

**KARA STATEMENT ON THE OCCASION OF THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY
LUNCHEON CELEBRATION. TUESDAY, 10TH NOVEMBER 2015 AT THE LAICO
REGENCY HOTEL, NAIROBI.**

- Our Chief Guest, Dr. Fred Matiangi, the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology & Ag. Cabinet Secretary for Lands, Housing and Urban Development
- Our most valued members, partners and friends
- Members of the press
- Ladies and gentlemen

Welcome to this special luncheon to mark our 15th Anniversary. We appreciate all of you for joining us today and for your unwavering support over the years. This occasion gives us an opportunity to reflect on the long and rewarding journey the Alliance has taken over the past 15 years as we take stock of the growth and benefits of strong non-political, non-denominational, non-racial and non-profit residents associations movement in Kenya.

When Kara was started in the year 2000, we only had a handful of residents associations struggling to ensure that service delivery challenges within their neighbourhoods were addressed by the Government. In those days, Kenya's space for freedom of expression was not very open and there were no clear mechanisms by which the public could hold the government accountable.

With taxpayers getting disillusioned and frustrated in their attempts to access better services, a natural progression took place where individual associations realized it was more expedient and effective to act through one federated organization that represent the views of all members. Nine Associations explored and pioneered the formation of KARA in 1999 and the Alliance was subsequently registered in the year 2000.

Over the last one and a half decades, our country has undergone tremendous transformation for the better and Kara has steadily championed and facilitated access to better services across the Country. With the democratic space opening up and citizens becoming more and more interested in government transparency and accountability, residents associations have emerged as effective mechanism of engaging with the Government in service delivery issues.

With the new governance dispensation that emphasizes public participation in every aspect of governance, the place and role of residents associations cannot be overemphasized. We are grateful that today the Government recognizes and is keen to engage Residents Associations in decision making processes.

As we mark our 15th Anniversary, we are alive to the fact that the coming years are going to be even more challenging and demanding for Kara. But we are confident that the impact of Kara and its members will be much greater. We are also cognizant of the fact that ICT has revolutionized the way of doing business in the world generally and Kenya in particular. Residents associations must therefore embrace the use of ICT in driving their agendas if they are to remain effective and of value to their members.

We are pleased that already some of our members are using applications that are aimed at enhancing communication and revenue collection from their members. We hope that the same can be replicated in other associations across the country.

We are equally keen to understand the mechanisms the government has put in place to ensure proper use of technology in enhancing service delivery efficiency and effectiveness. It is for this reason that we requested our chief guest, Dr. Fred Matiangi, the Cabinet Secretary for Information, Communications and Technology, our chief guest today, to join us for the luncheon and share with us information on the achievements made by the Government in regard to the use of ICT in service delivery. And on behalf of KARA, I would like to thank him for sparing time from his busy schedule to join us at this function.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, I wish to recognize the support of our partners who have made this event possible. We appreciate Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company; Communications Authority of Kenya; Safaricom Ltd; National Housing Corporation and Equatorial Commercial Bank Ltd for partnering with us in this event. We also appreciate all of you for your participation in the forum and look forward to a fruitful engagement. Thank you very much.

Richard Nyaga

Chairman, The Kenya Alliance of Resident Associations