

## **Kenyans Cry Out for Leadership**

### **Press Statement**

#### **1. Introduction**

Over the years, Kenyans have expressed their desire and wish to live together and prosper as a nation. They have displayed a clear understanding that for that prosperity to happen there had to be stability and peace. However, this has not come to be.

With this understanding, we the Executive Committee of the National Council of Churches of Kenya meeting at Jumuia Conference and Country Home, Limuru, have deliberated and wish to share the following message.

#### **2. Concerns of Kenyans**

Assessing the way things are going in the country, the following issues raise concern:

##### **a. Government spending**

The coalition government is burdensome rather than facilitative. Ministers spend their time quarrelling about peripheral issues rather than undertaking their duties. In this understanding, the admission that the government has no resources for development is grave for the nation. Why should a government that is cutting down on development spending continue to spend so much money to finance a bloated and non-performing cabinet?

The government should get its priorities right. We at least expect the Minister of Finance to make strong recommendations on the downsizing of the cabinet, taxation of all holders of constitutional offices, and severe punishment for government officers engaged in wastage of public resources through unnecessary spending.

##### **b. Creation of Jobs**

Appreciating that unemployment among the youth is so grave as to cause a crisis in the country, we are taking a keen look at the government's initiative to launch 300,000 jobs for the youth. We commend the government effort and urge that the initiative be upscaled to match the magnitude of unemployment in the country. Meanwhile, we encourage the youths to visit government offices and seek to secure those jobs.

##### **c. Famine**

It is regrettable and saddening that after four decades of independence, the government is still unable to put in place policies and mechanisms to safeguard the supply of food for Kenyans. Hunger in Kenya has less to do with drought and more to do with lack of leadership since it is

man made and orchestrated for personal gain. How sad it is to know that there are people who are profiting from the suffering of Kenyans. Urgent measures to remedy this are required.

Further, we are concerned that more than one year after the post election violence, thousands of Kenyans remain in internally displaced persons camps. Is the government serious about resettlement?

d. Constitution Review

There is great merit in fast tracking the constitution review process. We call on Kenyans to rise up and demand that they regain the leadership of the process from the Parliament. Further, we urge that the process be accompanied by extensive civic education implemented by civil society actors to ensure that consensus is reached widely on the contentious issues.

e. Integration and Cohesion

As a nation, we are still divided along ethnic, social and political lines. It is regrettable that today, political leaders are not playing their role of giving leadership to efforts aimed at promoting national cohesion and integration. We urge that the National Cohesion and Integration Act be implemented fully.

f. Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Process

While we appreciate that the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Act 2008 has been operationalised, we still retain the following concerns inherent in the Act:

- i. Inadequate provisions for reparations, rehabilitation, amnesty and reconciliation
- ii. The Act does not include provisions for grassroots or community based approaches that would lead to authentic encounters towards healing and reconciliation among neighbours
- iii. There are no clear mechanisms for the implementation of the recommendations made by the Commission and the Commission may well turn out like all other Commissions before it.

In addition to these inherent weaknesses in the Act, we remind Kenyans that the world over, Commissions are not a panacea for the problems people face. Countries that have had Truth and Reconciliation Commissions are still hurting from divisions and conflict. Commissions are quasi-judicial and ad hoc arrangements that often lack follow up mechanisms.

We therefore urge all Kenyans to innovatively develop local reconciliation and healing mechanisms to renew relations with their neighbours. We shall, as the church, monitor the implementation of this process.

g. Corruption

Corruption in Kenya, as in the world over, is based on individualistic greed that defeats reason. While it is the responsibility of the government to take action on persons accused or guilty of corruption, every one of us, as Kenyans, has a responsibility to change our culture and values so as to stamp out corruption. Kenyans must change and stop making heroes out of corrupt persons but instead shame them and hold them to account.

### **3. The Cause of the problems facing Kenya**

At the heart of the problems facing Kenyans is a leadership crisis that is clear to all except, seemingly, the political leaders. A review of the leadership of the nation reveals the following:

#### **a. The Executive: A Leadership Crisis**

We are saddened to observe that the impression and expression of most Kenyans is that they have a moribund President and an ineffective Prime Minister. In their hearts, Kenyans cannot understand how they can be going through an extremely difficult period, with no hope in sight, yet the President, who is constitutionally mandated to give them leadership, is extremely quiet about those issues, almost as if he has lost touch with reality. They cannot understand how the Prime Minister, who is charged with supervision of government ministries, can complain about the same people he is supervising instead of streamlining their operations.

#### **b. The Legislature: Personification of Greed**

We are greatly alarmed that Kenya has turned into a Parliamentary dictatorship.

The arrogant refusal by Parliamentarians to pay taxes and their blatant parading before the executive for consideration for ministerial appointments is a gross disservice to Kenyans, one that is even sinful for it emanates from a deep sense of selfishness, not the selflessness expected in national leadership.

We find it immoral that Members of Parliament, elected and paid by Kenyans to represent them in Parliament, spend most of their time peacocking around the country while crucial laws are passed by just a few legislators in the House. How can it be that Parliament has a backlog of laws they have not discussed yet they go on recess every now and then? Shouldn't we as a nation adopt the policy of not paying MPs who skip sessions in the House? That is, after all, the standard policy in any work situation and is the basis of the performance based management adopted by the government.

For sure, our MPs are aptly described by the passage found in the book of Isaiah 1: 23: *"Your rulers are rebels, companions of thieves; they all love bribes and chase after gifts. They do not defend the cause of the fatherless; the widow's case does not come before them."*

And while the MPs are getting their tax free allowances to acquire the latest pleasures and luxuries, Kenyans are dying of hunger. We are convinced that Kenyans should call for new elections now to replace the current parliament.

#### **c. The Judiciary: Where Justice Died**

The Judiciary is meant to be the dispenser of justice. Had Kenyans had faith in the Judiciary, the Post Election Violence would never have happened. However, the Judiciary in Kenya continues to display a lethargy that is making many Kenyans, including the Executive arm of the government, to seek justice elsewhere. For how can you explain that the government is now taking to negotiating with and killing criminals rather than taking them to court? The emerging "Commission Culture" should be a point of shame for the Judiciary, for it is a declaration that Kenyans do not have any confidence of getting justice in the courts.

The sector on administration of justice needs urgent reforms. We urge that these be highlighted urgently to rid it of corruption, inefficiency and ineffectiveness. This is the sure way to fighting impunity in Kenya.

### ***Investigation and Prosecution of Criminals***

Connected to the judicial processes is the functioning of the office of the Attorney General. This has proved to be a great disappointment for Kenyans who are no longer assured that adequate investigations and prosecution will be done to dispense justice. We urge the President to effect a change of leadership in the office of the Attorney General urgently.

In the meantime, we challenge the Judiciary and the Attorney General's Office to remember the words of Proverbs 29: 4: *"By justice a king gives a country stability, but one who is greedy for bribes tears it down."*

### ***Implementation of the Waki Report***

Understanding this lack of faith in the Judiciary, we in the Council have today launched a campaign to collect at least one million signatures from Kenyans across the country. The Campaign will petition that:

- a. His Excellency Kofi Anan reveals the contents of the envelope handed over to him by the Commission to Investigate the Post Election Violence (Waki Commission).
- b. The prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (The Hague) investigates and prosecutes the perpetrators of the post election violence as a matter of urgency to save Kenya from further violence.

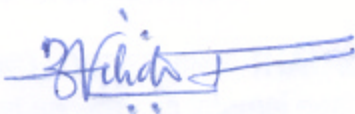
We ask all Kenyans to support this campaign by appending their signatures. We shall announce at the local levels where the forms will be located.

## **4. Conclusion**

Dear brothers and sisters, our nation is at a make or break point. The crisis we face is a crisis of leadership cutting across all sectors but moreso political leadership. In addition to challenging the President and the Prime Minister to rise up and offer the much needed leadership, we urge other sector leaders to embrace reform and stand to be counted as they speak and agitate for a better Kenya.

May God bless Kenya.

Signed on this 18<sup>th</sup> day of March 2009 at Jumuia Conference and Country Home, Limuru.



**Rev Dr Charles Kibicho**  
**Chairman**



**Rev Canon Peter Karanja**  
**General Secretary**