

## Kofi Annan--Opening Remarks to the Opening Plenary Session--Kenya National Dialogue: One Year Later

30 March 2009

*Kofi Annan, as Chair of the Panel of Eminent African Personalities, addressed the opening plenary session of the Kenya National Dialogue, a two day event hosted by the Kofi Annan Foundation in Geneva to review the mediation process in Kenya. The event took place 30-31 March 2009 and was attended by key actors in the Kenyan Peace Process, as well as Kenyan civil society organizations, mediators, media, and academics.*

() Almost all of us in this room were, one way or another, part of the efforts to resolve peacefully the crisis that engulfed Kenya following the December 2007 elections. ()

President Kufuor and I quickly spoke to President Mkapa and, Graca Machel to ask if they would join me as members of a Panel of Eminent African Personalities to assist in the mediation. With a great sense of urgency, as Kenya was burning and its citizens were being killed, the three of us agreed to help. We also quickly decided on the way forward. We recognized that strong and coordinated international support from the African Union, the United Nations, the European Union, the United States, and others was needed right from the start. It was important, too, that the international community acted in unison and spoke with one voice. We also needed to ensure that Kenyan stakeholders, such as civil society organizations and the media, were given an effective voice in the mediation process.

We sought their views and listened to their concerns, which helped us to draw up the agenda for the negotiations. And to ensure public support and confidence in the process, we published all agreements reached by the parties and were determined to be as transparent as possible. The effective external response proves that the **responsibility to protect** can work. But whatever positive role was played by the international community, the cessation of violence was a great achievement on the part of the Kenyan political leadership and the people of Kenya. ()

Kenya is at a crossroads. The time to act is now. And many of the people who need to undertake the required actions are right here in this room. In some ways, 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 until it is actually implemented faithfully, in both letter and spirit. ()

Source: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200903301452.html>

More information on the event, including the agenda, can be found at the following link: <http://kofiannanfoundation.org/newsroom/2009/04/kenya-national-dialogue-and-reconciliation-one-year-later%E2%80%99-which-took-place-geneva>