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KURA YANGU, SAUTI YANGU PRESS STATEMENT ON THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON THE 2017 ELECTIONS

Kura Yangu ,Sauti Yangu is a citizen movement spearheaded by a number of like-minded civil society organizations (Kenya Human Rights Commission, Independent Medico-Legal Unit, Constitution and Reforms Education Consortium, the Africa Centre for Open Governance, the Civil Society Organization Reference Group, Inuka Trust, Katiba Institute, Freedom House, and the Kenyan Section for International Commission of Jurists) who have come together to proactively support Kenya's preparations for the 2017 elections with a view to ensuring that the country minimizes the risks related to dysfunctional electoral systems and practices which the country has experienced in the recent elections.

Through ***Kura Yangu, Sauti Yangu*** a number of citizens and stakeholders concerned that the forthcoming elections should be the occasion for strengthening national cohesion and integration and deepening electoral integrity and accountability, have been working towards political dialogue with a view of establishing sufficient common ground to inform preparations for the 2017 elections. ***Kura Yangu, Sauti Yangu*** believes that political consensus on the elections will increase public confidence and ultimately make both the process and results more credible and legitimate, and therefore contribute to the overall state of political certainty and stability of the country.

After deep reflection and wide consultation with various stakeholders, including political leaders, faith based organizations, the private sector, trade unions, the media, civil society organizations and development partners; it is our belief as Kura Yangu, Sauti Yangu, that a national dialogue is critical towards a credible, free and fair electoral process. We are also cognizant of the clear progress in the debate as to whether or not there should be dialogue on the 2017 elections.

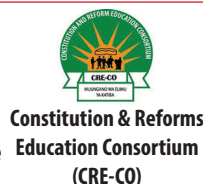
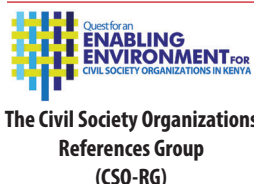
However we do recognize the different viewpoints on the issues for dialogue, and the way the dialogue should be conducted. On the issues that require dialogue, we do recognize that the IEBC has taken prominence, and rightly so.

However, ***Kura Yangu, Sauti Yangu*** would like to emphasize that the following issues should also be considered critical for national dialogue:

1. ***The credibility of the electoral governance process:*** There is need for political discussions around what constitutes a voter register in Kenya, and sufficient clarity on valid votes vs. votes cast. This can be achieved through political discussions around the use of technologies in elections, the management of the registration process, the management of the register of voters, and the tallying of presidential results.

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2. **Security in electoral governance:** There is need to have a political discussion around measures that the government can put in place to ensure that the 2017 electoral process is peaceful.
3. **Discrimination in electoral governance:** There is need to have political discussions around the implementation of the 2/3 gender rule and the political participation of other special interest groups.
4. **Dispute resolution in electoral governance:** There is need for a collective reflection on how to manage the internal challenges facing the Judiciary and, in particular Supreme Court.
5. **Coordination among public agencies working on elections:** Public agencies working on elections need to find ways of working together, rather than in silos, and also need to demonstrate their capacity to work together, as a confidence building measure.

Whereas, previously, the Jubilee Coalition had opposed the assertions made by a number of other stakeholders that there is need for dialogue ahead of the 2017 elections, Jubilee has now come round and has also accepted, in principle, that it would be necessary for the country to have dialogue.

The Jubilee coalition has, however, made it clear that the forum for such dialogue would be the institution of Parliament and has also indicated that it will provide its views to relevant parliamentary committees on the issues that need to be reformed ahead of the 2017 elections.

On its part, the CORD Coalition maintains that Parliament is not a proper forum for dialogue and has, instead proposed that the Jubilee Coalition and the CORD Coalition should each appoint an equal number of representatives to participate in the talks between the two parties.

Other stakeholders have proffered that the solutions sought should not be quick fixes, but comprehensive and long term.

Kura Yangu, Sauti Yangu notes that what is clear, therefore, is that the proposal for dialogue has been accepted not only by the main political coalitions, but also by most of the 2013 presidential candidates, other political parties, religious leaders, civil society organizations and development partners. What remains contested is the methodology to be used in achieving the dialogue.

As part of its support of is a national dialogue on elections 2017, **Kura Yangu, Sauti Yangu** is pleased to present the attached National Electoral Dialogue framework, as its proposal on how the mediation process for the 2017 elections can be managed.

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The National Electoral Dialogue Framework proposed by Kura Yangu, Sauti Yangu

The framework proposes three stages in the dialogue process. **The first stage** is the Pre-Dialogue Process. During this stage, stakeholders will come together and agree on the mediation arrangements, and on who will participate in the mediation. During this stage stakeholders will also agree on the agenda for the mediation process and finally on the rules of procedure that will guide the mediation process.

The second stage is the Dialogue process. During this stage, stakeholders will formally adopt the mediation agenda, adopt the rules of procedure and deliberate on the agenda of the National Electoral Dialogue (NED). They will also adopt the resolutions of the NED.

The third stage is the Post-Dialogue stage and will consist of reporting on the NED dialogue, implementation of the NED resolutions, monitoring the implementation of the resolutions and assessing the pre-election environment.

Kura Yangu, Sauti Yangu welcomes reactions by stakeholders to the proposed framework and will, in the coming days, meet and explain the framework to the stakeholders, with a view to obtaining their support.

As the country continues to engage in this process, we would like to condemn any forms of violence, be it from the police or individual citizen, as this has the potential to scuttle a healthy dialogue process.

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