PRESS STATEMENT

NAIROBI

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR MESSAGE FROM HIS GRACE THE MOST REV. DR. JACKSON OLE SAPIT

"How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in Unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron’s beard, down upon the collar of his robes.” Psalm 133: 1-2

1. Preamble

Dear Kenyans, we send you greetings with a message of Goodwill to all Kenyan, Visitors and neighbors this festive season.

1. We are a Country that is blessed in many ways. Like precious ointment running on Aaron’s beard,

a) We are a Country that has one of the most progressive Constitutions on Earth, with provisions to protect and uphold human rights.

b) We are a Country that is blessed with over 400,000 students in our Universities today, seeking knowledge and skills and hoping to graduate so that they can build the Nation

c) We have a Country whose resource is rich. For example, we are blessed with 63 oil blocks and there are already plans to start the oil production on pilot basis.

d) We are a country with an innovative mobile payments platform, such as has never been seen even in the developed world and many countries worldwide continue to envy us

But after carefully assessing and reflecting on issues affecting our Nation we are in danger of losing out as we see our Country being openly raided by persons who do not seem to care for the present and future of our generation. In this respect, we are calling for urgent action, lest we lose out and at the end have no Country to be proud of:
2. National Cohesion and Integration
Whereas there have been efforts to unite Kenyans, we note with deep concern that there is deliberate effort by politicians to instigate conflict within and between Kenyan communities. Some politicians threaten national cohesion through the hate speech, incitement and mobilization of their communities in an attempt to exclude others during the early start of campaigns for 2017 general election.

We emphasize that Kenya belongs to all of us and we urge every politician to promote inclusivity at all levels of our society. We will only support leaders who promote national cohesion and integration guided by the principle of reconciling all Kenyans.

3. Corruption.
We are still concerned with wastage and theft of public resources as reported by various state organs. Ordinary citizens keep waiting for guidance on the measures to be taken to rectify the damage. We are in a state of desperation. The financial system used by government, that was intended to provide efficient and above board services has now been compromised by those tasked with its use, leading to loss of billions of shillings from the public purse. It has become clearer than ever before that integrity is a virtue that cannot be digitized.

Key National Institutions continue to lack clear governance structures. Some of these Institutions continue to operate without oversight boards. This situation still exists with impunity and, even in the midst of many qualified Kenyans who can provide oversight; it is clear that the ineptitude from appointing authority is deliberate and meant to perpetuate corruption. We urge a sense of urgency and desire to demonstrate results for all pending cases. We are equally concerned with centralization of corruption and economic crime cases that have all been transferred to Nairobi. This negates the principle of access to justice and increases court case expenses. This decision should be revised. As a church we shall galvanize the country to reclaim our country.

4. Economy
We have noted with great concern the dire state of the national economy. Most organizations and companies are laying off staff, many loans borrowed are in arrears or default and the public debt has increased significantly. Urgent measures must be taken to remedy the situation. Whilst we are aware that the economy is anticipated to grow at the rates of between 5.5 to 6%, much of this growth does not translate into food on the table for majority of Kenyans. As it is today, much of the growth is largely driven by mega government projects, whose real benefits to the common Kenyan is yet to be seen. Today, in spite of the capping of interest rates, banks have essentially turned to lending to government and the private sector remains starved of credit that is badly needed to grow the economy.

Recognizing that the country has discovered more minerals there is need to address equitable distribution of the resources and revenue with host community, responsible mining and pollution among others. Indeed, we caution that the process of awarding contracts should be done with transparency. Oil contracts can be shrouded in secrecy and it becomes very unclear what the long term benefits are likely to be. In this respect, we appeal to key stakeholders in the industry to engage in open and honest discussion on the
Local Content Bill 2016 which seeks to protect the interest of the local communities. In addition there is urgent need to promote public education on the benefits of the extractive industry. This should include an honest critique of the nature of contracts being awarded to existing and potential firms in the extractive industry.

5. Education
We commend and appreciate measures the government has taken to improve management of the education sector and urge that the changes be institutionalized. This is the sure way of sustaining and embedding the changes and reforms. We further urge the government to focus more on quality education and on productive skills to enhance employability of Kenyan’s younger generation.

6. Labour disputes
We urge the government both national and county governments to put in place measures to ensure staff are properly compensated and there is room for dialogue to avoid disruptions of services to the people in the various sectors. It is quite disheartening to note that the Doctors’ and Nurses’ industrial dispute has taken longer to resolve. We call upon public servants involved in dispute to show sense of urgency.

7. Peaceful, Credible and Fair 2017 Election and Civic Education
We want to thank the religious leaders for assisting the country to have in place a new electoral body. We urge those who have been nominated to restore public confidence in the electoral body, which will help the country have credible and fair elections. As the country gears for 2017 elections we want to urge politicians as they engage in political processes and activities they should ensure the election is held in a peaceful environment by not inciting their supporters but abide by the electoral rules and regulations. There is need to avoid any interference of the electoral body. We oppose any attempts to deny Kenyans funds for civic education. Civic education is an integral part of any electoral process that seeks to empower citizens to make informed choices and decision.

7. Fellow Christians

As we celebrate this year’s Christmas, I want to urge all of you to be modest in your expenditure and ensure your neighbors who have nothing you share with them whatever God has blessed you with.

As we usher in Christmas and the New Year, I wish you God’s blessings, Merry Christmas and happy 2017.

Signed on this 25th December 2016, All Saints’ Cathedral, Nairobi

The Most Rev. Dr. Jackson Ole Sapit,
ARCHBISHOP OF KENYA, BISHOP OF ALL SAINTS’ CATHEDRAL DIOCESE &
BISHOP IN ORDINARY TO THE KENYA DEFENCE FORCES