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## **CAFOD welcomes Kenya's peaceful constitution results**

CAFOD today congratulated Kenyans on the huge turnout and peaceful vote on a new constitution, despite fears of a repeat of violence unleashed by the 2007 Presidential elections.

Kepha Ngito is a peace and rights activist in Kibera whose project is supported by CAFOD. He said, "The true legacy of the post-election violence is that the politicians would not have joined together to push through such a big piece of reform to address root causes without it. The people have felt justice at last, but we had to go through it the hard way. It's a struggle that our fathers began and I'm glad to have been part of the generation that has made it happen."

Kenya's first new constitution since its independence from Britain in 1963 will place checks on the powers of the president, devolve some power to counties and improve democracy and human rights. It is hoped the new provisions will help tackle corruption, political patronage, and conflicts over land and ethnic tensions which have plagued Kenya.

However CAFOD's Governance Officer for East Africa Titus Lotee, comments that there is still a lot of work to do in making sure that Kenyans understand the next steps in the process - and that their expectations are managed.

"There could be an expectation from ordinary Kenyans that they will wake up to a radically different country. Some things will come into effect immediately, like the Bill of Rights, but major institutions that will implement these rights, like the police force, will take a long time to reform.

"The President needs to prepare Kenyans to be realistic - keeping hope of course - but drawing attention to the schedule, and urging parliamentarians to stay united in passing the more than forty pieces of new legislation needed to bring the constitution into effect."

Survivors of the terrible post-election violence of 2008 have also welcomed the new constitution. Lilian Sireka is a resident of Kibera, one of the hotspots of the post-election violence two years ago.

"Since my shop was burnt down in the election violence, Kenya has gone forward a little. I voted 'Yes' because the constitution will really change me and my children's lives: Kibera will get more control over resources and there will be less fighting."

Two-thirds of Kenyans voted in favour of a new constitution. Kenya's polling stations in 210 constituencies closed with no major incidents reported. Of more than 8.6 million votes counted, over 68% percent voted "Yes". This turnout, despite predictions, is close to the 9.8 million who cast a vote in the 2007 presidential elections.

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