



## **PRESS STATEMENT**

Read by Hussein Soud Maawy, Spokesperson  
January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Having received no official response from the Government of Kenya (GOK) following our letters of appeal and memoranda regarding information on the implementation of the proposed Lamu Port South Sudan Transport (LAPSSSET) Corridor we the people of Lamu, supported by over 15 community groups and 1,000 individual community members of Lamu hereby announce that we intend to exercise our constitutional rights and fundamental freedoms to demonstrate, picket, petition and follow legal recourse on the matter.

Earlier this week, we bore witness to the fact that the government is in total disregard of our constitutional rights after the Office of the President commissioned the bulldozing of some of our farmland in the Kililana area so as to initiate the construction of the Lamu Port road without informing the local communities or compensating them. The lack of information on the project has been disconcerting not only to Lamu locals, but Kenyans as a whole. To date, a copy of the feasibility study has not been shared to the general public. Meanwhile, the Japanese consulting firm contracted to carry out the study refused to share any information on the contract and tendering process in early December 2011 when questioned by the Parliamentary Committee on Transport, Public Works and Housing.

While we commend the GOK for looking at efforts to modernize Kenya and improve our transport infrastructure, we have been left vulnerable to the drastic changes to come including that of population and our environment. We remain without adequate information, capacity, skills, and resources to cope with the impacts since an environmental impact assessment (EIA) has not been carried out, a resettlement plan not finalized, nor a mitigation plan shared with us to date, which violates the constitution of Kenya.

The days of the mighty and powerful oppressing the few and the weak are gone. With the new constitution, we are fully empowered to seek legal recourse and take mass action on the matter. Today, we have submitted a petition letter to the Office of the President comprised of signatures from 1,000 community from 46 villages and 700 national and international, demanding that the Lamu port project be suspended until the GOK: 1) shares all information on the proposed project to the local communities; 2) facilitates for a comprehensive environmental impact assessment to be carried out by independent experts; 3) undertakes a participatory process with the local communities involved in the planning and implementation of the proposed project; and 4) investigates and addresses the land rights violations against the indigenous Lamu communities before any further development plans are inaugurated.

To make certain our demands are met, we have consulted with lawyers on the matter who are finalizing a legal petition as we speak, and we will take any mass action necessary to assure our voices are heard from the poor streets of Lamu up to the high streets of Parliament. The coalition of civil society groups supporting the pursuit of legal action are comprised of: Boni Self-Help Group, Faza Youth Action Group, Huduma Self-Help Group, Imams of Lamu, Lamu Council of Elders, Lamu Beach Management Unit, Lamu Environment and Conservation Network, Lamu Environmental Protection and Conservation, Kililana Farmer's Association, Lamu Marine Forum, Lamu Youth Alliance, MUHURI Lamu, Sauti ya Wanawake, Shungwaya Welfare Association, and Wanaharakati Okoa Lamu. Our petition has been additionally supported by over 700 individuals and organisations from Kenya, Africa, and other parts of the globe including, INUKA Trust, Natural Justice, Development Policy and Management Forums (DPMF), Coast People's Forum, and Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI).

Supported by all these groups and individuals, we remain firmly committed and resolved to take any measures necessary to suspend the project if the community concerns are not addressed.

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### **Save Lamu**

P.O. Box 314, Lamu 80500, Kenya

*Tel:* 0723-205-998

*Email:* info@savelamu.org

*Website:* www.savelamu.org