



## **KENYA COMMUNITY SUPPORT CENTRE (KECOSCE) – PRESS RELEASE**

### **INTERATIONAL DAY OF YOUTH: KECOSCE URGES IEBC TO ALLOW YOUTH TO USE WAITING CARDS TO REGITER AS VOTERS**

Kenya Community Support Centre (KECOSCE) will this year join the youth in Malindi and Msambweni districts in commemorating the International Day of Youth, an event held annually globally to reflect on the gains, challenges and opportunities for youth in every country. The theme for this year's celebration is **building a better world, partnering with youth**. As an organization that has worked with the youth in the Coast of Kenya for the last four years, this theme represents as a symbol of hope ad faith. It demonstrates that despite the negative attention that youth, as a social group, have been getting (and often generating), there are just as many youth who serve as the agents of change, and beacons of hope for social development.

We congratulate the youth in the Coast of Kenya for their resolve to maintain peace in the region. The youth have demonstrated resilience to the ever increasing challenging environment of political and social mobilization towards violence and have ensured Coast has enjoyed peace even at the height of political tension from 2007 todate.

As we commemorate this important day, we wish to call on our central government, the local authorities, the public institutions, private sector and all actors to prioritise and address the needs of the youth, who are the majority population by considering not just political statements that indicate youth consideration in planning but also enhance partnership with the youth in the development strategies that focus on (1) employment and entrepreneurship; (2) health and education, including education on sexual and reproductive health; and (3) participation, including political inclusion, active citizenship and protection of rights.

This being a political year, we are calling on all political parties to take a step and rethink about the participation of youth in the leadership of their parties but also active participation in decision making levels of the parties, we expect youth consideration not just for nomination to special seats but creation of level ground for free, fair and peaceful elections and nominations at party level to enable youth to contest in the many political leadership slots as provided for in the new dispensation.

We are calling on the government to hasten issuance of IDs cards to eligible citizens especially the youth to enable them to register as voters and be part of the voting process, if this is not

achieved, we expect the IEBC to allow people to register using their waiting cards to ensure all citizens enjoy this right to choose their leaders.

We are also urging all actors in the Coast Region give peace a chance and stop threatening youth with a call to boycott this historic event and participate in the forth coming general elections and stop their threats to the population not to participate as this will deny the youth the historic opportunity to become key partners in moving this country into the next level of political development. The youth must be allowed to vote, to contest and to ensure peaceful transition to the devolved governments. We have hope in devolution and we think this is the moment to make the promises made to the youth decades ago a reality.

We are finally urging the youth in the whole country to step up and fill the leadership gap that exists currently, we are changing our destiny, we are weeding out all corrupt leaders, all leaders with integrity issues, we are bridging the gap between the old and the youth, the rich and poor and providing chances to the minorities, they youth cant miss this landmark elections and the responsibility for ensuring Kenyans go to polls peacefully and expect free and fair elections rests with the youth of today.