

Audio Statement by H.E. Mr. Kofi Annan

On the occasion of the first anniversary of the partnership agreement in Kenya

28 February 2009

Today marks the first anniversary of the signing of the Agreement on the Principles of Partnership of the Coalition Government.

As I'm unable to be in Kenya, I wish to reflect, with the rest of you, on the significance of this day.

The signing of the agreement helped end of one of the most tragic chapters in Kenya's history.

It also restored Kenyans' faith in their own country, and rekindled their hopes for a better future.

This anniversary provides a good opportunity to take stock of what the country has gone through and to chart the way forward.

Whilst considerable progress was made in the early stages of the process, that momentum has been lost.

One year after the signing of the power-sharing accord Kenyans are feeling frustrated at the slow pace of change. I can understand those sentiments.

The root causes of last year's crisis need to be comprehensively addressed if the country is to avoid a repeat of the violence.

Of particular importance are the reforms agreed under Agenda Item Four of the National Dialogue.

These include constitutional and institutional reforms, land reform, and reducing the huge gap between the haves and the have-nots.

Other priorities are creating more jobs for youth, equal access to opportunities, promoting ethnic harmony, ending the culture of impunity, and promoting transparency and accountability.

I urge the political leadership to listen to the voices of the people and expedite the effective implementation of the National Dialogue agreements.

This will require renewed determination and greater unity of purpose.

For it is only through such leadership that politicians can retain the support of the people.

And to my Kenyan friends, let me say this: while I understand your frustrations, we must all acknowledge that fundamental reforms involve difficult decisions.

I urge all of you - from business, religious leaders, professional associations and NGOs – to remain vigilant by maintaining pressure on the politicians to act decisively on these changes.

On this day, let us not forget the horror that Kenya lived through early last year.

Let us also recall the words of the agreement signed by President Kibaki and Prime Minister Odinga on the steps of Harambee House one year ago today.

In it, the two leaders acknowledged that the formation of the Coalition Government was not an end in itself.

They agreed that the primary goals of the Coalition were to begin the healing and reconciliation process, to promote the greater interest of the nation as a whole, and to set the country on a new path towards lasting peace and sustainable development.

On this day, and in the crucial weeks and months ahead, let us strive to revive the hopes of the Kenyan people that these crucial objectives will be attained.

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