

**News Release** | 30 March 2009 – for immediate release

## Kofi Annan urges Kenyans to act now to accelerate the pace of reform

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### **Kofi Annan Foundation hosts meeting to share lessons learned from mediation process in Kenya**

**Geneva, Monday 30 March** - Kofi Annan has today called on Kenya's leaders to accelerate implementation of the country's reform process agreed in February 2008. Speaking in Geneva, Mr Annan stated: "Kenya is at a crossroads. The time to act is now."

Mr Annan's remarks were made at the Opening Plenary of 'The Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation – One Year Later', a two-day meeting hosted by the Kofi Annan Foundation to review the mediation process in Kenya in 2008 and to share lessons learned with Africa and the wider world.

Addressing the 250 participants at the meeting, Mr Annan said: "There is no disagreement on what needs to be done. All that is lacking is effective action. The parties have already agreed on a blueprint for building a more equitable, prosperous and just society. That blueprint is found in the reform package agreed in the National Dialogue."

Mr Annan praised the efforts of all Kenyans in 2008. He said: "The cessation of violence was a great achievement on the part of the political leadership and the people of Kenya. Kenyans should be very proud for having brought the country back from the brink. There was no alternative to dialogue and mediation, and the leaders found the courage and wisdom to seek a political settlement to stop the killing."

But Mr Annan went on to warn that "the achievements of 2008 were only a beginning and most of the hard work remains to be done."

The slow pace of reform, he said, had caused disillusionment among ordinary Kenyans. "There is a collective understanding of what needs to be done to move the country forward. The average person finds it hard to comprehend why the changes, some of them very fundamental, are not taking place at a faster pace."

He cautioned: "Negotiating and signing a peace agreement is the easy part. Implementation is much more complex and much more difficult. An agreement, no matter how beautiful its



text, is merely a piece of paper unless it is actually implemented faithfully, in both letter and spirit.”

Mr Annan stressed that the lessons from Kenya have a wider relevance for Africa and elsewhere. “A number of the causes underlining the crisis in Kenya in 2008, including the politicisation of ethnicity, non-adherence to the rule of law, corruption and the abuse of power, and inequitable development, exist in other parts of Africa and across the globe. I believe this is one reason why the world is paying such attention to the way Kenya grapples with these issues.”

The Kofi Annan Foundation will be publishing a full report of the outcomes of the meeting, which concludes on Tuesday 31 March, on its website: [www.kofiannanfoundation.org](http://www.kofiannanfoundation.org).

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For a full transcript of Kofi Annan’s opening address and images from the meeting, please visit [www.kofiannanfoundation.org](http://www.kofiannanfoundation.org)

For further information on substantive issues around the ‘The Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation: One Year Later’, please contact Lamin Sise: +41 79 600 1259 / [sise@kofiannanfoundation.org](mailto:sise@kofiannanfoundation.org)

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Notes to editors

### **About ‘The Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation - One Year Later’**

‘The Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation: One Year Later’, hosted by the Kofi Annan Foundation in Geneva on March 30 and 31 2009, draws lessons from the mediation in Kenya in 2008 that can be shared with Africa and the wider world. Under the chairmanship of Kofi Annan, the meeting features a number of panel discussions, and brings together key actors who participated in the



mediation effort in early 2008, as well as international and Kenyan civil society representatives, academics, analysts and members of the media who were observers of the events during that time or who have since studied the process that led to the National Accord.

### **About the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation (KNDR)**

Following the disputed presidential election in Kenya in December 2007, and the subsequent violence, the African Union mandated a Panel of Eminent African Personalities, chaired by Mr. Kofi Annan with former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa and former Mozambican Minister and First Lady Graça Machel as members, to find a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

On 29 January 2008, the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation (KNDR) was formally launched by the Panel and the two Principals - President Mwai Kibaki who heads the Party of National Unity (PNU) and Honourable Raila Odinga leader of the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM). On 1 February 2008, the Agenda for the talks was agreed and the parties completed the first two Agenda items, *'Immediate Action to Stop Violence and Restore Fundamental Rights and Liberties'*, and *'Measures to Address the Humanitarian Crisis, Promote Reconciliation, Healing and Restoration of Stability'* on 1 and 4 February, respectively. Over the course of the next three weeks, the talks focused exclusively on Agenda Item Three - *'How to Resolve the Political Crisis'*. On 28 February, a power-sharing agreement was reached pursuant to which a Coalition Government comprising the PNU and ODM was established. The talks continued on to Agenda Item Four, *'Long Term Issues and Solutions'*, which is still being addressed.

During the negotiations, the Kenyan parties also agreed to establish three important commissions: the Independent Review Commission on the 2007 elections (IREC) and the Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Election Violence (CIPEV), which have both completed their work and submitted final reports, and the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC), which is in the process of being established. The parties further agreed to pursue a comprehensive constitutional review process, which is also underway. At the conclusion of the mediation phase of the process in July 2008, the KNDR stressed the need to ensure the continued role of the Panel during the implementation phase, including through the establishment of a Coordination and Liaison Office (CLO) in Nairobi.

One year on, the Coalition Government is working to implement the KNDR agreements and the recommendations of IREC and CIPEV.

For further information please visit: [www.dialoguekenya.org](http://www.dialoguekenya.org)