



The Promise of our Generation

A proposal for a National Vision from Kenya's young people

March 2003

The Promise of Our Generation

A proposal for a National Vision from Kenya's young people

1. What is this about - Introduction

- 1.1 This is a proposal from a group of young people in Kenya for a shared national vision. It has been developed by a small group of about 50 young people working in consultation with a larger group of individual and institutional contacts. It is being shared as a proposal and it is hoped that the feedback received will enable the group to finalize it in March 2003 and present the final copy as a consolidated proposal for the national vision from Kenya's young people.
- 1.2 Kenyan young people and indeed many Kenyans find themselves caught up in a period of rapid change both within the country and outside it. They need to adapt to these changes as well as find a place for themselves both within the country and outside it.
- 1.3 Convinced that this historic challenge needs to be creatively and purposefully confronted a group of young people have worked to develop a proposal for a shared national vision that they and other young people in the country can work to demand and deliver.
- 1.4 Kenya has a very young population. 66% of the country's population is below 24 and 80% below 34 years of age. The future of this country will therefore be shaped in many ways by the aspirations of its young people and the contributions they can make to society as leaders in their own right.
- 1.5 As we embark on our journey in the 21st century, Kenya's young people propose this for a shared national vision. This is intended to focus the activities, programmes and aspirations of a wide spectrum of Kenyans and act as road map for all of us in creating the Kenya and the future we want for successor generations and ourselves. As it is shared and discussed with various groups, it is our hope that it will be confirmed as a vision for our country to guide the activities and energies of all stakeholders over the next 25 Years – 2027.
- 1.6 We propose it as a promised made by our generation to the next generation of Kenya's young people who will be coming of age in 2027. We pledge ourselves as Kenya's young people to devote our efforts and energies to the realization of this vision. We pledge to provide leadership and work to demand this future for ourselves, and the generations that will come after us.
- 1.7 Why we are sharing this with you

We invite you to critically review the proposal and give us feedback. We would like this proposal to reflect the views of as many young Kenyans as possible before we finalize it and release it more broadly.

2. *How the vision was developed*

- 2.1 In April 2000, the IEA¹ and SID² finalised the first phase and published the results of the Kenya Scenarios Project in a small book entitled “*Kenya at the Crossroads: Scenarios for our Future*”. In that book the scenarios team³ identifies four possible pathways into Kenya’s future and what might happen to Kenya over the next 20 years. They are neither definitive nor blue prints, but possible futures presented to stimulate debate and to emphasise that Kenya’s future will be shaped by the decisions and actions of the major players.
- 2.2 It was intended that the project would stimulate conversations about alternatives futures for Kenya, contribute to the development of a common language with which to address the challenges facing Kenya, and hence inform the decisions of major actors in Kenyan national life. Through broad thematic research and carefully facilitated public workshops over an 18-month period, four scenarios, or pathways into Kenya’s future were identified. The scenarios were: *El Nino*, a scenario of decline and disintegration as a result of no political or economic reforms; *Maendeleo*, an economic reform scenario, which forecast initial rapid gains but accompanied by severe inequalities and instability; *Katiba*, a scenario that saw institutional transformation as the key to reform, but which also depicted instability and little economic improvement; *Flying Geese*, a scenario that involved simultaneous economic, political and institutional transformation of the country, resulting in inclusive democracy and economic growth.
- 2.3 The *Flying Geese* scenario elicited tremendous interest throughout the country, offering as it does, a way forward, indeed a vision of what Kenya could become if the appropriate steps were taken now with the future in mind. The “*Flying Geese*” scenario considers simultaneous political and economic transformation, and paints a picture of high productivity, equitable and politically stable society, but through a challenging transition. The “*flying geese*” imagery captures the leadership model that Kenya must adopt to sustain itself on this road.
- 2.4 This national vision initiative is therefore an attempt to deepen work on the “*Flying Geese*” scenario, by outlining pillars of a shared vision for Kenya and through it, explore the leadership necessary, and the challenges it would face, in ushering in this desired Kenyan future.
- 2.5 The Vision has been developed by a group of 45 principally young persons whose average age is 25. This team met several times between June and November to develop the vision principally in small working groups by different focus areas.
- 2.6 The main meetings were in August, when the group outlined pillars of the national vision and drew up questions to respond to in the development of the vision. The group divided itself into 4 subs –groups to develop various pillars of the vision according to the focus areas. These were on Economy, Social Development and Culture, Institutions and Politics.

¹ A leading Kenyan policy dialogue forum based in Nairobi

² SID: The Society for International Development is an international non-governmental organization based out of Rome, Italy and which partnered with the IEA in the development and implementation of the Kenya Scenarios Project.

³ A team of Kenyan professionals who met and worked together over 5 workshops between September 1998 and April 2000 to develop the scenarios. Two of these workshops were dedicated to research and three to scenario development.

2.7 The sub groups met weekly in September and October to discuss and develop visions for their sub-groups. They met for a mid-term review in October and a final working meeting in November 2002. This final meeting consolidated the work of the working groups and agreed on this as a final proposal.

3. *Challenges facing Kenya at the beginning of the 21st Century*

What is the challenge for our generation?

- 3.1 In developing the vision, we have reviewed recent research and work, which presents in detailed form the challenges we face as a generation of young Kenyans.
- 3.2 We have talked to several experts as well as ordinary people in order to confirm this research and draw out lessons and main issues that we think the country will have to confront over the next thirty years. We have reviewed Kenya's social, political and economic crises and compiled a list of driving forces that have shaped the past and continue to shape the present.
- 3.3 The crises in Kenya today are the manifestations that Kenya has reached the limits of its chosen economic models and champions as well as the limits of political and institutional organization. This means that Kenya will face a succession of small crises and emergencies in the coming years.
- 3.4 Decreased agricultural productivity; reduction in arable land; an uncompetitive manufacturing sector; poor infrastructure and utilities; food insufficiency; and global marginalization among other things characterize the economic crisis.
- 3.5 The political dilemma is characterized by the present system's lack of legitimacy; Kenyans do not believe they have a high stake in the current political set-up and treat with disdain many matters and issues political. There is widespread mistrust of the judiciary; weakness of oversight institutions such as parliament; widespread mistrust of the security forces and their partisan nature. It is clear that there is a retreat from formal institutions and an increased dependence of informal arrangements and institutions; non delivery of services despite heavy taxation which makes the state appear both distant and predatory and increasing exploitation of ethnic and regional differences for political mileage.
- 3.6 The social crisis is characterized by the erosion of cultural values, increased criminal violence; a growing number of unemployed youth; the inability of the health and education systems to meet the needs of the population; the collapse of many rural communities and increase in family violence.
- 3.7 These symptoms are rooted in the un sustainability of Kenya's traditional development path based on primary exports and peasant agriculture; failure to develop a broad-based and competitive manufacturing sector; limited production of capital goods needed for manufacturing. The main message from this is that the country will need to find alternative ways of employing its labor force that consists principally of many young people.
- 3.8 These challenges are further compounded by new global challenges as a result of global liberalization and centralization of decision-making about elements of global governance.

- 3.9 The political social and institutional crises are signs that Kenya has not yet developed an inclusive and tolerant society where all Kenyans believe they have an equal stake. Many instead feel quite excluded and their citizenship does not bestow on them the same benefits accruing to all. There has been an erosion of confidence and the rise in self-doubt by Kenyans as society.
- 3.10 We are therefore not a prosperous nation, a nation where economic injustice and inequality thrive. Our economy is not very competitive nor is it able to respond to the challenges of increased globalization. Since many of our people do not feel they have a stake in the nation, we are a society where intolerance and suspicion of each other thrives. More importantly, we appear to have lost faith in our ability to change things and create a different society.
- 3.11 These crises mean that Kenya faces many challenges as we embark on our journey into the 21st century. **The challenge of these crises is beyond the resources of any single individual or tribal experience.** This situation is unprecedented. There are no blueprints for handling it. Therefore, we will all make mistakes. No one can know in advance what will work and what will not. That is why we need to be **willing to learn and to apply all our resources to confronting them.**

4. *Challenges of our Generation – Our Interpretation and take on challenges facing the nation.*⁴

From the above realities of Kenya at present and what the research leads us to conclude regarding the present situation and how this might evolve in future, we have identified challenges for our generation and that of our country at present. They are summarized in the following 14 challenges:

- 4.1 To build a united Kenyan nation with a sense of common destiny based on shared national values.
- 4.2 To ensure supremacy of the Kenya Constitution.
- 4.3 To establish a mature, pluralist and tolerant society that takes pride and draws strength from its diversity.
- 4.4 To ensure a secular state where the freedom of religion is guaranteed for all.
- 4.5 To create a patriotic, dignified and confident society.
- 4.6 To build an inclusive, mature and well-developed democracy.
- 4.7 To establish an ethical society.
- 4.8 To establish a caring and compassionate society and culture.
- 4.9 To guarantee the security of all Kenyans.
- 4.10 To work towards an economically just society.
- 4.11 To establish a prosperous society, with an economy that is competitive, dynamic, robust and resilient.
- 4.12 To develop a healthy and educated populace.

⁴ Synthesis of our aspirations and desires from the discussions during the Naro Moru Workshop.

- 4.13 To manage our natural resources for the benefit of the present and future generations of Kenyans.
- 4.14 To take our place in the community of nations imbued with a clear sense of purpose, contribution and responsibility.

5. *Why we need a vision as young people*

These 14 capture the main challenges that face our country presently. Many of the issues discussed in previous sections and in any research in the country could be collapsed into these.

- 5.1 As Kenya's young people and alternative leadership we have decided to come together and prepare a proposal for a vision of our country that confronts the above challenges we are currently faced with.
- 5.2 WE present this as our proposal from a group that not only consists of the majority of the population and one that we are convinced will the opportunity in our endeavors to bring this about. As many of us ascend to positions of decision making in our nation's life, we shall work together with other Kenyans to bring this vision to reality. We shall commit ourselves, and our resources to confronting the 14 challenges above.
- 5.3 We therefore present this proposal of a vision as a demonstration that Kenya's young people will commit themselves to:
 - 5.3.1 The creation of a united nation,
 - 5.3.2 With a confident Kenyan society infused with strong ethical values,
 - 5.3.3 The development of a society that is democratic, tolerant, caring and economically just,
 - 5.3.4 The development of a prosperous nation, progressing and in full possession of an economy that is competitive, dynamic, robust and resilient.
 - 5.3.5 Managing our resources for the benefit of present and future generations of Kenyan and that we,
 - 5.3.6 Will take our place in the community of nations with pride, responsibility and will contribute to uplifting the status of Africa our continent.

6. *The Vision*

6.1 A united nation with a sense of common purpose and shared destiny

- 6.1.1 Kenya is one, united, and confident nation of diverse cultures and people, sharing common goals. The unity of the country is paramount and the Constitution ensures this and all Kenyans work toward the preservation of this unity. The words and actions of leaders, citizens and institutions, promote this unity.
- 6.1.2 Kenyans have a strong national identity based on shared history, struggles and national values, but the country still consists of a diverse mix of ethnic groups, languages and cultures. The shared national values include integrity, wisdom, individual and communal empowerment, personal development, quality

relationships, family, achievement, self-respect, freedom, and entrepreneurship.

- 6.1.3 Kenya has put to rest the many arguments with regard to citizenship and the instruments that bestow citizenship are available to all Kenyans as their right.
- 6.1.4 Through a process of national education and socialization we promote the unity of Kenya and the development of a shared history, culture, language, values and beliefs. Through this we develop a stake for all Kenyans in a one united republic.

6.2 A mature, free and tolerant society

- 6.2.1 Kenya is a free, pluralist and tolerant society where the diverse people, cultures, traditions and lifestyles all co-exist side by side. Different ethnic groups live in harmony and in cohesion with a spirit of mutual understanding and respect.
- 6.2.2 Kenyan citizens are assured of access to justice. The justice system is fair, efficient, responsive and upholds the shared values of Kenyans.
- 6.2.3 Kenya is a secular state, where the freedom of religion and worship is guaranteed.
- 6.2.4 The arts and culture are central to the development of our multicultural society. Diversity is expressed through Kenyan art, music, dress, theatre, sports and various cultural festivals and events.

6.3 A dignified and confident people

- 6.3.1 We are a proud and confident people, with faith in ourselves and our nation, our accomplishments and possibilities.
- 6.3.2 The family is recognized and protected as the basis for society for development of the people of Kenya, their socialisation and transmission of social and moral values.
- 6.3.3 We are patriotic and take pride in our nationality.
- 6.3.4 We are a hardworking proactive people, who celebrate historical and contemporary role models.

6.4 A just, democratic and accountable nation

- 6.4.1 The Kenyan state is a legitimate entity, deriving its legitimacy from the people.
- 6.4.2 Our government is competent and all-inclusive. It upholds the principles of democracy, transparency and accountability, and promotes equitable social and economic development.
- 6.4.3 The process of choosing our leaders is open, free and fair.
- 6.4.4 Power is devolved and decentralized and citizens have more power to make and enact decisions that affect them.
- 6.4.5 Both the state and citizen recognize and carry out their respective duties and responsibilities.

- 6.4.6 We are an informed populace that participates in decision-making.
- 6.4.7 Our public, private and civic institutions in Kenya are legitimate, efficient, transparent and accountable.
- 6.4.8 The rules that govern us and our institutions are just and are made and altered in an open and consensual manner.
- 6.4.9 Our youth in Kenya is recognised as the repository of our hopes and aspirations, and are encouraged and empowered to play their full role in the nation.
- 6.4.10 The old people are respected as a source of wisdom and experience.
- 6.4.11 Human rights are diligently protected
- 6.4.12 The gains brought about by affirmative action are evident, with women and other previously marginalized groups now in leadership positions and enjoying full equality.

6.5 An ethical society and leadership with integrity

- 6.5.1 Together with our leaders, we subscribe to the highest ethical standards.

6.6 A Safe, Secure and Caring Nation.

- 6.6.1 All human life is precious and protected.
- 6.6.2 We are a country at peace with ourselves and the world around us.
- 6.6.3 We have the capability to effectively deal with all natural and man-made catastrophes.
- 6.6.4 We assure food security for all.
- 6.6.5 We ensure access to water for all for purposes of achieving social and economic goals.
- 6.6.6 We have assured access to reasonable shelter that has a degree of permanence and ensures ease of access to amenities such as energy, communication and living space for all.
- 6.6.7 Our security services are professional, disciplined and well equipped, and are under civilian oversight.
- 6.6.8 We have developed a social security system that serves all.
- 6.6.9 *Harambee* is the building block of a caring and philanthropic society.
- 6.6.10 The rights of refugees are protected, and they are to a large extent integrated into every sector of Kenyan life as per national and international conventions.

6.7 An economically just society

- 6.7.1 There is a concerted effort to reduce income economic inequalities.
- 6.7.2 All regions in Kenya participate fully in economic development.
- 6.7.3 We have made significant progress towards optimal land use and equitable land distribution.

6.8 A productive, prosperous and innovative people

- 6.8.1 Kenya is a robust, dynamic and vibrant economy that embraces technology, innovation and progress.
- 6.8.2 The private sector is the engine of growth. The government is the facilitator of positive investment climate and adopts consistent and coherent policies.
- 6.8.3 Enterprises in Kenya embrace the highest standards of corporate governance, excellence; professionalism and integrity.
- 6.8.4 We boast a healthy and educated population that applies its skills in industry and the service sector.
- 6.8.5 Employment: Kenyans are assured of access to opportunities for self-fulfilment through work, (the generation of economic, spiritual and social resources) and the ability to command a commensurate return sufficient to cater for human basic needs.
- 6.8.6 Our agricultural sector is diversified, market-driven and competitive.
- 6.8.7 Our country boasts of vibrant small and medium sized enterprises, with access to affordable capital.
- 6.8.8 Kenya has an open economy and is a prime exporter of high value goods and services in the region and beyond.
- 6.8.9 The service sector in Kenya is the highest contributor to national earnings and serves a transformed agricultural and industrial sector.
- 6.8.10 We have high quality, extensive, and cost effective infrastructure, and robust capital markets and financial sector.
- 6.8.11 We have established a comprehensive information network, developed its capacity in electronic and print media, encouraging local content.
- 6.8.12 We have a well-designed system of protecting intellectual property rights that spurs innovation, research and exploitation of indigenous knowledge.

6.9 Pursuing sustainable development,

- 6.9.1 Having recognised that our country has a fragile environment whose use must be managed with the future in mind, land and other natural resource management embraces principles and practices of sustainable development.

6.10 A responsible African member of the global community of nations.

- 6.10.1 Kenya is a key and influential African member of the global union of nations. Kenya has identified her strategic interests to be in the furtherance of economic and trade interests and continues to play a role in regional conflict resolution.