
KARA Chairman's Statement

Introduction

1. It is an honour for me to welcome my fellow distinguished members of Kara to the 2017 Annual General Meeting and present the Chairman's report for the Alliance for the year ended 31st December 2016.
2. We are grateful for the steadfast support you have accorded the Alliance over the years and we trust that the support will continue. We are alive to the fact that without your support we cannot achieve much. There is no better way to achieve structured and effective citizens participation than through strong and vibrant residents associations. We call on you to reinvigorate your respective associations and ensure that your service delivery expectations and demands are recognized and upheld. We are glad that more and more people are seeing the value of Resident Associations and more importantly the need to join Kara as members.

Transition Year

3. 2016 was a transition year for us as we had Mr. Henry Ochieng substantively taking over as the new CEO after our long serving former CEO left to pursue other interests. It has been an exciting year with its share of ups and downs. However, overall, we are happy at the milestones we have been able to realize during the year.

Engagement with County Government

4. To begin with, we finally had the Nairobi City County Community and Neighbourhood Associations Engagement Act enacted after two years of lobbying and advocacy. The Act was signed by the Governor of Nairobi on 26th August 2016 and officially came into effect on 27th November 2016. The law provides for a legal framework for structured and effective engagement between Residents Associations and the County Government. It also give statutory recognition to community and neighborhood initiatives in complementing county government service delivery.
5. Pursuant to Section 6 of the Act, Kara recently signed a cooperation agreement with the County Government to provide a legal and structured framework for implementation of the Act. The agreement highlights specific service delivery areas where Kara and the County Government shall collaborate and also provide for the obligations of each Party.

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6. We are pleased to report that some of the provisions of the Act are already being implemented. On 28th February 2017, Kara held the 1st Governor's Roundtable forum with Resident Associations to discuss service delivery issues. This is in line with Section 11 of the Act which prescribes that the Governor should have a meeting with representatives of Resident Associations at least twice year. The second forum is slated for 20th June 2017. One of the key highlights of the forum was the directive by the Governor that Kara be represented in various County Committees. We will closely monitor implementation of the Act to ensure that it is properly and effectively implemented. We request our members to closely work with us to ensure that we all benefit from the Act.
 7. We intend to have the Community and Neighbourhood Associations Engagement Act enacted in as many Counties as possible. Already, Kiambu County has enacted their version of the Act and is in the process of developing cooperation agreement for implementation of the Act. At National level, we are still pushing for the National Assembly to pass the Resident Associations Bill which gives a framework for Resident Associations to be more effective in engaging the Government.

Presidential Award

8. During the year we were honored to have received a Presidential Award for our role in supporting Kenya Revenue Authority in creating awareness on the rental income tax among our members and the general public. As a result of our efforts, KRA surpassed their revenue target for rental income tax. We will continue our engagement with KRA for the benefit of all Kenyans.

KARA Business Expo & Conference

9. As part of our efforts to diversify our revenue sources and provide a platform for our members to exchange ideas, learn from each other and engage various service providers on service delivery issues, we successfully organized the first ever Kara Business Expo & Conference in November 2016. The event brought together corporate organizations and businesses drawn from both the private and public sectors to showcase their products, services and engage the participants. We were able to raise over Ksh.6 million thanks to our sponsors and exhibitors. This will be an annual event and preparations for 2017 edition have been began.

Chairpersons Forum

10. In order to strengthen collaboration with our members and share information on diverse service delivery issues, we have been organizing a series of Kara Chairpersons' Forum. We successfully held three forums in 2016 and the last one was attended by senior Directors from the National Land Commission who competently responded to and addressed issues raised by participants. The

Commission has taken inventory of the public land across the country and committed to ensure that the grabbed spaces revert back to the respective communities. This year, we will combine the Roundtable forums with the Governor's Roundtable Forum.

KARA Committees

11. Our Committees were not very active during the year and this was due to the reorganization taking place in the organization that required that we review our priorities. The exception was the Resources Mobilization Committee which actively involved in working with the secretariat to come up with revenue generating ideas. As we stabilize, we intend to revitalize the Committees and ensure that they are actively involved in the affairs of Kara.

Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs)

12. To enhance Kara profile and strengthen collaboration with organizations that we have common interest with, we signed several Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) to provide framework for collaboration. MoUs have been signed with Safaricom Ltd; KK Security and NEMA. Discussions are underway with other organizations on having structured collaboration on areas of mutual interest.

National Addressing System

13. Kara has been appointed to be a member of the National Addressing System (NAS) strategy development and implementation Committee charged with the role of ensuring the establishment of a NAS with consistent and uniform standards throughout Kenya. We will soon share details of the work of the Committee and advise on their expectations of Kara and its members.

Projects Undertaken

14. Since 2013, the year of Kenya new Constitutional dispensation, donor funding has significantly dwindled. However, we had a number of projects running in 2016 and we are grateful to our partners for their support. Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF), our oldest partner, continued their support for the popular Bimonthly Talk Series forums and we had six forums during the year. We also appreciate Business Advocacy Fund (BAF) for supporting us to develop regulations for the Solid Waste Management Act aimed at facilitating effective implementation of the law. BAF is also supporting us to lobby and advocate for the enactment of the Non Motorized Transport policy for Nairobi City County. We are grateful to Centre for Sustainable Urban Development (CSUD) of Columbia University, New York, for their support on public transport advocacy and policy change. During the year we also had partnership with Institute for Development Studies (IDS) on University of Nairobi and Integrated Transport Planning (ITP) of the United Kingdom

KARA Strategic Plan

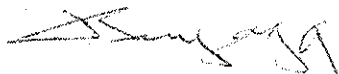
15. We have moved into the New Year 2017 with a lot of optimism and focus. We are about to complete development of the Kara Strategic Plan for the period 2017 to 2022. This will guide our activities moving forward. As part of our cost cutting measures and optimal use of available resources, we have carried out substantial retrenchment and are considering relocating our offices to more affordable premises. Our long term plan is to start investing in acquiring an office facility to ensure sustainability. We are already working on investment plan and options that can enable us achieve this goal in a cost-effective way.

Kenya Elections 2017

16. This being an election year, we intend to play an active role in civic education and awareness as well as mobilize the public to exercise their right to vote. We have already applied for accreditation from the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission and are seeking partners to facilitate our activities. We appeal to all of you to keep peace during the campaign period and mobilize your respective networks to get out and vote on the election day.

Conclusion

17. We have an opportunity to make our voices effectively heard in public service delivery processes and we must seize it. As Kara, we commit to work with you, Government, development partners and other service delivery stakeholders towards realization of a society where all are empowered to attain a living space that permits a life of dignity. We will vigorously pursue every opportunity that will add value to our work and strengthen the effectiveness of Resident Associations in Kenya.
18. Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Governing Council Members. They have demonstrated selfless commitment and support for the organization even in the most difficult of times and circumstance. Last but not least and as always special thanks to our staff for their commitment and focus in driving Kara's goals and vision.



Richard Nyaga
CHAIRMAN, KARA.