



GCAP Kenya alliance urges dialogue and says the political leadership has let down its people

Statement from Charles Mwangi Waituru, GCAP-Kenya National Coordinator,

January 4th, 2008 – Violence sweeping across Kenya since December 27th's disputed election is undermining years of progress in the fight against poverty and inequality there. With the economy at a standstill, violence and ethnic cleansing is devastating urban slums and poor rural areas. The Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) Kenya network members most affected include slum based Korogocho Networks, Kariobangi, Mathare networks, Migori, and Molo networks. Preliminary reports indicate that network members have been beaten, lost their houses, are displaced and have had some of their relatives killed.

The GCAP Kenya alliance is working with grassroots civil society and inter-faith groups across the country to forge a peaceful solution to the impasse based on dialogue. We welcome the presence of external mediators and encourage more people outside Kenya to support these efforts. We are also trying to counter calls for a response from the notorious clandestine movement, the Mungiki - formed following the tribal clashes of the 1990s in parts of the Rift Valley province. This is a dangerous development for the poorest people in Kenya and only urgent dialogue with the political parties will divert these efforts.

The high level of ethnic polarization pursued by political parties in the run-up to the election has been detrimental to both national unity and economic development. **Kenya has made remarkable strides in the achievement of Millennium Development Goals and the fight against poverty. The country has surpassed the goal 2 and 3 indicators and the poverty levels have fallen from 56% to 46% in a period of five years since 2002.** The events of the past week are a serious assault on the war against poverty and inequality as the economic gains go down the drain.

Following pressure from Civil Society groups such as GCAP, the leading candidates committed to wage an issue-based campaign. The result was commitments from across the political divide to address poverty and inequality and achieve the MDGs through the expansion of universal education to include secondary education, expansion of health, creation of employment for youth, and environmental sustainability. Though formally committed to a clean campaign, the reality on the ground was a political campaign characterized by mudslinging and tribal incitement. The political leadership has let down the people of Kenya with this strategy and failure to respond to the escalation of violence.

For more information or to book an interview call:

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Notes to Editors:

The Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) is the world's largest civil society alliance of social movements, International NGOs, trade unions, community groups, women's organizations, faith and youth groups, local associations and campaigners working together across more than 100 national coalitions/platforms. GCAP is calling for action from the world's leaders to meet their promises to end poverty and inequality. In particular, GCAP demands solutions that address the issues of; public accountability, just governance and the fulfillment of human rights; trade justice; more and better aid; debt cancellation and gender equality and women's rights.