

KENYA NATIONAL DIALOGUE AND RECONCILIATION

KOFI ANNAN ACCEPTS WITH REGRET THE WITHDRAWAL OF CYRIL RAMAPHOSA FROM KENYA TALKS

Nairobi, 4 February 2008—Kofi Annan this morning accepted with regret the withdrawal of Cyril Ramaphosa, the South African businessman who was unanimously chosen by the Panel of Eminent African Personalities to serve as the Chief Mediator in the Kenyan National Dialogue. Ramaphosa told Annan that he was withdrawing his name for consideration for the post in the face of reservations by the Government/Party of National Unity.

Ramaphosa said that he could not function in the job without the complete confidence of both parties, and therefore he would return to South Africa today. “My experience in Northern Ireland and South Africa convinced me that a mediator can be effective only when he has the full confidence and support of all parties,” he said. “Unfortunately, this is not the case.”

Kofi Annan, the former UN Secretary-General who has been chairing the National Dialogue since 29 January, expressed extreme regret at losing Ramaphosa, whom he described as “one of the most experienced and qualified men for the job, with experience in Africa and a knowledge of and deep respect for the Kenyan people.”

Annan said that the search for a Chief Mediator would have to continue and that he hoped it would not set back the ongoing Dialogue.

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