



Report of The People Dialogue Festival (PDF)

September 2021

Nairobi-Kenya

By the Centre for Multiparty Democracy (CMD-Kenya)

List of acronyms

BBI	Building Bridges Initiative
CCM	Chama cha Mashinani
CEC	County Executive Committee
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CMD	Center for Multi- Party Democracy-Kenya
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DIPD	Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy
EACC	Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission
FIDA	Federation of Women Lawyers Kenya
JP	Jubilee Party
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KMPDU	Kenya Medical Practitioners' and Dentist Union
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NYC	National Youth Council
NYP	National Youth Policy
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
PDF	People Dialogue Festival
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SG	Secretary General
TJRC	Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission
UHC	Universal Health Care
UNLJ	University of Nairobi Law Journal

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background

On 15th and 16th September 2021, the Centre for Multiparty Democracy, (CMD-Kenya) convened the third edition of the People Dialogue Festival (PDF) at the Hilton Hotel, Nairobi. In 2019, CMD-Kenya initiated PDF – a multiparty and a multi-actor dialogue platform on governance issues in Kenya. The inaugural event was held on 7th, 8th & 9th March, 2019 in Nairobi while a second PDF was held on 5th to 7th March, 2020. The concept of PDF mirrors democracy festivals organized in the Nordic-Baltic Sea region, which provide opportunity for citizens and leaders to meet eye-to-eye and on level terms to dialogue about issues facing their countries. Thus, PDF in Kenya is premised on an understanding that democracy is more than democratic institutions and written rules. It is a culture that has to be nourished through the creation of spaces and platforms where people can physically get together, talk to each other, get inspired, exchange opinions and debate their ideas. PDF provides a rare opportunity to foster active civic engagement, a culture of dialogue and critical thinking on a range of governance, social and economic issues by bringing together people of different trades and backgrounds.

CMD-Kenya is a platform for political parties, political actors, civic actors and policy makers to engage in dialogue and cooperate in strengthening multiparty democracy, promote social justice, sustainable development, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and political governance best practices.

1.2 Rationale

In a stratified society such as Kenya coupled with increasing skepticism for politics, the urgency to creating a stronger and more transparent connection between decision makers and decision takers cannot be gainsaid. Dialogue serves this key connection by ensuring active and meaningful engagement of different actors and citizens in public affairs. Indeed, dialogue is the distinguishing feature of democratic societies, which are judged by the extent to which governments open up to citizen involvement in public affairs and the space they give for citizens to hold the government accountable. The challenge is therefore to establish spaces for dialogue among state and non-state actors as well as ordinary citizens to strengthen their relationships towards the overall good of the country's democratic development and the transformation towards sustainable development.

Moreover, for Kenya to begin emerging from the present and historical state of affairs that makes it increasingly vulnerable, there is the need for greater collaboration among leaders both in public and private sectors, to deal with the underlying issues, develop answers to problems and move the country forward on a positive path of sustainable peace and development. A contrary path threatens to erase strides of development and may further entrench poverty and inequality especially among young people who make up a high percentage of the total Kenya's population. Collaborative national leadership will stimulate dialogue at different levels of the society on ways to achieve more effective and holistic strategies for managing and resolving differences and building inclusive processes that advance good governance in the country.

While PDF is an established people-centered national dialogue platform, there is need for broadening the scope to ensure that dialogue is structured, sustained, inclusive and issue-based. Involvement of various stakeholders at different levels will enhance the sustainability of dialogue and actioning on the deliberations especially as the country gears toward a General Elections in less than a year.

1.3 Objectives

The overall objective of the PDF was to facilitate a balanced inclusion and effective participation in national dialogue on governance and development and promote the institutionalization of implementation of dialogue outcomes. Specifically, the PDF in September 2021 sought to:

- a. Provide opportunity for reasoned arguments that link national dialogue with other political processes particularly the 2022 general elections.
- b. Highlight the Decade of Action Campaign and secure duty bearers' and citizens' commitments at a national level, to accelerate SDGs processes.

1.4 Approach and Focus of the PDF

The approach of the dialogue was based on co-creation in both content and format. CMD-Kenya considers co-creation a philosophy, tool and a method. However, the COVID-19 pandemic proved challenging to the usual organization of the PDF, necessitating changes to plans for the September 2021 PDF. Adaptability and flexibility were applied by having the activities largely virtual with a reasonable in-person audience. This was in a bid to strike the delicate balance between protecting public health and safeguarding the democratic space.

1.5 Expected Impact

As a platform for constructive multistakeholder dialogue cutting across age, gender and hierarchy, PDF continues to make a positive impact on Kenya's democracy, governance, sustainable peace and development. Briefly, the expected outcomes of PDF 2021 were:

- a. Optimism: Enhanced appreciation for democracy, strengthened belief in positive change among Kenyans.
- b. Relationships and Equality: Encouraged new and strong relations, building trust between system and citizens, reduced power distance and diversity.
- c. Innovation and solutions: Championed new politics, ideas, methods, processes, strengthened capacity to develop solutions and creativity.
- d. Participation and dialogue: Increased capacity to participate, opportunities to do so, curiosity, open conversations, showroom of new participatory and collaborative methods.
- e. Learning: Shared and exchanged of new knowledge, skills and motivation for behavior change. Both individual, organizational and societal learning, display of new methods and research of what works

**Chapter Two:
Highlights of PDF 2021 Results**

2.1 Number of Participants

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a hybrid model was adopted for the PDF 2021, where a small number of participants attended in person while a large number of others followed and participated virtually. Physically, a maximum of 100 participants were invited per day, to participate in the event for the two days. On the other hand, available statistics demonstrate that the number of participants following and taking part in the conversation virtually was not static; it was oscillating from time to time. On average,

2.2 Overview of PDF 2021 Sessions and Discussion Themes¹

The event was spread across 2 days, with 3 sessions and 15 thematic discussions as presented below:

Day	Session	Discussion Themes
DAY 1	Session 1: Opening & Commemoration of The International Day of Democracy	Theme 1: Opening and Commemoration of The International Day of Democracy Welcome Ceremony
		Theme 2: My Future Kenya – Kenya in the eyes of children
		Theme 3: Democracy and political development gains in Kenya and what it means to the rest of the world
		Theme 4: Democracy and sustainable development
		Theme 5: The role of Parliament in safeguarding democracy
	Session 2: Towards Electoral Accountability and Stable Political Environment in Kenya in 2022	Theme 1: Towards electoral accountability and stable political environment in Kenya in 2022
Session 3: The Quest to Improve the Electoral Process in Kenya: Technology and Elections	Theme 1: Electoral integrity in the age of digital technologies and social media	
	Theme 2: The impact of dis- and misinformation on electoral integrity	
	Theme 3: Citizens’ trust in democratic institutions, and regulatory options to address electoral integrity issues	
DAY 2	Session 4: Leaving no One Behind in Seizing Opportunities to Promote and Protect Our Own Nation’s Democracy	Theme 1: Role of duty bearers and citizens in accelerating the attainment of the SDGs at the national level.
		Theme 2: The role of different actors in the implementation of the SDGs
	Session 5: Strengthening Partnerships for Sustainable Development Goals in Kenya	Theme 1: The place of multi -stakeholder actors in accelerating implementation, monitoring, and review of SDGs
		Theme 2: Enhancing local ownership and political commitment to accelerating the implementation of SDGs in Kenya

¹ Refer to the detailed discussion of each of these sessions and discussion themes in Chapter 3 below.

2.3 Partnerships

Strategic collaborations were sought with different actors who supported successful execution of the PDF. Two (2) categories of partners made the event a success as follows:

No	Category	Partners
1.	Institutional/Strategic Partners/ Donors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Danish Liberal Democracy Program (DLDP) 2. Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD) 3. URAIA Trust 4. Konrad Adenauer Foundation Kenya 5. Royal Dutch Embassy – Nairobi
2.	Planning and/or Executing Partners	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CMD-Kenya member parties 2. Danish Liberal Democracy Program (DLDP) 3. Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD) 4. Royal Danish Embassy Nairobi 5. Office of Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP) 6. Political Parties’ Dispute Tribunal (PPDT). 7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Kenya Forum 8. United Nations Development Program 9. Kofi Annan Foundation 10. Siasa Place 11. FIDA-Kenya 12. Kenya Diaspora Alliance 13. Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA) 14. Alliance of Democracies 15. 2030Beyond 16. Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) 17. Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) 18. Athena Network 19. Council of Governors (CoG) 20. Booker Academy – Kakamega 21. Alliance High School – Nairobi

2.4 Media Coverage

The event was streaming through social media platforms (CMD-Kenya Page and PDF Page and the CMD-Kenya YouTube Channel). Further, a real-time tracker of the #FormNiDialogue on Twitter revealed that as of 9th march 2019, there was high level reach to audiences across the globe as follows:

Item	Number
Posts	9,886
Users	1,019

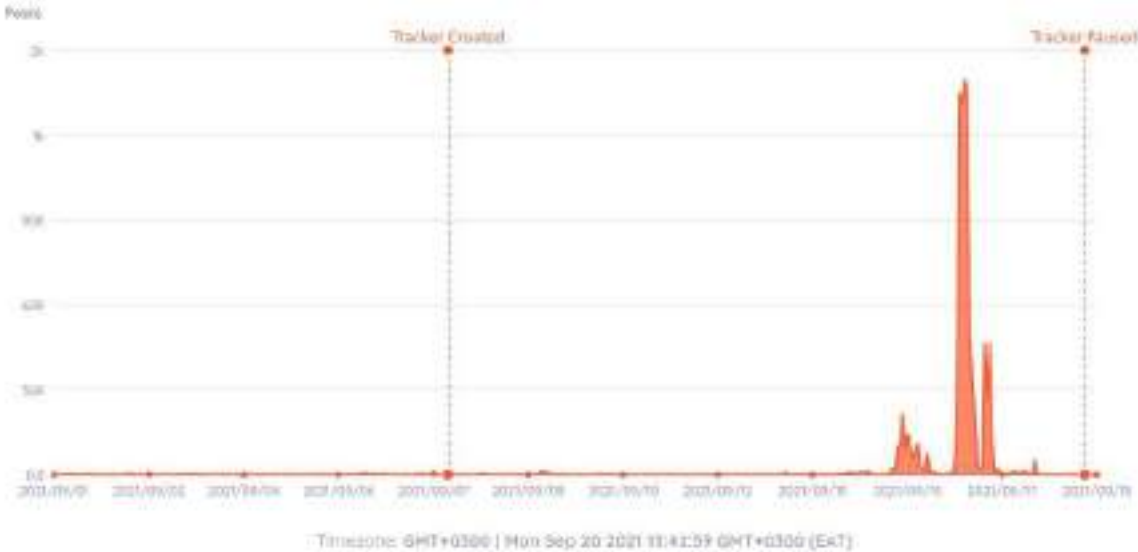
Engagements	15,422
Reach	7,958,461
Impressions	172,075,557

2.5 Participation

Various individuals and organizations took part in the PDF 2021. All CMD-Kenya member parties participated in the event. Besides political parties, representatives from the private sector, religious leaders, trade unions, students, youth serving organizations, women and the women movement participated in the event. Tracking the #FormNiDialogue online engagement reveal that 9,886 posts were made with 1,019 users actively engaging in the hashtag. Further, 15,422 engaged in the discussion through engaging, commenting, liking the posts as well as sharing. 7,958,461 online users were reached by the #FormNiDialogue discussion and 172,075,557 was the number of times that the hashtag was viewed by online users.



Timeline



Also, during the online engagements under the PDF 2021 hashtag, 38% of the discussions were positive and in support of the discussions emanating from the festival. 6 % users had negative sentiments, while 57% users had neutral sentiments during the discussions as shown below:

Sentiment

Positive	38 %
Neutral	57 %
Negative	6 %

Sentiment Score: 86.86



8/25/2021

With regard to gender composition, majority of the online users were males represented by 69% of those who participated in the online conversation while the remaining 31% were females as summarized below:

Gender

Male	69 %
Female	31 %



Chapter Three: Thematic Discussions During the PDF 2021

3.1 SESSION 1: OPENING & COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DEMOCRACY

3.1.1 Theme 1: Opening and Commemoration of The International Day of Democracy Welcome Ceremony

The event was opened by the CMD-Kenya Executive Director, Mr. Frankline Mukwanja. It sought to set the tone of the event as well as present the key highlights of the PDF 2021. He observed that this was a different PDF event that demanded some level of innovation, adaptability and flexibility due to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic that require us to strike the delicate balance between protecting public health and safeguarding the democratic space. There was appreciation that Covid 19 has put the Freedom of Assembly and Association under threat even when they are the foremost tenets of democracy. That is why the event was limited in terms of the number of people attending as well as was being held in a closed space. However, the event was open to everyone joining virtually.

He observed that PDF is an initiative that is timely as our Country navigates through an important democratic process of fostering stability, seeking to improve on governance and ensuring inclusive economic and democratic development. This process is among the greatest challenges since the country became independent. And it's not one that political leaders can face alone. For development in Kenya is to be sustainable and truly respond to people's needs, then the people themselves must play a key role by being involved in the process, have access to information and their voices be heard by politicians therefore PDF plays a key role to ensure this is done effectively by providing space for dialogue that involves persons from across the divide of political, social and economic spectrum.

With regard to the discussions on Sustainable Development Goals, (SDGs) in the PDF, Mukwanja indicated that achieving them will require dedication and active participation from groups across society. One of the many actors that must actively participate for societies to achieve these goals is political parties as they have a fundamental role in empowering citizens and ensuring inclusion and equality in societies around the world. That's why political parties are essential to achieving the SDGs.

As a multiparty dialogue platform, CMD-Kenya joins other actors globally to celebrate the International Day of Democracy on 15th September every year as a way of consolidating our democratic gains. He underscored that democracy requires the participation of all citizens.

3.1.2 Theme 2: My Future Kenya – Kenya in the Eyes of Children

For the first time, the PDF 2021 brought on board primary school pupils from Booker Academy and secondary school students from Alliance High School as discussants on the future of Kenya.

In her remarks, **Terry Motaroki of Booker Academy** observed that the SDGs are majorly aimed towards the eradication of poverty and therefore to achieve the goal the government ought to create more jobs in order to reduce the dependency rates. To ensure pupils and students do not drop out of schools, the government should provide food for children in arid and semi-arid lands and promote agricultural activities in ASALS by putting up irrigation schemes in the areas to boost food production activities. The government should also provide better and quality healthcare to students and pupils. Terry further implored upon the government to continue providing schooling materials to schools and should improve on them especially with the new educational curriculum. Lastly, the government should ensure that pupils are not deprived their rights to quality education, peace and quality healthcare as adults become role models.

Teddy Nyale, the Alliance High School Captain gave a key note address during the PDF 2021. He affirmed that the PDF was an epitome of democracy, where one gets an opportunity to speak and dialogue with different stakeholders on matters pertaining democracy. Alliance school students holds dialogue with the school's Chief Principal regularly in order to better the school. Teddy decried the tribal nature of Kenyan politics and political parties. He indicated that since 1963 to date most political parties are tribal or ethnic based with only few national parties whereby most tribal chiefs or tribal kingpins ride on the theory to cling or get to power. To him, this has made the youth to be antagonistic in their political participation. Multipartyism is a great milestone though it is not living to its full dream due to challenges facing country and abuse to democracy. He challenged youth to push for change as progress is impossible without change and opinions are of no use if not based on knowledge. To ensure well enabled IEBC, free and fair elections, Teddy urged the government to provide adequate resources to the IEBC to enable it conduct free and fair elections. Economically, he urged the government of Kenya to exploit the resource in Kenya to promote economic development and growth. The 17 SDGs are geared to better our lives and enhance policies therefore the government should partner with different stakeholders with interest in SDGs to make sure we achieve the goals as the future is attainable through dialogue, negotiation and involvement of citizens.

3.1.3: Theme 3: Democracy and Political Development Gains in Kenya And What It Means to the Rest of the World

By: Dr. Annette Schwandner, Country Representative, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Kenya

Dr. Schwandner observed that too rich people and too poor people in a community or a country is a danger to democracy. It is therefore good to create a middle-class economy whereby democracy can prevail easily. Africa needs cross border infrastructure i.e., trade and roads development. Cross border trade leads to improvement of democracy and economy. Kenya should improve trade and develop joint projects this will turn lead to the growth of her economy. Other ways of improving the economy is through boosting tourism by developing tourist sites and its infrastructure such as hotels and promoting political stability to make it easier for tourists to come here from Russia and Asia.

3.1.4 Theme 4: Democracy and Sustainable Development

By: Mr. Walid Badawi, Resident Representative – United Nations Development Program – Kenya

In his remarks, the UNDP Resident Representative to Kenya Mr. Walid Badawi underscored the important role of dialogue in ensuring that different actors come together to address common agendas. That the PDF 2021 timely coming just a few days after the UN Secretary General launched a new roadmap for the next 25 years of multilateralism entitled, “Our Common Agenda”. This agenda is, above all, an agenda of action designed to accelerate the implementation of existing agreements, including the SDGs.

While making reference to a number of studies and publications, Mr. Badawi maintained that, in many respects, Kenya is moving towards the right, but much remain to be done. According to the Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance, Kenya ranks 14th out of 54 countries with an overall governance score of 58.5 out of 100 showing a “slow improvement” with an increase of 3.7 points in the last 10 years (absolute trend), In terms of Participation, Rights & Inclusion, Kenya currently scores 51.6 out of 100 and scores the same for Security & Rule of Law. According to a recent public opinion poll published by the Afrobarometer, in Kenya, only 23% of young people interviewed believe that the Government has performed “fairly well” or “very well” in addressing the needs of young people. Also, 24% of young Kenyans interviewed did not vote in the last election and 47% indicated that they were close to a political party. As part of the same public opinion poll, in Africa, the young people interviewed indicated that they are Not at all/Not very satisfied with the way democracy works in their country.

While these statistics point out certain areas of improvement, for example on enabling opportunities for peaceful participation of the youth during elections, we see that Kenya is moving in the right direction. Kenya has one of the most progressive Constitutions in the world which instills a sense of national pride. Under the umbrella of democracy, Kenya has been able to carry out crucial processes that are examples for others to follow, including Devolution and establishing many robust institutions. Therefore, there is need to recognize and applaud the level of maturity and effectiveness around the separation of powers and adherence to the rule of law that we have witnessed repeatedly in the country. There is a strong call for action, a call to the youth, to leaders, to institutions, to civil society, to political actors, to the private sector, to us the development partners, to all the citizens of the world, but more particularly, to the people of Kenya for an active and meaningful participation in renewing the social contract and deepening democracy based on peaceful coexistence, compassion, and empathy that must prevail despite the difficulties.

3.1.5 Theme 5: Keynote Address - The Role of Parliament in Safeguarding Democracy

By: Hon. Dr. Amos Kimunya, Majority Leader – National Assembly of Kenya

Democracy is a universally recognized ideal as well as a goal, which is based on common values shared by peoples throughout the world community irrespective of cultural, political, social, and economic differences. It is thus a basic right of citizenship to be exercised under conditions of freedom, equality, transparency, and responsibility, with due respect for the plurality of views, and in the interest of the policy. The progressive constitution of Kenya 2010, provides for an enabling

environment for citizens to participate at National and local level. However, one of the major impediments to the growth of our democracy is voter ignorance due to lack of voter knowledge and little level of literacy.

The defined constitutional roles of our legislators as being representation, legislative, and oversight. Although, voters interpret differently their understanding of the representation role, to that of being the problem solver, agent of development and chief fundraiser. This invariably obscures and affects the choices made, based on persuasive campaign pledges. It further negatively impacts on the contribution towards legislation and oversight that voters seem to pay little attention to, or factor in their voting. The legislative process is also an open process in which various stakeholders and members of the public have an opportunity to participate or contribute to the substantive development of law and policies that are from time to time being considered by the National Assembly, aka public participation.

3.1.6 Remarks by H.E Kalonzo Musyoka – Party Leader Wiper Party and Former Vice President of the Republic of Kenya

The former Vice President of the Republic of Kenya and Wiper Party Leader, H.E. Kalonzo Musyoka made remarks during the event. He particularly committed that when elected, he will do his best to make Kenya united as long as the IEBC conducts free and fair elections. He observed that the recruitment of the IEBC CEO should be done in a transparent manner and get a credible person. In similar vein, the issuance of Identification cards and the voter registration process should be credible. To ensure that the country is on the path towards achieving the SDGs, there is need to have a conversation on matters that affect Kenyans, such as the increase in fuel prices, realities that continue impoverishing Kenyans, setting a wrong precedence towards the attainment of the global development goals.

3.2 SESSION TWO – TOWARDS ELECTORAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND STABLE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT IN KENYA IN 2022

3.2.1 Theme 1: Towards electoral accountability and stable political environment in Kenya in 2022

Electoral accountability is an integral marker in any democracy. It is most closely associated with citizens' ability to cast a ballot in an election and the outcomes be accepted by the population, oppositional parties, and international observers to be "free and fair". Although Kenya's democratic setting has been improving over time, divisive ethnic based politics, tribal clashes, violations of human rights, gender violence, high-level corruption and impunity remain key challenges in realizing electoral accountability and political stability after every election. Based on the 2017 elections and the events thereafter, including violence that rocked many parts of the country, the session sought to provide opportunity to key political leaders to discuss and commit to observing free and fair elections.

Panelists:

1. Ms. Veronica Maina –Secretary General UDA party.
2. Mr. Edwin Sifuna –Secretary General ODM party.

3. Ms. Margret Ndanyi –Executive Director and ANC party, Acting SG.
4. Ms. Millicent Abudho –Secretary General Ford Kenya Party.

Moderator – Debarl Inea

Key takeaways:

Discussions during the session demonstrate the need for more cross-party and multi-actor dialogues as basic minimums as the country approaches the 2022 General Elections. That the government should create a conducive environment for political development including ensuring that foreign missions are allowed to fund civic education programmes being run or implemented by the non-State actors. Issues that create uneven playing field for political participation, such as voter bribery and electoral violence should be firmly dealt with by relevant State agencies. The session emphasized the need for political tolerance and every Kenyan be allowed to join a political party or political alliance of his/her choice as a basic Constitutional imperative. Discussants also emphasized the need for enhanced civic education, targeting different categories of Kenyans, especially the young people to understand the importance of peaceful elections as a way of ensuring that the country remains stable before, during and after elections. It was however observed that misinformation and disinformation is a great challenge to political processes as some parties spread propaganda and lies. Finally, the discussants underscored the need for political parties to have strong internal dispute resolution mechanisms to deal with disputes especially during the party primaries that precede the General Elections.

3.3 SESSION THREE – THE QUEST TO IMPROVE THE ELECTORAL PROCESS IN KENYA: TECHNOLOGY AND ELECTIONS

3.3.1 Theme 1: Electoral Integrity in The Age of Digital Technologies and Social Media

The discussion on this topic provided a neutral platform for a technical and political dialogue with election stakeholders to highlight the issues of safeguarding the digital space ahead of Kenya’s 2022 Presidential Elections, learn from the 2013 and 2017 general elections to identify what can be done differently in 2022, and increase electoral integrity and confidence in Kenya’s upcoming election. The discussion involved stakeholders working in this space to ensure that this initiative adds value and complements ongoing activities.

Panelists:

1. Corinne Momal-Vanian, Executive Director, Kofi Annan Foundation
2. Ms. Anne Ileri – Executive Director FIDA-Kenya/ Chairperson-ELOG
3. Ms. Ann Nderitu, Registrar of Political Parties
4. Hon. Dr. Shem Ochuodho, IT expert and Chairperson – Kenya Diaspora Alliance
5. Dr. Douglas Kivoi – Principal Analyst – KIPPRA.
6. Ms. Veronica Maina - Secretary General – UDA Party
7. Olaf Böhnke, Senior Advisor at the Alliance of Democracies.

Moderator –Debarl Inea

Key takeaways:

Covid-19 has had an impact on democracy as some norms have been forced to be overdone or overridden i.e. some countries have postponed elections therefore covid has made democracy bit of vulnerable in some situation and countries. It is in this context that technology has become handy to sustain democratic dialogues around the world. But on the other hand, technology can be harmful to democratic development especially during election period due to its potential of spreading disinformation and political propaganda. The discussion underscored the need for every politician to pledge for online behavior towards elections and anyone spreading hate should be held culpable and responsible. That youth should spearhead and educate voters on importance of peace during electioneering period using virtual spaces. Also, it was recommended that data science be utilized to enable the electoral bodies to track spending by all politicians during campaigns. That technology should be used to make electoral processes credible, such as at the polling stations and transmission of results that are credible from the polling centres. Limits should be put in place on advertisement of politicians during campaigns to prevent disinformation and propaganda.

3.4 SESSION FOUR – LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND IN SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES TO PROMOTE AND PROTECT OUR OWN NATION’S DEMOCRACY**3.4.1 Introductory Remarks by Mr. Edwin Sifuna Vice Chairperson – CMD Kenya**

The concept of PDF mirrors democracy festivals organized in the Nordic-Baltic Sea region, which provide opportunity for citizens and leaders to meet eye-to-eye and on level terms to dialogue about issues facing their countries. Thus, PDF in Kenya is premised on an understanding that democracy is more than democratic institutions and written rules. PDF provides a rare opportunity to foster active civic engagement, a culture of dialogue and critical thinking on a range of governance, social and economic issues by bringing together people of different trades and backgrounds. The Vice-Chairperson also utilized the opportunity to call upon the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to lift the ban on direct sponsorship of organizations and parties by other parties from abroad.

3.4.2 Theme 1: Keynote Address - Role of Duty Bearers and Citizens in Accelerating the Attainment of the SDGs at the National Level

By: H.E. Amb. Ole Thonke – Danish Ambassador to Kenya

In his remarks, Amb. Ole Thonke acknowledged that very few Kenyan elections haven’t experienced violence since 1997. That this was largely because there were limited opportunities for dialogue between and among political and other civic actors on how potentially divisive issues can be solved. There has been a practice of monologue democracy in Kenya whereby decisions are only made by leaders then communicated to the citizens without proper participation. He observed that the CMD-Kenya PDF creates opportunity for dialogue amongst political players. The Danish People’s Meeting that the PDF borrows much from doesn’t only discuss about politics but also engages civil society, private sector in discussing the future therefore the next CMD-Kenya PDF shouldn’t be about politics only. Private sector should be

brought on board in order to realise the importance of SDGs as they are the major producers and actors in economy.

3.4.3 Theme 2: The Role of Different Actors in the Implementation of the SDGs

As a basic institution of all modern democracies, political parties have a fundamental role in empowering citizens and ensuring inclusion and equality in societies around the world. They guide the actions of government institutions and civil society organizations, aiming to establish effective measures to overcome structural inequality, which is what holds us back – in many cases – from more progress including on the SDGs. This discussion involved civic and political actors as well as other stakeholders in Kenya with experience sharing from elsewhere on dissecting the impact of and nexus between politics and sustainable development.

Panelists:

1. Mr. Anderson Kiraithe – CEO, United Disabled Persons of Kenya (UDPK)
2. Ms. Judith Oduma – CEO, County Assemblies Forum (CAF)
3. Ken Mike Oluoch – CoG Technical lead on SDGs.
4. Rina Lauritzen Trautner – Cofounder, 2030Beyond
5. Mr. Patrick Juma – KEPSA
6. Mr. Sylvester Makaka – KAM
7. Ms. Catherine Kibe – Athena Network.
8. Ms. Winfred Wambua – NGEN
9. Ms. Maria Mbeneka – Chairperson of the County First Lady’s Forum.
10. Mr. Thorn Baraza –Alliance High School Student

Moderator - Janet Mbugua

Key takeaways:

The SDGs were founded on and based on Human rights and the principles of inclusion. They are about leaving no one behind as far as socio-economic, political and environmental development is concerned. It was therefore agreed that no SDG will be met unless everyone is considered involved and engaged which brings out the leave no one behind principle. This includes the marginalized groups. Thus, policy development and any other actions that are aimed at actualizing the SDGs should ensure consultation and inclusion of the different groups in society. Further, it was observed that the implementation of the SDGs needs to be localized so as to aptly respond to unique needs of different groups. That County Governments should be facilitated to ensure proper implementation of the SDGs as part of their mandate as captured in the Constitution of Kenya 2010. The Covid-19 pandemic has certainly slowed down the implementation of SDGs and the attendant interventions both from the resources as well as the social perspectives.

3.5 SESSION FIVE – STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN KENYA

3.5.1 Theme 1: Keynote Address – The place of multi -stakeholder actors in accelerating implementation, monitoring, and review of SDGs

By: Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi – Kenya Presidential Candidate 2022 General Elections, Immediate Former Secretary General of United Nations Centre of Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Former Minister of Trade and Industry - Republic of Kenya

Dr. Kituyi indicated that SDGs are a product of inclusive consultations. Achievement of the SDGs is therefore, a collective bargain. He however, noted that leaders who were expected to take lead in the implementation of the global goals were not performing this role as expected. But also, he noted that in order to achieve SDGs, the mandate should not be left to leaders or politicians alone but the youth should be part of the struggle to achieve them. He challenged the youth to be part of the struggle to create for their space instead of being idle and complaining all the time. That fighting extreme democracy harshness is a collective commitment. In his final submission, Dr. Kituyi reiterated that corruption must be done away in order to make the Kenyan economy great, therefore the youth must speak against the corruption vice.

3.5.2 Remarks by Hon. Martha Karua, Party Leader – Narc-Kenya Party

Hon. Martha Karua, the 2013 Presidential Candidate and Party Leader – Narc-Kenya party spoke after Dr. Kituyi’s keynote address. She observed that a lot of fixing need to be done in Kenya by all of us especially the youth. Drawing global experiences, Hon. Karua said young people have always been engines of revolutions through choice of right leadership and get good governance. He challenged young people to register as voters because voting changes leadership. Although Kenyan politics is highly monetized, young people should take the lead in changing the direction of their country.

3.5.3 Theme 2: Enhancing Local Ownership and Political Commitment to Accelerating the Implementation of SDGs in Kenya

The “whole of government” and “whole of society” approach and institutionalized stakeholder engagement in the implementation of the global development goals in Kenya provides an unrivaled avenue to ensure the dialogue is focused on issues, which address the major development challenges faced by people in Kenya and around the world. Furthermore, it compels a recalibration of Kenya’s political discourse shifting away from personality based and ethnic political mobilization to a contest of propositions to resolving issues affecting the society. Discussions under this theme sought to enhance local ownership and political commitment to accelerate SDGs implementation in Kenya.

Panelists:

1. Hon. Gideon Ochanda, Chairman – Kenya Parliamentary Caucus on SDGs & Business
2. Florence Syevuo, Country Director- SDGs Kenya Forum
3. Ms. Kirsten Brosbol – Founder 2030Beyond

Moderator - Janet Mbugua

Key takeaways:

Successful implementation of the SDGs calls for an enabling policy and legal framework that the Parliament of Kenya has been keen on facilitating. It is also a collective effort that calls for the participation local persons, governments both national and county governments and political parties. Although the implementation process is devolved, the process is not properly funded. Different actors should also take lead in creating awareness among Kenyans on the benefits of the SDGs and why the implementation of the same is important. This also includes inducting students on the SDGs to enhance their understanding of the development goals.

Chapter Four: Conclusion and Lessons Learnt

4.1 Conclusion

The PDF 2021 yet again provided opportunity to Kenyans to have a dialogue about the country's democratic gains and deficits as well as project the country's future as captured under the SDGs. Key to note was the need for holistic political dialogue on inclusive governance reforms ahead of the 2022 general elections and also the role of young people on taking lead in steering the country forward. Other issues that surfaced during the event included the need to conclude the long-term reforms such as land reforms that have remained divisive among Kenyans over time.

4.2 Lessons Learnt

- a. Dialogue can be a tool for addressing broad societal challenges. Entrenching dialogue as part of Kenya's socio-political culture can be important and enable citizens to present positions that can be taken into account by duty bearers.
- b. Flexibility in project implementation in a context of highly dynamic environment ensures that activities that are responsive to emerging situations are implemented. Adapting CMD-Kenya's interventions in January 2020 ensured that the project is refocused and tailored towards addressing real issues facing the nation.
- c. There are still divisions in the country along political persuasions. The divisions are modeled along political leaders who were erstwhile for and against the 2018 handshake process. The political leaders are also taking advantage of lack of robust civic education programs to advance their political goals. What this implies is heading to 2022 elections, the majority's decision will be based on what the politicians told them and not what they think about the real issues afflicting the country.
- d. Democracy development work should continue even in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic; we should not suspend democracy. However, this creates a division between those who can access technology and those who cannot. The PDF 2021 capped the number of attendants to the forum due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This potentially locked out participants who could have intended to attend physically as it happened in the preceding PDF events.