



**SPEECH BY NCIC CHAIRMAN REV. DR. SAMUEL KOBIA DURING THE  
INTERGENERATIONAL SYMPOSIUM**

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For centuries, African societies managed to share ideas across generations via a series of efforts ranging from fireside stories, rights of passage ceremonies, apprenticeship and training. Interactions between various age groups ensured that new generations understood their society, its ethics, its laws and most importantly the ethos of that society.

It is indeed true that in traditional African societies crime and vice were minimal because we all belonged to each other and the elders provided not only advice on where society was and where it should go but they also gave clear succession paths that assured access to political power and the transfer of wealth from one generation to the next. In today's terms this is called succession planning.

However nostalgic we feel about those days, we are faced with new

realities in socio-economic lives today that we can't simply return to the 'good old days'. If you ask yourself who a young person today is you are likely to have a hodgepodge of answers. Many are Africans, Kenyans, mixed tribes, multi-cultural and influenced and taught by TV, social media, a western style education system with minimal interactions with relatives let alone the elders.

It is this mixed and multiple identity society that has seen a rise in vice, ethnic polarization, political tension and drug use in young people. We know for example that children with absent parents are more likely to lose their way in life. There is therefore a very clear gap in our society and we need to find ways to connect otherwise we will end up in a space where our youth are not mentored and guided towards social-economic success in an ethical manner.

We must ask ourselves how many of our youths have we seen involved in money laundering, corruption and drug trafficking? How many of our youths are used as goons in political parties? At the same time how many of our elders are mentoring young people and instilling virtue in them? There is a

clear lacuna in intergenerational transfer of power, wealth, and ethics. Which leads to a youth without a sense of belonging, without a clear path to success and leadership. This youth is then a weapon to be used by the highest bidder for their only ethic is wealth at whatever cost.

It is with this in mind that the NCIC has decided to bridge this gap by facilitating dialogue between the elderly and the youth. To create not just conversations but friendships, mentorships and paths towards positive identity, and the successful transfer of wisdom, wealth and power governed by ethics as enshrined in article 10 of our constitution.

As the NCIC, we are painfully aware of the need for ethical citizens as we have seen what a lack of ethics has done to many parts of our country. We are aware that charity begins at home not at school. Yet our kids seldom have any interaction with their parents and grandparents on what kind of people they need to be. It is good that we are educating our children more these days and it is very good that Kenya has one of the highest literacy rates on the continent. But we must be careful not to create very well educated political goons, wash wash connoisseurs and fraudsters.

To do this we must deliberately create within our homes, schools, and institutions opportunities for the youth to interact with their elders. If the future belongs to them then we must adequately prepare them for power, wealth and responsibility. First and foremost I'm sure every youth here has questions on how they can make it in life without being corrupt. That answer lies with the elders here who have done so. They hear too many stories of the corrupt rich and very few of the pious rich. The same youth want to know how they can reach leadership status in their chosen sphere of life, they neither want to sleep their way to the top nor do they want to steal their way there; that answer once again lies with the elders here.

As an elder your life story is both a caution and inspiration. Your mistakes are battle scars on where one should not tread and your successes are lighthouses to guide them through stormy seas. Your wisdom gathered over years can save the youth years of frustration and as such this interaction for us is a key first step in finding where Kenya has gone wrong.

As I conclude I would like to urge the youth here gathered and those that

will hear this message that the elders are a vast source of information, wisdom and advice. If you tap into this resource you will know how to navigate through life and achieve what you need and want without losing your soul. You must ask yourself what does it matter if you gain the whole world and lose your soul? You must choose to be an article 10 Kenyan: patriotic, respectful, accountable and dependable. With these virtues your wealth and power will first start from your soul and then it will not only richly furnish yourself but also richly furnish our society and we can finally have the Kenya we all want.

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