



SPEECH BY THE KENYA NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS VICE-CHAIRPERSON, GEORGE MORARA, DURING THE HANDING OVER OF THE KEYS TO RESIDENTS OF KIBERA SOWETO EAST ZONE 'A' IN A PROJECT UNDER THE MINISTRY OF LAND, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT ON FRIDAY, 8TH JULY 2016

Cabinet Secretary, Prof Jacob Kaimenyi, Ministry of Land and Physical Planning

The Governor of Nairobi City County, Dr. Evans Kidero

Members of Parliament with us here today,

Principal Secretaries,

Members of County Assemblies here today,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Bwana CS,

We have eagerly waited for this day to come. We are truly honoured by your presence here today and the time you have set aside

to officiate this handing over ceremony for the people of Langata Constituency who are part of the bigger Kibera Area.

Bwana CS, your presence here makes this experience of house ownership extraordinary, important and meaningful, especially because those who are getting the opportunity to own a house today are a group of people who would ordinarily not be expected to buy or own a house in a housing market that continues to remain out of reach for a majority of Kenyans.

We wish to acknowledge the commitment of the Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban Development towards the realization of the right to accessible and affordable housing as provided for under Article 43 of the Constitution to people living in slum areas countrywide.

Bwana CS, Today's ceremony is going to see a number of Kenyan families living in Kibera experience a new dawn of dignity where **flying toilets will be replaced with flushing toilets!** This is truly a new dawn, a new life and a satisfying experience for Soweto East Zone 'A' residents. The younger generation, and the children especially, who are moving into these new houses will begin a new life of dignity and respect as they grow up away from

the indignities that their parents or guardians had to endure before the move scheduled for today. Under the new homes, the Right of the child to shelter is now more assured.

Bwana CS, six months ago, the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights was ordered by the High court to arbitrate a dispute. We were ordered by the High Court in Nairobi on 5th January 2016 to oversee and ensure that only the genuine beneficiaries from Soweto East Zone ‘A’ became the homeowners in this new housing project. As the *national Constitutional custodian and protector* of human rights and freedoms articulated in Chapter 4 of the Constitution, the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights took up this role fearlessly, without favour or prejudice, in observance of the Constitution, and to the best of our ability. This process, to say the least was not easy and there were moments of showdown, frustration, anger and relief. When Albert Einstein said “*that in the middle of every difficulty, lies opportunity*” he knew what he was talking about. That is why, on Tuesday 22nd March 2016 together with the Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban Development, we were able to conduct a successful balloting

and allocation exercise that provided the 691 beneficiaries an opportunity to get an allocation of either a 3 or 2 roomed house. Allow me at this juncture, **Bwana CS** to thank the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights staff members who took charge of the process faithfully and diligently, led by Commissioner, Jedidah Waruhiu.

Bwana CS, of the 691 beneficiaries, firstly, it is important to note that 34% of these are women while 66% are men. And secondly, the numbers of beneficiaries living with disabilities are 2% and those who are older members of society or the elderly are 1%. This means that we have 37% beneficiaries who are in the special interest groups, and this is excluding the youth.

What is more, Cabinet Secretary is that this that day is a testimony of the resilience, determination and staying power of our people. Today marks the end of a long journey that started 12 years ago. The dream of that journey has been realized. To the great people of Kibera, I say, *kwa kweli, Subira yenu imevuta heri.*

We at the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights consider this day not only significant to the people of Langata Constituency and the Nairobi County, but also for our nation. Today marks a great example where the words development and human rights mean the same thing. This is indeed the spirit of Vision 2030 when it talks of “*investing in people in order to improve the quality of life*”

Bwana CS, we would like to take this opportunity to publically appreciate the leadership and courage shown by you, your PS Architect Aida Munano, your Secretaries, your Directors especially the Director of Housing Mr. Sikuku; the Settlement Executive Committee under the leadership of Bishop Handa and the Soweto Housing Cooperative Society under the leadership of Jacktone Onyango Otieno you remained vigilant in ensuring that the balloting and allocation of the housing units went well. We also want to thank the Nairobi County Security team whom we worked with very closely to ensure the safety and security of all during the entire process.

The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights will continue to remain vigilant, practical and engaged in ensuring that the rights all Kenyans irrespective of their political persuasion, economic and social status are promoted and protected at all times. It is our hope that all Kenyans will remain vigilant in respecting, upholding and defending the Constitution of Kenya because that is the minimum standard expected of all of us under Article 3(1).

Bwana CS, Today, 691 households will be transformed by the power of the Key that you are about to hand them. The Key to their future. The key to their home. We look forward to your Government handing over many more keys to many more deserving Kenyans in the near future.

I thank you very much Hon CS.

GEORGE MORARA,

VICE-CHAIRPERSON

KENYA NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS