

**OPEN LETTER**

April 1, 2008

**Hon Mwai Kibaki**  
**President of the Republic of Kenya**  
**Hon Raila Amolo Odinga**  
**Prime Minister designate of the Republic of Kenya**

**Mr. President and Prime Minister designate,**

**Re: FORMATION OF A LEAN CLEAN CABINET- NO MORE THAN 24!**

We are concerned Kenyan citizens coming together under the umbrella of the Movement for Political Accountability (MOPA) and the Kenyans for Peace with Truth and Justice (KPTJ) coalitions, and other interested Kenyans, including the Nobel Peace Laureate, Professor Wangari Maathai.

We write to communicate our alarm over proposals on the size of the new Cabinet. Kenyans are outraged at plans for a bloated Cabinet with figures of 34 and 44 being circulated around. These are irresponsible and expensive suggestions, given the current economic crisis Kenya is in, with fuel prices now almost at Ksh100 a litre and bread almost costing Ksh40 a loaf. Moreover, we still have not addressed sufficiently the plight of the internally displaced and a bloated, fat cabinet could be seen as adding insult to the injury that all Kenyans have suffered since December 30, 2007. Kenyans, from all walks of life - including your respective supporters, have all urged for a lean, clean and efficient cabinet that does not pander to patronage and greed.

We believe that the new Cabinet should have no more than 24 members. Kenyans need a lean, clean government staffed by committed, qualified, honest members. To secure this, nominees' past records must be scrutinised and vetted, including their wealth declarations. All parliamentarians should have signed their wealth declarations by now and these should be made public once they are named and before they are sworn in to provide Kenyans an opportunity to scrutinize the declarations. Indeed, you should make agreement to disclose wealth a criterion for naming members to the cabinet.

Kenyans are just emerging from the worst crisis in our history and it is clear that this crisis is not definitively over. Well over a thousand people have died, and many hundreds of thousands languish in IDP camps as the rains set in. In our view, the political class bears the major responsibility for that crisis, either by actions of omission or commission over the years, but particularly around the failed 2007 presidential elections. It is unacceptable that this political class should now misuse the crisis they provoked for their own personal benefit. Let us not forget that at least 20 million Kenyans continue to live on less than a dollar a day.

The National Accord and Reconciliation Act 2008 provides for Parliament to give effect to the agreement on the principles of partnership of the coalition government to foster national accord and reconciliation. It provides for the **formation** of a coalition government and the **establishment** of various offices, including Ministers of the Government of Kenya. It thus presupposes that a NEW cabinet be formed in the context of the agreement. The spirit of the mediation agreement is that we shall have a grand coalition, which shall lead the country to a new Constitution, after which the Coalition shall stand dissolved. **Therefore, the present government is a transitional one and must understand itself as such.** It must focus on the key priorities of the country now as discussed during the mediation; constitutional reforms, other long term reforms, an end to impunity, reconciliation and reconstruction.

Recognising that the Act presupposes the formation of a new government we urge you to disband the current partial Cabinet and constitute a new one in the spirit of the mediation agreement and the legitimate expectations of the people of Kenya.

As it is, Section 16 of our Constitution clearly provides for the enactment of a law by Parliament to establish and determine the number and portfolios of the Cabinet. That this has never been done in 45 years is a further testament to the calibre of our political class.

According to the 2007/8 budget, the cost of running 34 ministries this year is Ksh299.6 billion (US\$4.5 billion). This is an average of Ksh8.8 billion per ministry. Using this average cost, 44 ministries could cost the taxpayers about Ksh387 billion (US\$ 5.8 billion) or almost Ksh87.6 billion more a year. Using this same average, a quick calculation tells us that capping ministries at 24 could reduce our recurrent expenditure on ministries by approximately Ksh 90 billion, if the political class was willing to make the hard but correct choices in governance.

It is important to note that wealthier and more stable countries than Kenya maintain way smaller cabinets than we have historically done, and it may be time for us to borrow a leaf from them. Canada with similar population has less than 24 ministers; the United Kingdom has about 25 ministers; France has 15. Could there be a relationship between development and a small cabinet?

MPs were elected to represent Kenyans, not to agitate for wasteful expenditure in the name of power sharing, and we wish to remind you both that in your respective campaigns you both declared that you would only appoint lean and clean cabinets. This is the time to honour these promises as a sign of good faith to Kenyans, and you both have a historic opportunity to change the way government relates to the governed by showing that you are responsive to us the voters who honoured you with our votes in December.

Kenya needs a smart government, not a big one.

**Signed:**

**Kenyans for Peace with Truth and Justice**  
**Movement for Political Accountability**  
**Office of the Nobel Peace Laureate**  
**Concerned Kenyans**