



**PRESS STATEMENT
13th MARCH 2013**

**A NEW PARADIGM SHIFT IN KENYA'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP:
PERFORMANCE OF YOUTH IN 2013 GENERAL ELECTION**

Since 1997 when the Youth Agenda was established, we have consistently pushed for the participation of young people in competitive politics and involvement in decision making in the public sphere. Since that time every election has been marred by politically triggered ethnic violence in which young people were primary perpetrators and unfortunately also victims.

Following the just concluded General Elections, we celebrate the high number of youth contenders for the positions of County Representative, Member of Parliament, Senator, Women's Representative and Governor. We are particularly pleased that several alumni of Youth Agenda's Leadership Development Programmes (PLDP and YLDP) who participated in these landmark elections. We wish to congratulate all the successful candidates.

We congratulate those young first time voters who exercised the right and responsibility to vote, and all young Kenyans who made their voices heard during this election.

And most significantly, we thank young men and women for keeping the peace in their words and actions. Peace has prevailed due to the conscious actions and hard work of many youth activists, campaigners and civil society organizations.

Young people's lament for the last 50 years has been about a largely elderly group who got into leadership and which has tended to overstay blocking all possibilities of generational change in leadership. We at the Youth Agenda note with concern that Kenya's political process has often skewed in favour of the old, moneyed and well-networked persons. With the advent of the new constitution however, we expected some of these problems to be addressed legally through enactment of the campaign finance bill, fair political party nomination processes and enforceable affirmative action clauses.

In the next few weeks, we shall share a detailed analysis of the outcome of these Elections with utmost precision. At this time, we wish to highlight the following as key milestones and shortcomings regarding youth participation and representation in the electoral process.

Access to a National ID Card: An estimated 3 million young people who had not acquired their IDs were unable to register thus denying them an opportunity to exercise their political right. In addition to that both old and young people who lost their IDs between the registration and voting period were locked out on the 4th March 2013.

Youth Voter Registration and Voter Turnout ; Out of the 14,350,824 voters registered by IEBC 61% were youth below the age of 35 years. This is a 2% increase from the youth who registered to vote in 2007. With a voter turnout of about 85%, it is safe to say that young people took their civic duty and responsibility seriously, not just on social media and in political rallies, but coming out in their numbers on the material to choose their leaders.

High Cost of Political Party Nomination process; Youth Agenda analysis through a report launched in January 2013 noted with concern a lack of seriousness by parties to develop their nomination rules based on the Political Parties Act and the constitutional principles. In fact a number of them cut and pasted from the other. Consequently, the party nominations process was characterised by logistical capacity gaps, violence, and unclear nomination procedures. From our analysis we also noted that a number of young people opted for smaller parties which were less expensive and less competitive. On the positive side, young people enjoyed reduced nomination fees even in the mainstream political parties. It was also encouraging to note that out of 12,777 candidates cleared by IEBC about 3,780 were below 35 years.

Youth Representation : The outcomes of the just concluded elections has recorded the highest ever youth representation and more so in the higher positions. Youth representation is as follows: 1 Governor, 5 Senators, 18 Members of the National Assembly, 10 Women Representatives and many county ward representatives whose information we are still waiting from the IEBC. Compared to Women who did not register any governor or senator the young people demonstrated a paradigm shift and change of status quo.

Affirmative Action for the Youth: Young people will also register additional numbers for the 16 senate seats, 12 National Assembly and the 2 youth representatives to the senate. From our preliminary analysis the senate seats will be shared among four political parties as follows: ODM -5, TNA-5, URP 4, Wiper 2. Of these ODM nominated one young woman to the senate, TNA has three, wiper none and URP one. With regards to the 12 Members of the National Assembly, ODM has 4 slots, TNA 4, URP 3 and Wiper 1. From the party list, ODM will nominate two youth, URP two youth, TNA three and Wiper have no youth which it shall nominate according to the ranking. All factors constant, it is thus expected that out of the 16 women who will be nominated 5 will be below the age of 35 years. Out of the 12 slots of Members of National Assembly – 7 will be young people. The other 2 youth representative to the senate will be nominated by ODM and TNA.

Once again we wish to congratulate all the elected youth leaders and urge them to embrace solid knowledge of engagement opportunities within the Constitution, particularly those that promote electoral participation and promotion of social and economic rights which is a challenge to many young people. We call on Political parties to strengthen their institutions, support elected youth leaders and create more space for the youth. We also wish to request IEBC to aggregate their data in terms of age. We further urge the registrar of persons to embark on an efficient strategy of issuing IDs to young people as a matter of urgency. In conclusion we call upon the the new office to appoint young people in key government position whose representation has been missing in the previous governments. Upon filing of CORD's petition to the Supreme Court, Youth Agenda calls on all citizen to remain peaceful as they wait for final determination.

Signed,

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