

---

## DIALOGUE MUST PREVAIL AND GREATER RESPONSIBILITY FALLS ON PRESIDENT RUTO.

**Nairobi, Monday 20 March, 2023:** The Centre for Multiparty Democracy (CMD-Kenya) – a multiparty dialogue platform - acts under the framework of its membership of political parties, as well as their collective commitment to enhance meaningful dialogue between citizens, diverse civic actors and policy makers in Kenya. CMD-Kenya has closely followed the situation in the country today that comes only days after the People Dialogue Festival (PDF), which took cognizance of the prevailing political tensions in the country and appealed to all political and civic actors to keep doors to dialogue open at all times, even though they may disagree on some issues.

CMD-Kenya underlines once again the crucial importance of holding meaningful political dialogue on socio-economic issues, governance reforms and to safeguard democratic gains. We note that the country has been in similar situations before and that previous leadership i.e., former Presidents of Kenya have taken both the initiative and responsibility to lead the country out of such crises such as the impending weekly demonstrations dubbed *Machosi Mondays*.

In line with Article 131 of the Constitution of Kenya on the authority of the President, we call upon President William Ruto as the symbol of national unity, to ensure that political stability is reinstated as the first priority and to pave way for dialogue and bipartisanship on the range of grievances raised by Azimio leadership. Therefore, we ask the President to initiate dialogue with political leaders as soon as practically possible. Similarly, the President should ensure that enhanced dialogue goes beyond the political elite and accommodates gender equality, the inclusion of youth, minorities, civil society organizations, and other non-traditional actors like citizen movements in a political decision-making process.

We also urge the Azimio La Umoja One Kenya under the leadership of Rt. Hon. Raila Odinga to give dialogue a chance by dropping the call for mass action every Monday. This will create an enabling environment for businesses to thrive, a condition necessary to help the country address the current economic hardships and related challenges. While the high cost of living is a legitimate concern, we encourage the political class to seek shared solutions for the benefit of all citizens. Lifting the country from the ravaging impacts of the runaway cost of living will require bipartisanship from leaders at both local and national levels of governance. Again, this can only happen in an environment of political stability and peace.

With regard to electoral justice and especially the concerns raised about the composition of the new leadership of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), we emphasize the importance of building consensus that would ensure an independent EMB, allow for free, fair, transparent and credible elections to take place in accordance with the framework of the

Kenyan Constitution, thus preserving peace and stability in the country and deepening the democratic process and the rule of law.

We call on all political actors and citizens to refrain from any action that could increase tensions or lead to heightened violence as well as challenge them to preserve the hard-won democratic gains and to strengthen democracy and the rule of law. More than ever before, restraint and the spirit of responsibility are needed at this particular moment of the history of Kenya.

We also call on the National Police Service to maintain commitment to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution of Kenya, including by allowing peaceful protests and releasing protestors who were arrested today; bearing in mind that the preservation of political space and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Constitution is a necessary condition to the success of the political dialogue, a position to which President Ruto has expressed his utmost commitment.

Finally, CMD-Kenya founded as a multiparty dialogue, believes that democracy can only thrive when all voices are heard, and inclusive and respectful dialogue between politicians, political parties, civil society, and citizens is crucial to achieving that goal. We remain committed and keen to supporting a structured national political dialogue process as well through our dialogue initiatives, to help build trust, collaboration and consensus between political parties and other political actors, forming the foundation of a respectful democratic culture. At a time when inequality is growing and trust in state institutions is strained, building links between politicians and the people they represent must be the priority.

**FOR AND ON BEHALF OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE – CMD-KENYA**

\*\*\*\*\*

Contact: Frankline Mukwanja Executive Director | Email: [frankline@cmd-kenya.org](mailto:frankline@cmd-kenya.org)