN OUR HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS**

By Safia Mohammed - Programs
KANGO

INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence (GBV) refers to any form of violence that is specifically directed at individuals or groups based on their gender. It is a deeply rooted social issue that primarily affects women and girls

although men and boys can also be victims. Gender-based violence encompasses a wide range of behaviours, including physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and economic coercion.

There are different forms of gender-based violence and these forms of violence are often driven by unequal power dynamics, discrimination, and harmful gender norms and stereotypes. Examples of these forms of violence are:

- Domestic violence
- Sexual assault,
- Rape
- Intimate partner violence
- Child marriage
- Female genital mutilation
- Honour killings,
- Trafficking.
- Sexual harassment.

THE SITUATION

Gender-based violence has become a concern in Kenyan universities and other learning institutions where there are instances where many girls have been sexually harassed by their peers, lecturers, university staff and even their fellow students. Gender-based violence in Kenyan universities includes sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, intimate partner violence, and discrimination based on gender. These acts of violence can occur in different contexts, such as classrooms, hostels, social gatherings, or even online platforms.

University accommodation is quite expensive. Therefore you will find that when a girl is vulnerable in instances such as poverty where she comes from a poor background and she is not able to afford the hostel she is forced to live with her friend who is a boy that has a house around the campus, with time she is forced into a sexual relationship

with the boy who makes a move on her and because she feels indebted to the boy for assisting her at her lowest she agrees to secure herself a roof over her head. Things escalate afterwards when it starts getting physical. She can not escape the situation because she is dependent on the boy and perseveres in the toxic relationship.

THE SOLUTION TO GBV IN UNIVERSITIES

Cheaper accommodations for university students to prevent such incidents support their financial well-being, accessibility to education, academic performance, community building, and overall success. By addressing housing affordability, universities can foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for students to thrive.

Creating awareness and education by promoting comprehensive awareness campaigns and educational programs that address the issue of gender-based violence. These initiatives should focus on promoting gender equality, consent, respectful relationships, and bystander intervention. Educational institutions should integrate such programs into their curriculum and provide regular training to students, faculty, and staff.

Policy and Reporting Mechanisms by developing and enforcing clear policies and procedures that explicitly condemn gender-based violence and providing a framework for reporting incidents. Establish confidential reporting mechanisms and ensure that survivors have access to support services, such as counseling and legal assistance and encouraging universities to collaborate with local law enforcement agencies and support organizations to facilitate a coordinated response.

Safe Campus environment through improving campus security measures by enhancing lighting, installing surveillance cameras, and increasing the presence of security personnel. Implement measures to prevent and respond to incidents of sexual harassment, assault, and stalking. Foster a culture of safety and respect by encouraging the active participation of students, faculty, and staff in creating a secure campus environment.

Strengthening support services for survivors of gender-based violence. This includes establishing counselling centres that specialise in trauma-informed care, providing access to medical services, and offering support groups. Ensure that these services are confidential, accessible, and responsive to the unique needs of survivors.

OPINION

CONTRASTING THE KENYAN AND BRAZILIAN HEALTH SYSTEMS: LESSONS IN ADVANCEMENT AND CHALLENGES

By Kinyua wa Kibiru - Communications

In the pursuit of accessible and effective healthcare, it is essential to examine and learn from the diverse health systems around the world. This article delves into a detailed comparison of the health systems of Kenya and Brazil, two countries that represent different stages of development and confront unique healthcare challenges. By analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, achievements, and challenges of each system, we aim to highlight key lessons and potential areas for improvement in the pursuit of equitable and quality healthcare for all.

HEALTH SYSTEM OVERVIEW

KENYA: The Kenyan health system operates under a decentralized structure, with the Ministry of Health overseeing policies and coordination. It heavily relies on public funding and external assistance to provide healthcare services to its population of over 50 million. The system consists of public, private, and faith-based healthcare providers. However, significant regional disparities in infrastructure, resources, and service delivery persist, posing challenges to achieving equitable healthcare access.

BRAZIL: Brazil boasts one of the largest public healthcare systems globally, known as the Unified Health System (Sistema Único de Saúde or SUS). SUS provides universal coverage to Brazil's population of over 200 million. It is funded through a mix of public financing, primarily from the federal government, and supplementary private health plans. The system aims to provide comprehensive care from primary to tertiary levels, with a strong emphasis on prevention and community-based care.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

KENYA: Despite resource constraints and various challenges, Kenya has made notable progress in recent years. The country has achieved significant improvements in child health, maternal care, and infectious disease control through initiatives such as the Beyond Zero campaign and expanded immunization programs. The establishment of the

Linda Mama program has increased access to maternal healthcare services for vulnerable populations. However, inadequate funding, a shortage of healthcare professionals, and infrastructural limitations remain persistent challenges.

BRAZIL: Brazil's SUS has been internationally recognized for its achievements in expanding healthcare coverage and reducing health inequalities. The system's focus on primary care, community health workers, and family health teams has contributed to improved health outcomes in rural and underserved areas. Additionally, Brazil has successfully developed specialized services, such as its renowned organ transplantation program. However, SUS faces challenges related to the sustainability of funding, regional disparities, and long waiting times for certain procedures.

LESSONS AND POTENTIAL COLLABORATIONS

a) **Primary Healthcare:** Brazil's emphasis on primary healthcare, preventive measures, and community engagement can serve as valuable lessons for Kenya. By investing in robust primary care infrastructure, ensuring an adequate supply of healthcare professionals, and empowering community health workers, Kenya can enhance early detection and management of diseases while reducing the burden on higher-level facilities.

b) **Health Financing:** Kenya can learn from Brazil's diverse funding mechanisms, including the allocation of public funds, social health insurance, and private contributions. Exploring innovative financing models, such as increasing public healthcare spending or expanding the coverage of health insurance schemes, could help Kenya reduce out-of-pocket expenses for citizens and improve the overall financial sustainability of the health system.

c) **Resource Optimization:** Both countries can benefit from sharing best practices in resource optimization. Brazil's experience in managing complex healthcare networks, coordinating care across different levels, and optimizing resource allocation can inform Kenya's efforts to enhance efficiency, reduce wastage, and improve the referral system. Kenya can also explore public-private partnerships to leverage additional resources and expertise.

d) **Health Information Systems:** Strengthening health information systems can aid decision-making and resource allocation in both countries. Sharing experi-

ences and expertise in leveraging technology for data collection, analysis, and surveillance can help improve health outcomes and promote evidence-based policies. Kenya can adopt Brazil’s successful initiatives in utilizing digital health solutions, such as electronic medical records and telemedicine, to improve



NUGGETS OF WISDOM

“Float like a butterfly; Sting like a bee.”

- Muhammad Ali

ASPECT	KENYAN HEALTH SYSTEM	BRAZILIAN HEALTH SYSTEM
HEALTH SYSTEM OVERVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decentralized structure with the Ministry of Health oversight Relies on public funding and external assistance Public, private, and faith-based healthcare providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unified Health System (SUS) Provides universal coverage Mix of public financing and private health plans
ACHIEVEMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notable progress in child health and maternal care infectious disease control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded healthcare coverage and reduced health inequalities Improved health outcomes in rural and underserved areas Specialized services, including organ transplantation
CHALLENGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate funding, shortage of healthcare professionals Infrastructure limitations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability of funding Regional disparities, Long waiting times for certain procedures
LESSONS AND POTENTIAL COLLABORATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investing in primary care infrastructure, and empowering community health workers Exploring innovative financing models Optimizing resource allocation Strengthening health information systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasizing preventive measures, community engagement, and family health teams Diverse funding mechanisms: public funds, social health insurance, private contributions Managing complex healthcare networks, Optimizing resource allocation Leveraging technology for data collection and analysis

ALL IN A DAYS WORK...



Things You Don’t Want to Hear During Surgery:

- I. *Oops!*
- II. *Has anyone seen my watch?*
- III. *That was some party last night. I can’t remember when I’ve been that drunk.*
- IV. *Damn! Page 47 of the manual is missing!*
- V. *Well, this book doesn’t say that... What edition is your manual?*
- VI. *Ok, now take a picture from this angle. This is truly a freak of nature.*
- VII. *Damn, there go the lights again...*

PICTORIAL

KANCO LUNCHEON IN PHOTOS



BACKPAGE

PROF ALLAN RAGI ATTENDS THE ASTANA SPACE ENERGY EXPO IN KAZAKHSTAN



Prof Allan Ragi at the Astana Expo Space Energy in Kazakhstan

In a remarkable confluence of achievements, Prof Allan Ragi, KANCO’s esteemed Executive Director, attended the prestigious Astana Expo Space Energy in Kazakhstan following his recent recognition with the Bizz Eurasia Award. While the connection between space exploration and public health may not be immediately apparent, Prof Ragi’s participation in this event underscores the untapped potential

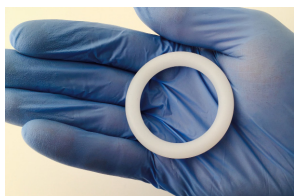
of space technology and its potential applications in advancing public health and healthcare services.

Space exploration has always captivated the human imagination, pushing the boundaries of what is possible and expanding our understanding of the universe. However, the benefits of space exploration extend far beyond the realm of astrophysics. Prof Ragi’s visit to Astana Expo Space Energy highlights the realization that space technology holds immense promise for improving public health outcomes, enhancing healthcare delivery, and addressing global health challenges.

One of the key areas where space exploration intersects with public health is telemedicine. Space missions require astronauts to receive medical care from a distance, which has driven the development of advanced telemedicine technologies. These technologies enable healthcare professionals to remotely diagnose, monitor, and treat patients, particularly those in remote or underserved areas. By leveraging space-derived telemedicine solutions, public health organizations can expand access to quality healthcare and bridge the gap between urban and rural communities.

Space-based technology, such as satellite imagery and remote sensing, plays a crucial role in disaster management and early warning systems. Real-time data collected from space assets can help monitor and predict natural disasters, epidemics, and other health emergencies. This information is vital for timely and effective response planning, resource allocation, and coordination of emergency healthcare services.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH KENYA LAUNCHES VAGINAL RINGS TO COMBAT HIV/AIDS



In a significant stride towards advancing

HIV/AIDS prevention and empowering women’s health, the Ministry of Health Kenya has launched a groundbreaking initiative—the introduction of vaginal rings as a preventive tool. This momentous development represents a major break-

through in the fight against HIV/AIDS, underscoring the government’s commitment to improving public health outcomes and reducing the burden of the epidemic. The launch of vaginal rings presents a new and empowering option for women to protect themselves and take control of their sexual health.

Traditionally, women have faced unique challenges in accessing and using HIV prevention meth-

ods. The introduction of vaginal rings addresses this gap by providing women with a discreet and user-controlled method of protection. By placing the power of prevention directly in the hands of women, this innovative approach empowers them to make informed decisions about their sexual health and protect themselves against HIV transmission. Vaginal rings are flexible, self-inserted devices that release a controlled dose of an antiretroviral drug over a specific period.