

## Social Justice, Reconciliation and National Cohesion Project

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Good morning ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of Dr. Heidy Rombouts and the team, I bring warm greetings from GIZ Nairobi today 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 2011.

GIZ (formerly known as GTZ) is grateful to have been invited by the Destiny Vision Youth Group to participate and partner in such an important event, in Kisumu, bringing together youth from the different locations in Kisumu with one goal of pursuing Peace through Soccer education in the project - Kisumu Inter-Slums Soccer Education Tournament 2011 - with the theme 'SAY NO TO VIOLENCE'.

GIZ represented here today by Social Justice, Reconciliation and National Cohesion Project is guided by the National Accord and Reconciliation Act 2008 and particularly the implementation of Agenda Item IV, in working closely with key institutions in Government and Civil Society.

The agenda on peace, reconciliation and national cohesion remains paramount as Kenya makes efforts to deal with past historical injustices considered heavily contributing to the 2007 post-election violence.

Backward looking into the past, has to go hand-in-hand with looking forward to a peaceful coexistence and national cohesion for which we are all responsible.

It is GIZ delight to see that efforts are being made at a community level to live together in tolerance and harmony despite our different ethnic backgrounds. As Kenyans, we should strive to embrace ethnicity positively as negative ethnicity is fodder for further conflict or violence. Positive ethnicity does instead, assist us to learn, celebrate and enjoy our different cultures enriching our diversity.

A Soccer Education tournament like this, is one such example of an opportunity to educate and empower individuals of all ages - especially the youth- with the awareness of their responsibility in ensuring peace in the country. That peace begins with the individual taking up responsibility for peace with his/her neighbor, and within his/her community. It starts with saying NO! to violence.

We applaud the training sessions and code of conduct that all participants must undertake – Coaches, referees, officials and team members. This is a crucial starting point of understanding, being unified and speaking with one voice, in saying NO! to violence. This has to be upheld through-out the tournament but also beyond, so that you become change agents and ambassadors in the community here in Kisumu.

Each player must strive through self-discipline to contribute his or her strengths, talents and abilities to the team, overcome individual weaknesses, respecting and relying on other team members for success. This may be true for soccer, but also true, with attaining peace in the country. Each Kenyan must take up individual responsibility and respect each other for us to achieve this.

Again, we thank you for this opportunity and look forward to closely collaborating with Destiny Vision Youth Group and all participants and other stakeholders, in Saying NO! to violence and making this project Kisumu Inter-Slums Soccer Education Tournament 2011 a success!