Joint Statement by Mathare Flood Response Organizations

Wakenya and many friends from all over:

Thank you very much for the solidarity you have given Mathare residents as they seek to recover from the worst flooding they have lived through in the last forty years.

On the evening of April 24, a deluge of rain led to flooding that decimated many houses along the Mathare and Getathuru rivers. It also led to the deaths of at least 40 community members, including children and a person with a disability. Truly, we are touched by all who have supported our rapid response process: we are grateful for the financial contributions and the donations of necessary items (including dry food, bedding, mattresses, clothes and diapers). We are also grateful to those who came to offer condolences and who offered a hand as we continue to cook for the flood victims.

We especially want to highlight the rapid and effective response by many community groups and individuals in Mathare. So many helped in collecting data for the cash transfers, helping victims to find shelter, finding missing bodies, providing food and medical aid, and receiving other types of support for the victims.

Currently, there are still efforts to find the bodies of family members and friends, as well as to feed and clothe the hundreds of newly houseless individuals residing in schools, churches and even still sleeping outside even as the rain continues. All of the financial donations you have sent in response to this crisis are being put towards the recovery of our people.

To date, as The Network of Mathare Community Social Justice Centres, we have received 3,129,661 KES for Mathare flood victims. This is how the money has been spent:
1. As of Tuesday, April 30, our collective Mathare Mchang'a has received: 1,758,025 KES. So far, this has allowed for 334 cash transfers to verified victims of 3000 KES each (for a total of 1,002,000 KES); we are progressively sending more cash transfers to the households impacted by floods and we will keep you updated on the process.

2. As of Tuesday, April 30, our paybill had received 1,066,636 KES and 313,170 KES to the phone of a rapid response representative. We used the 313,170 KES for the community kitchen operations that started on Wednesday, April 25—including buying food, firewood, cooking oil, soap, water and hiring a tent to have this kitchen since it is the rainy season. Since then, we have continued to feed breakfast, lunch and dinner daily to a minimum of 500 people. We are now cooking in four different sites in order to reach more of those affected. Our proposal is to use the 1,066,636 KES towards buying school items for affected children, as well as to contribute to funeral costs for affected families and cash transfers.

We will continue to honour and be accountable to all of those who stood with us and sent whatever they could to support these response efforts. You have really emphasized to us that Ubuntu exists: indeed, we are because you are.

We would also like to send a message to the government: we want to know where the 10 Billion KES to respond to the effects of El Niño went. We would like to remind you that, as the Kenyan Constitution states, “all sovereign power belongs to the people of Kenya.” Therefore, we are determined to make sure that this 10 billion KES is found and goes to all of those who have suffered from the combined effects of state neglect as it intersects with our global climate crisis.

We are extremely proud of how our community has defended the humanity of their people and continue to offer solidarity to each other even in their desperation. Meanwhile, our elected MCA’s and MPs continue to be silent; we will not let them rest.
We invite all to remain in solidarity with our community members in Mathare and other flooded areas; those affected continue to need blankets, mattresses, clothing, sanitary towels, drinking water, tents, food and more.

Above all, we say asanteni sana sana for all of the generosity and humanity that you continue to show for our people. We are because you are.

The Network of Mathare Community Social Justice Centres