

PANEL OF EMINENT AFRICAN PERSONALITIES

STATEMENT OF

HIS EXCELLENCY, KOFI ANNAN

I have had a very pleasant and fruitful visit to Kenya. I had the opportunity to meet with a wide range of people, including President Kibaki, Prime Minister Odinga, the business community, civil society, religious leaders, the diplomatic community and several other groups and individuals.

During my visit, I was particularly struck by the progress made in restoring peace and normality to the country. This is a very different Kenya from the one I experienced earlier this year. It is heartening to witness the many positive changes taking place, to see how former political rivals are working together as partners, and to sense Kenyans' growing optimism for the future.

But there is still much work to be done. The calm that has been restored should not lead to a loss of momentum in efforts to advance the reforms agreed upon under Agenda Item Four of the National Dialogue. The critical challenges include constitutional reform, land reform, youth unemployment, and national cohesion, among others.

I join the many Kenyans who are happy with the work and recommendations of the Independent Review Commission (IREC). Kenya must now embark on a serious electoral reform process to ensure that the events of December 2007 are never repeated.

There are outstanding tasks to be completed from earlier National Dialogue agreements as well, including on reconciliation and the resettlement of the internally displaced persons. The situation of IDPs is on the minds of virtually all Kenyans I met. A durable solution must be found expeditiously.

In my discussions with President Kibaki and Prime Minister Odinga, they reassured me of their commitment to implement the agreements and reforms. But all Kenyans must play their part, too.

Given the importance of the timely and effective implementation of the agreements and reforms, there is a need to ensure broad awareness of what progress has been achieved and what constraints have been encountered. Towards this end, the Panel has engaged South Consulting, a Kenyan research firm, to independently monitor the implementation process. South will issue periodic reports to the Panel, which will be shared with the Coalition Government and the public.

I intend to remain engaged and will be visiting the country periodically. The Panel is maintaining a secretariat in Nairobi, called the Coordination and Liaison Office (CLO). The CLO is headed by Ambassador Nana Effah-Apenteng, Chief of Staff of the Secretariat of the Panel of Eminent African Personalities, former Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations in New York and Special Adviser to President Kufuor of Ghana.

Kofi Annan
Nairobi, 23 September 2008