



8th People Dialogue Festival

SUMMARY REPORT

THEME

**Building a Collaborative Democracy
for Kenya's Sustainable Future**

**4 - 7 MARCH 2026
UHURU PARK, NAIROBI, KENYA**

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About This Report

This report provides a concise overview of the 8th People Dialogue Festival (PDF), held from 4th to 7th March 2026 at Uhuru Park, Nairobi. It covers the festival's attendance and participation, programme sessions, as well as a consolidated set of suggested priorities rooted across the dialogues. It is one of three documents produced from the 8th PDF. The Comprehensive Report and the Outcome Report are both available separately from the Centre for Multiparty Democracy (CMD- Kenya) Secretariat.

1 Overview

The PDF is CMD-Kenya's flagship annual civic platform, established to institutionalise structured, multi-stakeholder conversations on democratic governance, electoral integrity, and inclusive development. Now in its 8th edition, PDF has evolved into one of Kenya's most significant civic convening platforms, drawing together a cross-section of society that few other forums can replicate. Successive editions have generated actionable national agendas that have influenced policy discourse, party reform processes, and public accountability mechanisms.

The 8th PDF was convened at a moment of heightened democratic significance — less than 18 months before the 2027 General Elections, with public trust in institutions under strain, youth political energy at an all-time high shaped in part by the 2024 Gen-Z-led protests, and the country facing pressing economic pressures including rising public debt, unemployment, and cost-of-living increases. Against this backdrop, the festival provided a structured platform for citizens to diagnose democratic challenges, hold institutions accountable, and co-create reform agendas.

Participants included political leaders from across the political spectrum, representatives of the IEBC, the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties, the Law Society of Kenya (LSK), civil society organisations (CSOs), youth groups, international diplomatic missions (Netherlands, United Kingdom, and Denmark), faith leaders, persons with disabilities, school students, university representatives, media practitioners, and members of the public. The strong presence of young people, who formed the majority of attendees across all four days, was the festival's most visible and defining characteristic.

"Tuko na Power" was the youth declaration that resonated across all four days of the 8th PDF. A powerful affirmation of youth agency, it captured a simple but decisive truth: with youth aged 18–35 constituting approximately 31% of Kenya's total population and approximately 57% of all eligible voters, young Kenyans hold the numerical power to determine electoral outcomes at every level. It served as a forward-looking mobilisation call, by the youth, for the youth, to register, engage, and hold leaders accountable ahead of the 2027 General Elections.

Objectives of the 8th PDF

- Promote structured, inclusive dialogue, with Kenya's 2027 General Election as the immediate democratic horizon.
- Centre citizen and youth voices in electoral, policy, and governance processes, ensuring citizen-owned outcomes.
- Generate an issue-based national agenda for democratic sustainability, electoral preparedness, and accountable governance.
- Bridge the persistent gap between Kenya's robust legal and constitutional frameworks and their practical implementation, including the Constitution of Kenya (2010), the National Dialogue Committee (NADCO) Report, and related legislation.
- Strengthen the network of democratic actors, political parties, electoral institutions, CSOs, youth platforms, and international partners, in their shared commitment to Kenya's democratic future.

Thematic areas covered during the 8th PDF

The 8th PDF convened dialogue across eight thematic areas and produced seven key outcomes as shown below.

Eighth Thematic Areas of Dialogue



What The 8th PDF Produced - Key Outcomes

- 1** Strengthened citizen-institution trust through open, transparent, and respectful multi-stakeholder engagement across all four days of the festival.
- 2** Amplified and documented youth voices on Kenya's electoral, economic, and governance challenges, ensuring citizen-owned outcomes.
- 3** A consolidated set of key emerging issues was identified. The roles of CSOs, partners, and government institutions, as well as responsibility for follow-up and implementation, were, however not defined.
- 4** Shared understanding among political parties, CSOs, electoral bodies, and citizens on the urgency of implementing existing legal and constitutional frameworks.
- 5** 433 young people registered as new voters on-site at the IEBC stand, directly converting dialogue into democratic action.
- 6** Cross-border youth dialogue between Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania facilitated by the Royal Danish Embassy, strengthening regional democratic solidarity.
- 7** Launch of the Political Economy Analysis on Leadership and Integrity by Transparency International Kenya, grounding electoral reform advocacy in evidence rather than assertion.

Key Activities and Highlights

- "Ni Sisi Ni Sasa"; a spoken-word and rap performance by a student from Dandora Secondary School; crystallized the festival's call for immediate civic action with artistic power and emotional resonance. The performance captured the spirit of youth participation, democratic engagement, and the urgency for young people to take an active role in shaping Kenya's future.



- The live IEBC voter registration stands, which transformed the festival from a conversation about democracy into an exercise of it.
- The cross-national youth dialogue positioned PDF as a regional democratic learning platform by fostering cross-learning among youth from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Denmark. Through platforms such as the Youth Sounding Board, Youth Political Lab, and Culinary Corner, young people engaged in meaningful discussions on governance, leadership, culture, and sustainability while co-creating practical solutions. These interactions, alongside vibrant music, art, and exhibitions, created an engaging environment for civic expression and reinforced the festival's inclusive and multi-dimensional approach to youth participation.
- The Political Economy Analysis on Leadership and Integrity launch, which grounded advocacy on electoral reform in evidence rather than assertion.

2 Participation and Reach at a Glance

The infographic below provides an overview of the participation and reach of the 8th PDF across its four days, capturing the diversity of partners, institutions, and individuals who took part.

8th People Dialogue Festival • 4–7 March, 2026 • Uhuru Park, Nairobi

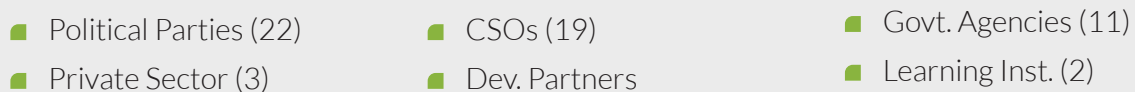
Participation and Reach at a Glance



Participant Profile

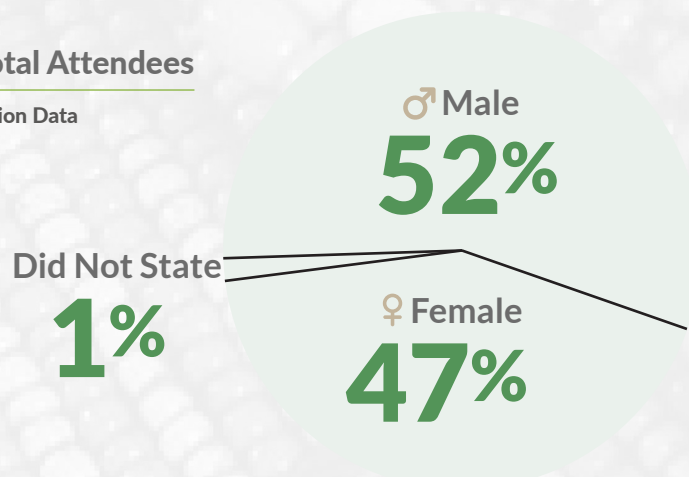


Exhibiting Partners Breakdown (60)



Gender Distribution - Total Attendees

Source: USSD Registration Data



3 Programme Sessions Overview

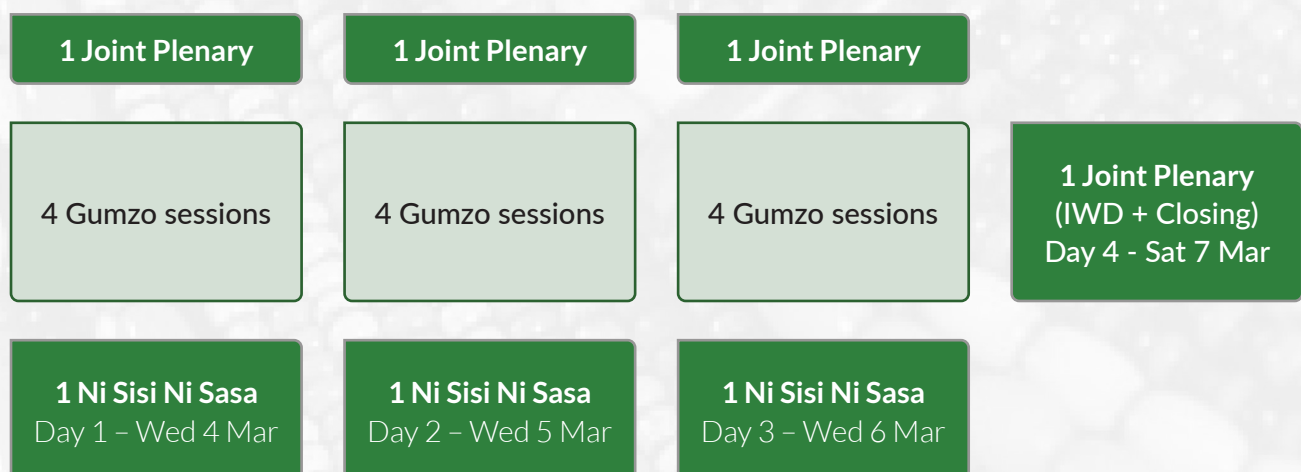
The 8th PDF was structured across four days, combining Joint Plenary Sessions, Ni Sisi Ni Sasa Village Conversations, Gumzo Community Sessions, Political Party Leaders, and continuous Youth Platforms. The multi-format design was deliberate: it acknowledged that different citizens engage differently with democracy and offered pathways for students, artists, politicians, activists, and ordinary residents alike to contribute.

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Programme Sessions Overview



Participant Profile



- 1 The Ni Sisi Ni Sasa (meaning it is our time now) Village at the PDF is a dedicated space designed for participants under 18 years old, aimed at amplifying their voices and facilitating dialogue on complex democratic concepts in a language they can understand to ensure their meaningful inclusion in democratic and governance processes.
- 2 These are afternoon breakaway sessions, providing smaller spaces to allow for deeper, more interactive engagement on specific themes, sectors, or priorities.

4 Key Emerging Issues

The issues emerging from the People Dialogue Festival 2026 reflect the collective voice of participants who engaged across four days of structured dialogue. Drawn directly from the festival's various dialogue sessions, these issues highlight key governance and development challenges while also identifying the actors best positioned to respond to them. Together, they represent a consolidated set of suggested priorities rooted in the dialogues held at the festival and provide a foundation for continued engagement and reflection in future People Dialogue Festival (PDF) convenings.

The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) and the Government

- Launch and sustain a continuous, community-embedded voter registration campaign with specific youth registration targets and public reporting on progress toward those targets.
- Strengthen transparency and public communication throughout the electoral cycle, not only during elections, to systematically rebuild public trust.
- Invest in digital voter registration systems that make registration more accessible to young and first-time voters.
- Clean voter registers through regular, transparent, and publicly audited exercises.
- Strengthen and visibly enforce campaign finance regulations, including timely disclosure requirements for political parties.
- Ensure meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities in all electoral processes, from registration to polling to dispute resolution.
- Operationalize civic education funding at the county level as provided for under existing legal frameworks.

Political Parties and Political Leaders

- Commit to issue-based campaigns and publicly reject the monetization of political competition, beginning with party primaries.
- Open party structures to youth and women through reserved positions, reduced nomination fees, and mentorship programmes for emerging leaders.
- Field and actively support more women candidates in winnable seats, beginning immediately with pre-2027 by-elections and party restructuring.
- Implement the NADCO Report commitments with transparency and measurable timelines.
- Adopt party codes of conduct on digital communication, explicitly prohibiting the use of party platforms or finances for misinformation.
- Engage constructively with the Youth Manifesto and commit to being assessed against its benchmarks ahead of 2027.

Parliament

- Pass the enabling legislation to operationalize the two-thirds gender rule as a matter of constitutional compliance and democratic obligation.
- Gazette the Persons with Disabilities Act (2025) regulations and allocate budgetary resources for implementation without further delay.
- Strengthen legislative oversight of public debt, campaign financing, and electoral administration.
- Create structured, formal mechanisms for youth participation in legislative processes, including committee consultations and youth parliamentary programmes.

Civil Society Organizations and Partners

- Monitor and publicly report on political party compliance with campaign finance laws, gender equity commitments, and the NADCO Report.
- Scale civic education programming, with particular emphasis on youth, first-time voters, and historically marginalized communities.
- Advance digital literacy and online safety education as core components of civic education, not optional add-ons.
- Support grassroots dialogue platforms to ensure that national conversations are anchored in community realities.
- Champion the Youth Manifesto as a public accountability tool and produce regular scorecards on political party performance against manifesto benchmarks.

Faith Institutions

- Establish and publicly adopt codes of conduct governing the acceptance of political donations and the use of pulpits for political mobilization.
- Leverage faith communities' significant social reach to support civic education, voter registration, and anti-corruption messaging.
- Resist instrumentalization by partisan interests and protect the moral independence that gives faith institutions their democratic legitimacy.

Media and technology Actors

- Commit to responsible reporting standards during the pre-2027 campaign period, including fact-checking protocols and rejection of paid political disinformation.
- Support the development of ethical AI guidelines for political communication in Kenya.
- Amplify youth voices and community-level democratic conversations, not only elite political narratives.

International Partners and Development Actors

- Align funding and programming priorities with citizen-defined democratic needs, ensuring that grassroots and community organizations have equitable access to support.
- Strengthen regional East African coordination on youth civic engagement, building on the Kenya-Uganda-Tanzania dialogue initiated at PDF 2026.
- Support multiparty dialogue platforms as long-term democratic infrastructure, not only as election-period interventions.
- Provide technical assistance for electoral administration modernization, including digital voter registration systems.

All Stakeholders: Shared Commitments

- Sustain grassroots dialogue platforms between election cycles as the foundation of democratic culture, not merely pre-election mobilization tools.
- Simplify public communication on complex governance issues: fiscal policy, debt, and electoral law, to enable informed citizen participation.
- Treat disability inclusion, gender equity, and youth participation not as separate programmes but as design principles embedded in all democratic processes.

5 Top Five Priority Actions

Below are the top five suggested priority actions identified across the sessions held over the four days of the festival.

Top 5 Priority Actions of the 8th PDF 2026

- 1** Voter Registration: Intensify continuous youth voter registration nationwide and remove structural barriers to electoral participation.
- 2** Campaign Finance: Enforce campaign finance transparency and accountability, including independent oversight of political party financing.
- 3** Disability Rights: Operationalise the Persons with Disabilities Act (2025) by fast-tracking regulations, budgetary allocations, and accessible communication standards.
- 4** Issue-Based Politics: Promote issue-based, integrity-centred politics and move decisively away from personality-driven and monetised political culture ahead of 2027.
- 5** Civic Dialogue: Sustain and expand grassroots civic dialogue platforms, including voter education, fiscal literacy, and digital safety programming.

6 County Town Hall Outcomes and PDF 2026

County town hall meetings organized by CMD Kenya between October 2025 and February 2026 highlighted key citizen priorities across counties, including electoral integrity, youth exclusion, accountability gaps, economic pressures, and shrinking civic space. These same issues re-emerged prominently at the 8th PDF, reflecting declining institutional trust, low youth voter registration, and weak implementation of legal frameworks. This shows strong alignment between grassroots concerns and national dialogue, with the PDF reinforcing county priorities.

7 Legislators Present at the 8th PDF

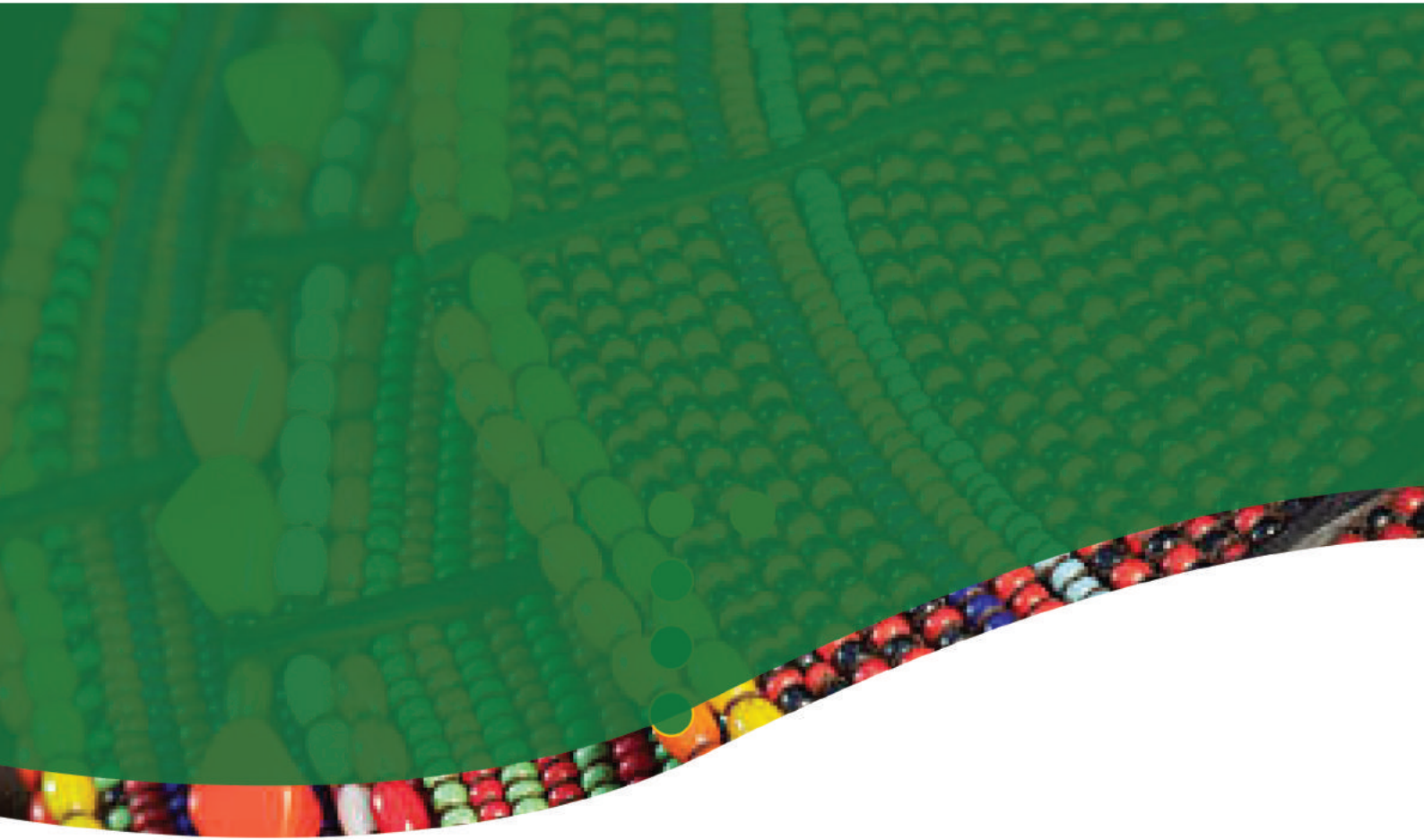
No	Name
1	Hon. Edwin Sifuna
2	Hon. Eugene Wamalwa
3	Hon. Kalonzo Musyoka
4	Hon. Amos Mwago
5	Hon. Millie Odhiambo
6	Hon. David Ochieng
7	Hon. John Mukunji
8	Hon. Nabii Nabwera Daraja
9	Hon. Dan Maanzo
10	Hon. Crystal Asige
11	Hon. Caroli Omondi
12	H.E. Kalonzo Musyoka
13	H.E. Rigathi Gachagua
14	H.E. Justin Muturi
15	Hon. Peter Munya

PDF 2026 Partners



Members





Centre for  **Multiparty Democracy** Kenya