

# **ISK PRESS CONFERENCE ON USING LAND AS A POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS AGENDA**

## **Introduction:**

We would like to raise our concern on the increased use of Land as a campaign agenda in this Country. The politicians seeking various political positions are using the land issues for political mileage, an aspect which is not only dangerous to peace and stability of our great nation, but also likely to sabotage our economy.

## **The issue**

While we note that land seems to be a tool of convenience to the politicians, our history has shown us how dangerous it can be in rekindling anxiety, hatred, hostility among communities and conflict. We are all aware that as we speak, parts of this country, for instance pastoral communities in Isiolo and sections of Baringo are currently bearing the consequences of land related conflicts, which have been in one way or another linked to the political class and the upcoming elections.

In addition, owners of the large ranches for instance are right now facing the biggest fears of their lives, while multinationals based in various parts of this country whose land leases are almost expiring are going through the same nightmare. Individuals have not been left out of this madness, moreso those who happened to have bought their pieces of land away from their ancestral land. We suspect that some people are going back to their ancestral homes apparently running away from perceived fear of perennial land related conflicts during this period.

Furthermore, there have been instances where ongoing efforts in line with the land reforms including issuance of title deeds, the land leases issues, resolution of historical land injustices among others have been demonized and capitalized for political mileage.

It is important to note that the Country has made significant progress in a bid to address land issues. Key among these is the passage of National Land Policy of 2009. Thereafter the enactment of the Constitution in 2010 and the enabling legislations particularly Land Act, 2012, Land Registration Act, 2012, National Land Commission Act, 2012 and Community Land Act, 2016. In 2016 Parliament passed the land laws amendments act to fill some of the gaps in the 2012 acts. All these legislative frameworks have been followed by the institutions both in the National Government and Devolved Systems. Therefore when the politicians use land as a campaign agenda to whip emotions, they essentially undermine these great strides and threaten to take the Country back to where we have come from. Politicians should be responsible in their utterances as the ramifications are costly to the country both economically and socially. It will also have a negative impact on the Country's peace and stability.

We acknowledge that indeed there have been some few challenges during this phase of implementation but we appreciate that necessary measures have been implemented to address the challenges. These efforts should be supported not vilified so that the Country can gain fully from these reforms

### **Our Recommendations:**

From the foregoing, we recommend as follows;

- a) Issues related to land to be left to the experts.
- b) We urge the politicians to stop making disturbing comments on land but to encourage implementation of the enabling legal and institutional framework.
- c) Political parties to implore upon their nominees at all levels to desist from using the land question in their campaigns.

- d) The Government and the Parliament to ensure that the land regulations being developed are finalized and gazetted within the shortest time possible.
- e) More support required to the relevant institutions so as to effectively undertake their mandate.
- f) We therefore urge Kenyans not to take seriously political talk that centers around land especially if it will lead to conflict with their neighbours.

**Chairman to the Council**

**Stephen Ambani**

**Secretary to the Council**

**Moses Kiambuthi**