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**PRESS RELEASE – 30<sup>TH</sup> SEPT 2011**

### **COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE**

Comfort, Comfort My people, says your God. (**Isaiah 40:1**)

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Provincial Synod of the Anglican Church of Kenya meeting at the All Saints' Cathedral Trinity Centre on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2011 is concerned about the restlessness that has been caused by the calamities experienced in the recent past in our country.

#### **COMFORT TO THE GRIEVED**

The tragedies and resultant injuries and deaths that Kenya has experienced in the recent past have left a trail of grief and devastation. Several cases of road carnage, the Sinai slum and Busia Tanker fires, deaths caused by the consumption of lethal local brews, collapsing of buildings under construction and the inhaling of poisonous chlorine fumes in Shauri Moyo to mention but a few, have caused injuries, deaths and losses to many families and to the nation of Kenya.

As the Government plans to compensate the families affected in the Sinai fire tragedy, we urge for a process that demonstrates integrity and fairness in the allocation and distribution of the compensation funds. However, we strongly call on the government to take firm and decisive measures to relocate those living along the pipeline and other high-risk areas to avoid a recurrence of such disasters in the future. It is also the prerogative of the relevant authorities to enforce the law in as far as traffic rules and regulations are concerned particularly with regard to public transport vehicles. Since we already have a law that regulates the production, sale and consumption of alcoholic drinks, the Anglican Church reminds Kenyans and the Government that the rule of law must be upheld at all times without exception.

In spite of the many disasters that have recently devastated the country, we are concerned that little has been done to implement the Disaster Preparedness policies and prescribed regulations. Disaster response mechanisms need to be

institutionalized as a matter of urgency to ensure that minimum losses are experienced when disasters occur.

As Christians, there is no question on the effectiveness of prayer when dealing with threats to human life. We call upon churches across denominations to join in prayer for comfort and peace for all who are bereaved and for God to avert the disasters that have been witnessed in our country.

### **TRIBUTE TO PROF. WANGARI MAATHAI**

We join Kenyans and the world in mourning the demise of Prof. Wangari Muta Maathai whose life was a great inspiration to many. Her efforts positioned Kenya in the map of the world as a land capable of bringing forth a heroine whose resilience, commitment and vision won her praise and accolades worldwide.

Prof. Maathai was a passionate environmentalist who stood firm against deforestation and paid a great price to reclaim grabbed public land at a time when land grabbing was rife in the country. Her legacy echoes to each one of us to be a humming bird doing the best we can to bring the change we want to see and should inspire us to be more accountable in our acts and deeds. As a nation we are reminded to be proactive in our response to environmental degradation and stewardship, since nature, in her words, if not taken care of, will be very unforgiving in future.

### **2012 GENERAL ELECTIONS AND ELECTION DATE DEBATE**

We are dismayed by the move to amend the constitution by altering the date of general elections from August to December of every fifth year. This is a case of abuse of legislative power by the National assembly. During the referendum in 2010, Kenyans overwhelmingly voted for the proposed Constitution and there was no debate on the date of elections. However, Parliament is pushing for the change to suit their own interests and we find this inconsistent with the wishes of Kenyans. This is especially serious as the churches had raised critical issues in the constitution that were trivialized and neglected. We stand with Kenyans in opposing immediate piecemeal amendment to the constitution and recommend that Parliament awaits the outcome of the Supreme court ruling on the issue.

As the country prepares for the 2012 elections, numerous aspirants are presenting themselves for the opportunities availed in the political arena. In view of the changes that have been instituted by the Constitution of Kenya with regard to general elections, it is clearly evident that the people of Kenya need to be prepared through civic education to ensure that they understand the electoral process as well as all the different elective posts they will be required to vote for. But even more important is the fact that there is need to ensure that Kenyans participate as expected and

outlined in the constitution for the election of accountable and credible leaders at all levels. We call upon the Government, the Civil Society and all concerned organisations to carry out Civic Education in all parts of the country to enable the people understand the new system of Governance in the new constitution especially Devolved Government. We implore Kenyans not to allow ethnic, partisan, political or religious differences to override sound judgment in electing leaders in the next Government.

### **RISING COST OF LIVING**

Kenyans are truly living in hard economic times occasioned by high commodity prices for food and other basic necessities. Whereas we commend the efforts being made to mitigate the economic hardships by the Central Bank of Kenya, we encourage the government to consider easing the burden on Kenyans by eliminating some of the taxes temporarily until the economic crunch is over. This will be a show of concern and solidarity with the majority of Kenyans who are struggling to make ends meet.

### **MESSAGE TO KENYANS**

The pursuit of justice for the victims of the post- election violence experienced in Kenya in 2007 has been one accompanied by controversies on the investigation and prosecution of the perpetrators. As the hearings for confirmation of charges continue in the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague, we urge Kenyans to remain calm and let justice take its course.

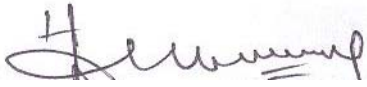
In the matter of food security, we take note that the meteorological department has predicted good rains in the upcoming short rains season between October and December. We encourage all Kenyans to make every effort to harvest and store rainwater, which can be used in farming after the rainy season. We also remind the relevant government ministries that they need to put in place all necessary measures to harvest water in dams.

### **CONCLUSION**

The times we are living in call for diligence on the part of all Kenyans to ensure that we move our country to the next level of good governance and prosperity for all as outlined in Vision 2030. It is therefore the prerogative of every sector of Kenya to take up its responsibility as we pull together for the common desired future.

May God bless Kenya.

Signed



**The Most Rev. Dr. Eliud Wabukala**  
**ARCHBISHOP OF KENYA &**  
**BISHOP OF ALL SAINTS' CATHEDRAL**

**On behalf of the Provincial Synod of the Anglican Church of Kenya**