

TRANSCRIPT OF H.E. AMBASSADOR OLUYEMI ADENIJI'S COMMENTS TO THE PRESS

Nairobi Serena Hotel, 19 March 2008

Amb. Adeniji: What happened in Parliament yesterday with the unanimous adoption of the two Bills represent a watershed in the development of this country in particular the post-crisis development. A few weeks ago nobody would have thought that such an event would take place. But it did take place and we are here to join our voice to the wider international community to congratulate Kenya and Kenyans for that major show of unity, of solidarity that we witnessed in Parliament yesterday. I don't know how many of you were there, but this is something that one should also celebrate, not by drinking too much beer, but at least be showing some satisfaction that Kenya is on its way to regaining its peace, reconciliation and its position in this sub-region, in Africa as a whole, and in the international community. Maybe I should stop there and give you plenty of opportunity to ask such questions as are currently agitating your minds.

Nasser Ega-Musa: Before you agitate your minds, I made the mistake of not introducing the senior political adviser Professor Thomas who has also been a long-time senior UNDP official, I apologize, Professor. The floor is open.

Question from KTN television: With regards to the momentum in the process, we saw a lot of attention was given to the whole mediation process while Kofi Annan was here and they were focusing on the political questions, and now that we are with the political deals, do you feel that there has been a slow-down in the momentum in addressing the issues especially on an agenda of long-term [issues]?

Amb. Adeniji: There has not been a slow-down in the momentum. It is just that when you reach a stage in any negotiation that requires urgent follow-up, you try to grab the moment when there is a lot of goodwill and try to profit from that goodwill. So then, finally, after a number of weeks, the political agreement was arrived at, it required some intervention of the parties to sort of codify that agreement. And you will agree that at that time, that was what every Kenyan was looking to. It was necessary to push that

process, It so happens that those who were in the negotiations are also members of Parliament, all of them, and I think two of them or so worked very closely with the Attorney-General to change the two Bills, the terms of the two Bills, which made it all the more easy for the anonymous adoption which we all witnessed yesterday in Parliament. Now that that process is almost completed, I say almost because the Government has to be announced, we intend to take up the remaining issues starting from tomorrow.

Question from Citizen TV: Can you elaborate on the issues that have been pending on the table?

Amb. Adeniji: There are quite a number of them. The issue of land, this is a very, very big issue, we have the wider issue of either a new or amended constitution for Kenya, that is a very wide issue, we have the agenda on provision of jobs, particularly for the great horde of youths in this country. These are some of the issues which we are still going to hopefully address in the next few weeks.

Question from Standard newspaper: The Independent Review Committee is due to begin 15th March, when is it going to start, where is it going to sit and do you think it will be independent?

Amb. Adeniji: Yes, it didn't start last Saturday as had been expected, that was a result of a number of factors, but now the international members of the Committee...by the end of the day today all the members will be here, and the Committee members will be sworn in by the Chief Justice tomorrow in accordance with the usage here, even though it is an independent review committee, but that notwithstanding they still have to be sworn in, in accordance with the law of the land of Kenya. As soon as they have completed the preliminaries they are going to begin their public sitting and all this will take place at the Kenyatta Conference Centre. They will announce when the public sittings will start.

Question from KTN television: The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Committee could be constituted soon and there are also indications that we could expect legislation [inaudible]?

Amb. Adeniji: We are working hard on this. The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Committee will be made up partially by Kenyans, partially by

internationals. We will try to identify the internationals and the internal members will be identified mainly by the government particularly now that you have a coalition government. The government in principle has undertaken to provide a venue where they will meet, that is still to be done. Nairobi is now slightly congested, and if it takes the government a little more time to identify a venue...three commissions are working simultaneously, there is the Independent Review Committee which will start as of tomorrow, there is the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Committee, there is also a sort of mini-commission which we have agreed to with our interlocutors whose terms of reference have in fact been elaborated, and that is a commission on the investigation of the post-election crisis and conflict. The membership of that has practically been identified as far as the international commissioners are concerned. Now, for the local commissioner, we think it will be prudent to wait for the constitutional dealings, that means for the coalition government, because there will be only one Kenyan.

Question from Citizen television: [inaudible but regarding continued violence and internally displaced persons, IDPs]

Amb. Adeniji: The issue of continuation of violence is very unfortunate because this is an issue that has been [dealt with] in the past by the negotiators with steps that have to be taken, What concerns the violence, that is a matter for the forces of law and order to take steps to prevent youths from attacking each other. They are probably overwhelmed but this is something which the Committee will not directly undertake. But in addition there also has to be individuals and groups visiting these various areas and preaching to them the sermon of reconciliation in the hope that people will stop this sort of violence. The issue of IDPs is being addressed, as you know, the international community is, as a whole, in particular interested in the issue of IDPs. But it is not an easy undertaking, There are some IDPs who will, voluntary, agree to go. From the reports we are hearing from the humanitarian organizations quite a number have gone back with assurance, of course, of security and with perhaps some assistance to resettle themselves. [Others] still have difficulties because many of them do not have a clue where they will go back to now. They have been so traumatized that they cannot see themselves going back to where they came from originally. Humanitarian organizations are working to overcome these kinds of difficulties. You can move them [the IDPs] from where they are – if they are willing to be moved. We have to bear in mind that people can not be

forced without creating the additional issue of possible conflict and crisis if you don't prepare properly.

*** End of press encounter***