



**LAUNCH**

**STATUS OF SOCIAL COHESION IN KENYA**

*Remarks by:*

**Nardos Bekele-Thomas**  
UN Resident Coordinator,  
UNDP Resident Representative

*Delivered by:*

**Fernando Abaga Edjang**  
Deputy Country Director – Programmes

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**Dr. Willy Mutunga, Chief Justice and President of the Supreme Court**

**Hon. Frances Ole Kaparo, NCIC Chairman**

**Hassan S. Mohamed, Commission Secretary, NCIC**

**Dr. John Omiti, Executive Director KIPPRA**

**Anders Roquist, Embassy of Sweden**

**All Protocols Observed**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great honour and privilege for me to make some remarks on behalf of UNDP and the UN family at this momentous launch of the report on the Status of Social Cohesion in Kenya.

We are cognizant that peace and social cohesion remain central to Kenya's development, given the persistent structural drivers of conflicts and violence, including land; ethno-political competition; political polarization; high youth unemployment; feelings of exclusion; proliferation of small arms; the very real threat of terrorism, counter violent extremism and radicalization of vulnerable youth as witnessed in recently in Mandera and the Coast region.

Building cohesion in a country of rich diversity like Kenya remains a key commitment at UNDP. Given the rich ethnic diversity of Kenya, there is need to focus on how to dialogue and achieve meaningful national cohesion and integration among various ethnic communities in the country. I believe that one of the most effective ways to achieve sustainable cohesion is through dialogue and open conversation that respects community level and national engagement. This process needs to be inclusive with various actors brought on board,

including religious leaders, elders, women, youth, private sector, special interest groups, such as persons with disabilities, minorities and marginalised groups.

You will be glad to note that UNDP has continued to partner with NCIC since 2009 to date, in strengthening the Commission's institutional and organizational capacity to deliver on its statutory mandate of promoting national cohesion and integration, among Kenyans.

Further, UNDP has a new programme on 'Deepening Foundations for Peacebuilding and Community Security in Kenya: 2014-2018', that prioritises national unity, reconciliation, cohesion and integration promotion at national and county levels. This includes:

- Supporting mainstreaming of cohesion and integration in the Kenyan socialization structures (schools, churches, mosques, etc) and counties;
- Facilitating and supporting the creation of collaborative structures that address reconciliation and integration in Kenya;
- Supporting monitoring of the development of laws, policies and practices and their implementation at the national and county levels;
- Supporting investigation and development of strategies that address discrimination and hate speech based on ethnic, religious, racial and national origin, as well as make appropriate recommendations to government and other organizations.

### **Distinguished guests and participants,**

Given the importance of cohesion in Kenya, the UNDAF highlights the need of a Social Cohesion Index (SCI), as a key result and performance indicator for the country. At UNDP, we are therefore very thrilled to support NCIC in the development of this premier Social Cohesion Index. A Social Cohesion Index

(SCI) is important in interrogating the various components and dimensions that constitute the SCI notably: 1) *Peace*, 2) *Trust*, 3) *Equity*, 4) *Diversity*, 5) *Prosperity* and 6) *Identity*.

Going through the study, I note the national SCI stands at 56.6%, with the lowest county at 22% (Wajir county) and highest at 66% (Kiambu county). This brings to fore various policy recommendations:

- Calls for heavy investments and concerted efforts to improve the social cohesion levels at the national and county levels. This presents an opportunity for the UN area-based programmes in Turkana and Marsabit to infuse cohesion and integration interventions in the ASAL cluster, where SCI is very low.
- Need to promote social values, trust, peace and positive management of ethnic diversities in the country. Investing in systems for early warning, conflict management and peace building is critical.
- Establishing a social cohesion data and information system and ensuring regular data and information collection. This would ensure effective monitoring of social cohesion in the country.
- Human and infrastructure capital development should be strengthened, notwithstanding devolution of service delivery.
- At the national level, Equity and Peace are the worst dimensions of social cohesion.

## **In Conclusion**

The UN System in Kenya as a whole, stays strongly committed to supporting national efforts to promote a peaceful and cohesive nation as part of a durable infrastructure for peace and stability. Political stability, social cohesion and economic prosperity are the fundamental cornerstones for sustainable

development. The UN will remain your trusted partner in this process and will continue to tirelessly work with NCIC for the benefit of the people of Kenya.

I express my gratitude to NCIC for the premier Social Cohesion Index. UNDP looks forward to supporting the Commission in developing regular social cohesion indices for Kenya.

Together, we can work towards “building a cohesive nation for posterity”.