



**OPENING REMARKS BY ICJ KENYA CHAIRMAN MR KELVIN MOGENI, DURING
THE GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONY OF THE PROPOSED ICJ KENYA HOUSE
22ND MAY 2018, KAREN, NAIROBI**

Guest of Honor,

ICJ Kenya past Chairmen present,

Fellow ICJ Kenya Council Members,

ICJ Kenya Members,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Kenyan Section of the International Commission of Jurists, I thank you for taking the time to join us today for this momentous occasion.

The ground breaking ceremony this afternoon marks the commencement of construction of ICJ Kenya house. I thank you all for your participation in this event and your interest in this project.

Before I go into an overview of this new project, let me give you a quick background of ICJ Kenya.

ICJ Kenya is a non-governmental, non-profit and a member based organization. ICJ Kenya is the only African national section. It is affiliated with the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Geneva, but operates autonomously. ICJ Kenya is registered as a Society under the Societies Act, Chapter 108, and Laws of Kenya.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Founded in 1959, ICJ Kenya is the oldest human rights organization in Kenya. Its membership is drawn from the Bar as well as the Bench and currently constitutes of over 500 jurists as members. ICJ Kenya is dedicated to the legal protection of human rights in Kenya, and the African region in terms of the general mandate for national sections defined by Article 4 of the ICJ Statute.

ICJ Kenya has observer status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' rights and it is governed under a constitution through an elected Council of seven members that serves for two-year fixed terms.

Our vision being a premier human rights organization promoting a just, free and equitable society with a mission to promote human rights, justice and democracy in Kenya and around Africa through the application of legal expertise and international best practices.

Distinguished Guests Ladies and Gentlemen,

This great initiative comes halfway through the implementation of ICJ-Kenya's 2016-2020 Strategic Plan which has been guiding our operations in the evolving post-2015 human rights and good governance agenda and providing strategic direction towards the realization of our vision for, "A just, free and equitable society."

The work of ICJ Kenya is anchored and implemented through five main strategic themes, namely: Human Rights; Governance; Access to Justice; International justice and Closing Civic Space. These strategic themes are implemented through four Programmes namely: The Human Rights Protection Programme, the Democratization Programme, the Access to Justice Programme, and the International Justice Programme.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For 59 years now ICJ Kenya has continued to consistently play a major role in progressive democratic and open societies, acting as a watchdog in promoting good governance, social cohesion, respect for the rule of law, promotion of human rights and accountability in Kenya and the region. The organization has continued to play a critical role in complementing the government's development efforts as well as being a critical counterbalance to government excesses during various phases of the country's half century of independence.

As we prepare to celebrate our 60th anniversary let us remember that though the context in which we work continues to evolve, our interventions on human rights, access to justice and governance are still relevant.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We remain alive to the challenging operating environment not only in Kenya but also around the continent which has witnessed the socio-political and economic marginalization of the poor and most vulnerable in society.

From corruption, extra judicial executions, manifestation of impunity, gross human rights violations, undermining of institutions of democracy, the weakening of judicial independence and rule of law across the continent, we are determined to deepen our interventions.

We will continue to draw inspiration from our membership who constitute the body of jurists.

Distinguished colleagues

All our achievements over the years would not have been possible without the great contribution made by past and current members. Allow me to recognize the contribution of our members including those present with us here today. Let me also appreciate our past chairmen and council for the great contribution they have made to ensure we are where we are today.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Needless to say, our efforts to actualize this project would be impossible without the active support of all ICJ Kenya fraternity, friends and stakeholders. I thank all of you for the encouragement and support which you have given us. This is really a result of the joint efforts of all of you and the success of the project will belong to you all.

We have been renting and happy to do so. We have always paid our rent on time and haven't caused our landlord any grief. We did the sums and determined that if we invested on this land, which turned out to be a very wise decision, we could end up owning our land and building rather than paying off someone else's mortgage.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In December 2011, ICJ Kenya purchased this property and fully paid for it. I am happy that today we are commencing the process of constructing our house, the ICJ Kenya house. We invited all of you here today because we value your contribution to ICJ Kenya's success that spans over 60 years.

Distinguished Guests,

This historic moment ushers in our 60th anniversary and will provide our organization with the much needed sustainability in the years to come and furtherance of our mandate of promoting human rights, governance and the rule of law in Kenya and the region.

The projected total cost of the building is **Ksh. 30, 573, 725**. We welcome you to join us and support us in finalizing this project now that we are in the final 32 weeks homestretch that we plan to finish construction.

Distinguished Colleagues,

We are aware to the fact that the successful implementation of this project requires commitment from all of us; ICJ members, the Council and the staff; as well as support from our development partners and all the stakeholders. To all our development partners present here today we are sincerely grateful for the continued working relationship; indeed, our work cannot be complete without your input.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I once again thank you for joining us for this ground breaking ceremony. As we mark the beginning of this construction allow me to reaffirm the ideals through which the building

will stand. This house will serve our great team and provide a permanent home, enhance our sustainability and continue to benefit the community that we so passionately serve while representing the committed values of ICJ Kenya.

Distinguished Guests, ICJ Kenya Members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me personally thank the ICJ Kenya Council, past and present, for their leadership in making this vision a reality. The Council is entirely grateful for the efforts made by the ICJ Kenya Secretariat and the support of our partners and donors.

Let me take this opportunity to also thank those under whose responsibility and care we leave these grounds; our Architects ZED Architects led by Prof. Jerry Magutu; our Project Quantity Surveyor AEGIS Development Solutions led by Dr. Philip Muchungu; our civil and structural engineers Armitech Consulting led by Engineer Mwangi Wairagu, and our main contractors Vanci Engineering Company led by Mr. Pan Hua. We trust you with this and we believe that you will meet your timelines.

I thank all of you here today and look forward to your continued support as we move towards the finalization of this building and the opening ceremony.

Thank you..!

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'KM', written in a stylized, cursive script.

Kelvin Mogeni

Chairman, ICJ Kenya Council