

**PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT OF A PRESS CONFERENCE  
BY H.E. KOFI ANNAN, H.E. BENJAMIN MKAPA  
AND H.E. GRAÇA MACHEL**

**Nairobi Serena Hotel, Friday 8 February 2008**

[Kofi Annan, Chair of the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation, and two other members of the Panel of Eminent African Personalities, former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa and former South African First Lady Graça Machel, went to Harambee House, Nairobi, earlier in the afternoon to jointly brief President Mwai Kibaki and opposition leader Raila Odinga on progress in the talks thus far. The three Panel members then spoke to the press at the Nairobi Serena Hotel.]

ANNAN: Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen. I think we indicated to you that as we go ahead we will make periodic statements, either through the spokesperson or myself and the three Panel Members.

I've read a lot of things in the papers and lots of speculation, and I thought it would be best that you hear from those of us who are actively engaged in the negotiations where we are.

I think everyone realizes that we have a serious problem in the country. They also accept that we have to find a way of uniting and reconciling the nation. In the negotiations, we have agreed that what is needed is a political solution. We are actively discussing the terms of that solution. And I sincerely hope that we will conclude our work on item three, the settlement of the political issues, by early next week. So we wanted to share with you where we are, and please don't pay much attention to the speculations and the rumors.

I hope next week we will have firm news for you, with the details of whatever we agree on. In the meantime, have faith and stay the course.

[Former President Mkapa then delivered a similar message in Swahili, after which Mr. Annan called on Graça Machel.]

MACHEL: I don't think I have much to add to what the SG [Mr. Annan] and President Mkapa have said. It has been a constructive process; it has been a cooperative process from both sides. And we have already made considerable progress in terms of how we face the crisis in the country. We all acknowledge the country is divided; the country is bleeding. It needs a deep process of healing in which both parts, particularly, but all the nation has to be engaged. That's why only a political solution, a political settlement is the way forward. And in that we all agree.

ANNAN: Thank you very much, Graça. One thing I forgot to tell you, which you know already, is that we had a very useful briefing session with the two principals. We just came from Harambee House, where we gave a progress report to the two leaders and appealed to them to support their negotiators and give them instructions to cooperate and to settle. Not that they are not; they are doing it. But of course we all know in negotiations, negotiators who have good reputations, excellent and good negotiators can never reach a deal. So I want the leaders to support their men and women working on the Dialogue and Reconciliation process to strike a deal. So we briefed the two principals today.

Another decision the group took was that Parliament should convene, an informal session of Parliament, inviting all Parliamentarians for us to brief them and also obviously if they want to discuss other issues, that is fine. But we will brief them on the process, where we are and where we are going. That will probably be on Tuesday of next week. But it's up to the President of the Parliament when he convenes it. And I think that will be another important step.

[Former President Mbaki then translated Mr. Annan's remarks into Swahili.]

ANNAN: We'll now take your questions.

[A local correspondent for the BBC asked what exactly Mr. Annan meant when he said the parties had agreed to a political settlement.]

ANNAN: Let me repeat precisely what I said. I said we are all agreed that a political settlement is needed, a political settlement is necessary. And we are now in the process of discussing the details, working out the terms of that settlement. So you may have to be a little patient, probably not longer than next week to get an answer to your question.

**QUESTION:** Lucy Hannan of [ITN] Channel 4. We were under the impression that there was a breakthrough, so can we assume that something that you would have liked to have announced at the last minute at Harambee House maybe there was a failure of agreement between the two leaders?

**ANNAN:** I don't know where you got your impression...

[Someone in the room called out "BBC World Service".]

**ANNAN:** Oh, you created that impression. [Laughs.] Were you in the room? Anyway, as I said, we are making progress and we've agreed that a political settlement is needed. We are in the process of working out, energetically and constructively, the details of such a settlement. And as I said, a little patience, with a bit of luck you'll have all the details later.

And I would also say that we did not go [to Harambee House] to negotiate with President Kibaki nor with the Honorable Raila [Odinga]. We went to brief them, to give them a progress report. They were not required to take any decisions. The only plea I made is that we should all move forward. They are the principals; they aren't with their teams, and it is appropriate that we brief them and say let's try bring the two closer.

**QUESTION:** Adam Mynott, BBC. I'm going to pursue the same point, if I may. A senior member of one of the negotiating teams is reported on one news agency as saying there had been some form of agreement for power sharing. Was he jumping the gun?

**ANNAN:** He was jumping the gun. We had a very good session today, there's no doubt about it, and I think it gives grounds for optimism and perhaps enthusiasm [laughter], but the issues are still on the table and we will go back to them on Monday. We've narrowed them considerably, but we will make a decision on Monday or Tuesday. And so he's not unjustified in being optimistic, or very optimistic, but we haven't firmed up any decisions.

[A journalist asked Mr. Annan about the behavior of the teams, which seemed quite negative yesterday.]

**ANNAN:** These kinds of mood swings happen in any negotiation. Sometimes they even walk out of the room. It's all part of negotiations. Or

they'll go out and insult each other; it's part of the negotiations. And so I'm not--I wasn't worried by what happened yesterday, nor how far we're moving today. But I'm just telling you we are making progress. Don't let the bumps in the road discourage you or lead you to jump to conclusions. I think Kenya needs a solution. The people are demanding it, and the leaders owe it to them, for the sake of national unity, for the sake of healing and for the sake of reconciliation.

You've heard the business community talk about what this crisis is doing to the economy. 49,000 people have already lost their jobs and more may be on the way. Farmers can't get to the farm to till their land; some cannot get their produce to the markets. Women, children and men are displaced in the open sun. Is this what leaders are put in office to do?

So they realize that they have a responsibility, and I must say, the team that we are working with has been very good. You may hear rumors from others outside, but they have worked conscientiously. They know they have a great responsibility and they know what the people and the nation expects of them.

They also know, that we have not come together to paper over things or put scotch tape on it. We want deep, long-term solutions that will ensure that we have strengthened our democratic institutions and that Kenya can look forward to the future with confidence, stability, and not go back and forth and have a crisis every couple of years or every five years.

So thank you very much. We are proud of the team that has been put together by Kenyans to work with us and I think they are serving you well.

[Former President Mkapa then rendered Mr. Annan's comments in Swahili.]

\* \* \*