

PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT OF A PRESS CONFERENCE

BY H.E. KOFI ANNAN AND KENYAN CEOs

Nairobi Serena Hotel

5 February 2008

[H.E. Kofi Annan, Chair of the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation, this morning addressed the opening of a meeting of some 300 Kenyan CEOs gathering to discuss the country's political crisis. The leadership of this CEO group then came to the Serena Hotel in the afternoon to present Mr. Annan in front of the press with a resolution they had adopted.]

[Michael Joseph, CEO of Safaricom, made opening remarks, saying that the CEOs had pledged support for Mr. Annan's work and urged the Government and the opposition to participate constructively in the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation. Mr. Annan was then presented with the document adopted by the CEO group.]

ANNAN: Let me thank all of you very much for what you have done, bringing together so many business leaders today, showing your concern for

Kenya, for Kenyans, for the Kenyan economy, and your determination to work with the leaders and all men and women of good will in this country to get us back from the brink.

It is important for all of us to realize that this is not an issue for the government alone or for political leaders alone. Each and every one of us has a role to play. If we all do our little bit and press ahead and pushed our leaders to take the right decisions, to have the courage to strengthen institutions, to prosecute those who are committing crimes and to strengthen our capacity to protect civilians and their property, I think we will make good progress.

I think what you have done today is a powerful message that you're sending to Kenyans and your workers. I know many people are losing their jobs, but if we are able to bring the violence under control and come up with a long-term viable solution, I have no doubt that this economy will grow leaps and bounds and that the people of this country can look forward to a stable and prosperous future. But let's work together.

Since we came here we've have had tremendous support from the business community, from a whole range of civil society organisations, from the churches. Often when I travel the world, people ask me how do you become a responsible global citizen; and in a way we should also ask today how you do become a responsible national citizen? It starts at home in the communities standing up for your neighbor, and if you see something wrong, getting together with some friends to do something about it, assisting the police with their work and sometimes identifying criminals in your midst. We all have to do this together.

So I thank the CEOs for what they have done today and we all have a lot to do. So let us pool our efforts and move ahead and get it done as quickly as possibly. I am sorry that members of the Dialogue and Reconciliation team are not here to be with me. They're busy. We've started the issue of how to overcome the political crisis gripping the nation, so it is a very hot issue and there are focussed on that and couldn't break off to be here, but they also send their appreciation and greetings.

Thank you very much.

QUESTION: Adam Mynott of the BBC. A question for Michael Joseph. Do you or your CEOs have any sense of how much this is costing Kenya in the past few weeks?

[Mr. Joseph asked one of his colleagues to answer, who then replied that some 49,000 jobs had been lost and that on an annualized basis the loss to the economy could be some 260 million shillings.]

QUESTION: A question for Mr. Annan: How do you feel the talks are going so far? And do you feel that there is another negotiator such as Mr. Ramaphosa who could come and help push things forward?

ANNAN: I answered your second question yesterday and I will answer it again.

I think the talks are going very well. I am satisfied; I'm pleased. The team is working very hard. We are beginning to work as a team, a team put together to help Kenya get out of this crisis, a team put together to help us come up with a long term viable solution, a solution that will strengthen institutions, a solution that will strengthen our democratic set up, a solution that will

hopefully also clear up the electoral difficulties that we've had periodically in the past, which will entail electoral reform, constitutional reform, and land reform, amongst others. So they see the responsibility they have and what Kenyans expect of them and they are working very, very hard and very constructively.

There are no hardliners in the room. Everybody says their position firmly and clearly and no one has said anything or had behaviour that has shocked me, that makes me feel we cannot work together or they cannot work together. And I think that is very important. But we need your support. Stay with us and encourage us to press on.

On the second question, I will try and get another mediator. As I told you yesterday, I was bitterly disappointed that such an outstanding negotiator [as Cyril Ramaphosa] could not find a consensus. I need to get another; actually I need two--a chair and a co-chair, to ensure that at any one time either one of them or both of them are here so that the group cannot claim that they cannot meet because there was no chair. So there will be a continuous chair available and meetings and negotiations should be sustained, because I had committed that we are going to try and do it in as short a time as possible.

For the short term, major issues, including the controversies surrounding the political crisis, I have given a deadline of 7-15 days and we intend to stick to that. It can be done. We know the issues; they are not new. With a bit of luck we can do it and make very rapid progress. And then we can tackle the long-term issues and that should happen.

If I am out of town, and none of the other Eminent Persons could be here, we don't want a break in the discussions. That is why we talk of two co-chairs to help move the process forward because I do not want to see a gap in the negotiations or difficulties for the negotiating team. So I would hope the parties will understand why the Panel [of Eminent African Personalities] decided to structure its operations in such a way that we would have two additional people, if you wish, as our plenipotentiaries working with us to move the process forward. When we have determined who he or she will be I will let you know.

[Mr. Annan was then asked by a journalist about the visit to Nairobi of the Foreign Ministers of IGAD [Intergovernmental Authority on Development] and the opposition threat to hold protest demonstrations. To what extent does he see this as provocative action by either side?]

ANNAN: Obviously, President Kibaki is free to invite whomever he wants and I am not going to comment on that. But as far as I know they are not here to negotiate or mediate this process. I think the whole world and all of Kenya have accepted that there is one process and one process only.

From my experience internationally, when you have different groups trying to mediate the same issue, it leads to confusion and the parties [unintelligible]. If they don't like what I tell them, they go to mediator B. If they do not like what he tells them they go to mediator C. And if she doesn't satisfy them they come back to me. And we will be turning around in circles. So everyone has to be clear that there is only one mediating team and the entire international community is backing our efforts. We have the AU, the United Nations, the European Union, the United States and other friends of Kenya from around the world. So that has to be clear.

On the question of provocation, in our own guidelines we have demanded that the parties avoid provocative statements outside the negotiating room, that they should not discuss sensitive issues on the table in their outside contacts. And we are going to be vigilant on that. We have discussed the issue in the statement that was issued and I think there is a clear

understanding that it should not have been done and there will be no mass
action.

Thank you.

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