The Hon Martha Karua, MP
Chair of NARC-Kenya
2012 Presidential Candidate
July 6th, 2011

Dear Martha,

I write as a resident of West Mugirango and Nyamira County and extend my welcome to our home and region. I am sure you will enjoy your stay, enjoying the hospitality of our people; make sure to enjoy enough matoke, tea, and coffee. Don’t forget ugali, our stable. I am also sure that you will leave with a better understanding of the people of Nyamira, the challenges we face and concerns for the development of the county and country.

It was my intention to be at your function in Nyamira today. However, time and distance don’t allow for that. In any case, I am sure that your tour of Nyamira will be a success. And that the people of Nyamira will better understand who you are and your agenda for Kenya so that they can make informed decisions on your leadership in the future.

You come to Nyamira in search of support for you declared candidacy for the chief executive in the Kenyan government. The Kenyan presidency, for those of us who aspire to lead the nation in the near future, is perhaps the greatest calling on our land. We in Nyamira will give you a fair hearing; we are good at listeners.

We hope that you will pay due attention to the aspirations and wishes of the people of Nyamira and how these relate to the rest of Kenya. And that you will welcome genuine debate on the way forward for our people across Kenya, starting with locations, divisions, districts, constituencies, counties and the nation.

Such a debate is long overdue.

In the past there hasn’t been debate on development alternatives; rather development issues have been papered over with political competition reduced to unwarranted ethnic competition with ethnic prejudices taking centre stage. Having been a player in the 2007 post-election mess, you have a better understanding than most Kenyans what such ethnicity-based politics can do to a people; in that year, we almost lost our dear country; and only so because of the manner in which the electoral competition issue had been framed! Ukabila and ethnic chauvinism!

Even if for this reason only, 2012 must see issue-based competition!

Like other parts of Kenya, we in Nyamira (in particular) and Gusii (in general) have unique challenges that constrain our growth and development; these are challenges that limit our ability to realize our full potential and effectively contribute to the nation’s development. It is important that these be understood and be addressed. Only leaders that understand
these issues, their magnitude and incorporate them in their agenda deserve the support of the people.

Some of these challenges are borne of nature: for example, good fertile land in Gusii that has led to high population density resulting in excessive pressure on land. Creative and innovative approaches are required for the land in Gusii to continue supporting the ever-growing population.

Other problems are man-made. These are largely centred on the leadership we have had since independence, both local and national. Indeed, the coming of the new constitution, we believe, is a godsend and offers hope to our people with respect to dealing with the issue of leadership, locally and nationally.

We in Nyamira and Gusii, like the rest of Kenya, are actively searching for new leadership; leadership that is in tune with the New Order following the promulgation of the constitution; leadership that is in tune with people’s issues and concerns; leadership that invests in real development of our people and seeks to maximum benefit for the common good. Leadership that is focused on betterment of our collective well-being!

The New Order is about issues, integrity and service to the people; it is about transparency in the interest of common good. It is about making Kenya a great nation based on laying sound foundations that would warrant that greatness. And it starts at the grassroots, laid a brick at a time; and developed, like a house on a firm rock, as basis for a strong Kenya for the future.

In Gusii and Nyamira, education results are dismal and not worth writing home about. Often, fewer candidates are admitted to university from a county than from a single good school in other parts of the country. We hardly have any institutions of higher learning; there are no mid-level or vocational training institutions, leaving many of school dropouts to be wasted. Do we then wonder the source of rampant crime?

We need a plan of action!

Crime is a major issue of concern to the people of Gusii and Nyamira, largely due to rampant unemployment, misemployment and underemployment. Too many young people are left on their own devices, with little preparation to face the world. With poor family backgrounds, these kids are easy prey for crime and crime kingpins for, as they say, an idle mind is the devil’s workshop!

This needs a plan of action!

In Nyamira and Gusii, we face population pressures that get amplified with diminishing land sizes. As our people squeeze the last productivity that they can get out of the land, we are faced with potential environmental catastrophe such as dry riverbeds, polluted natural water springs, extinction of animal and plant species, erosion, and more! It is all doom and gloom if we don’t change direction! We need urgent solutions to address this.
It starts with a plan of action!

We are seeking innovative land use to increase productivity (tea, coffee, dairy farming, pineapple, maize, wimbi, matoke, etc.) without harming the environment; we need quality seeds to increase production; we need value add to produce via agro-processing to increase earnings and provide employment. We need better marketing for agricultural output and investment in the development of marketing channels.

All these require a plan of action!

We have an aging population with little support, what with the loosening of family ties as people get dispersed across the world in search of opportunities. Yet the aging are our parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, and all.

There has to be a plan of action for this!

Martha, the above list is not exhaustive. However, I am sure you get the essence of my argument. Put simply: the terrain has changed; and those that are going to win are those that present real solutions, plans action for those solutions and demonstrate capacity to implement their solutions.

Some of us have thought hard about how to tackle these issues; we have solutions and are slowly evolving associated plans of action that we will present to the people of Kenya. We respectively challenge those that seek leadership to come up with their plans; then it will be competition between plans and programs, rather than tribe!

And then ... Kenyan people will vote for the best of the plans presented.

Let the debate begin; and let the candidate with the best plan win! The arena is open!

Yours truly,

Matunda Nyanchama (matunda@matunda.org)

Candidate for 2012 elective office

Country: Kenya

Home County: Nyamira

Constituency: West Mugirango

Website: www.matunda.org