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Public Hearing Transcripts - Central - Muranga - RTJRC11.11 (Murang'a College of Technology) (Women's Hearing)

Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission

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**ORAL SUBMISSIONS MADE TO THE TRUTH, JUSTICE AND
RECONCILIATION COMMISSION HELD ON FRIDAY, 11TH
NOVEMBER 2011 AT MURANG'A
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY HALL**

PRESENT

Tecla Wanjala Namachanja	-	The Acting Chair, Kenya
Gertrude Chawatama	-	Commissioner, Zambia
Nancy Kanyago	-	Leader of Evidence

(The Commission commenced at 10.05.a.m.)

(The Acting Chair (Commissioner Namachanja) introduced herself and other TJRC Commissioners)

(Opening Prayers)

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: We have other visitors from the GAZ organization from Germany which has been helping us as a commission. Thank you very much for coming. I do not know how many of you know the work of this commission? Is there anyone who has written a statement with the commission? I hear everyone speaks Kikuyu here. *Kuna mtu yeyote ambaye ameandikishsa statement?* I am asking the women. I have confirmed that there are people who do not hear Kikuyu. So, I will speak in Kiswahili but you will speak in the language that you choose, even if it is Kikuyu. Anybody who has recorded a statement? We are looking at violations with regard to land; of the over 40,000 statements, the majority of them deal with land. However, that is not the only issue we are looking into. We are also looking into the issue of disappearance of people, killings that have been done by the police or other people, or extrajudicial killings as we call them. We have heard a number of those cases from Murang'a. We are also looking at issues of corruption where resources meant for the public have been misused.

We are also looking into issues where, as an individual, you have been discriminated against either because of your gender, religion, health status or disability. So, those issues of discrimination on those grounds where you feel that there is something that you have missed, or something has been done to you because you are a woman or because of your health status--- Those are the things we are looking into. We are looking into issues of sexual violence and we are really encouraging women to talk about that. From the 40,000 statements that we have received, majority is from men but we know women are also suffering. So, as a commission, we decided to have separate meetings for women, so that we can hear from you directly how you are affected as women. Are we correct in saying that you women are affected? We want you to speak and you will tell us what you have experienced that you feel has affected you as a woman, because we have heard about the men who have spoken. They have spoken about land and other issues but there are things which only women can tell us. Unless you speak out, we will not have information. You

will have the opportunity to talk and those who want to speak will raise their hands and they will be given an opportunity. So that everyone can get an opportunity to speak, speak as briefly as you can. Say your name and where you come from and what has happened, and very importantly give us your recommendation on what you see as the solution. Are we together?

Women: Yes.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: Who would like to start?

Ms. Jane W. Karemi: Thank you so much Commissioners and the staff who are working together with you and my fellow women. How are you? My names are Jane Wangechi wa Karemi and I live in Murang'a. In 1990, I got a plot in Makuyu at a place called Kakungu. When I was given the plot, it was a residential plot No.70 and when I went to pay I was told that the file had been misplaced or lost. In 2009, we were called for a meeting at Makuyu. We went to the finance committee where I was told to pay the rates that I had not paid for that year; they told me the amount and I paid it. After paying, I was told to go to the surveyor's office at Makuyu, so that I could be shown where my plot was. I stayed there for about a week before they could allocate the plot to me. When I went to the surveyor, I was told that the plot was under somebody else's name. I was shown the names of those people. One was a nominated councillor. Her name was Josephine and another one was Wachira, but they had not paid for the plot. So, I was not shown my plot. I wrote a letter and I went to the Clerk. I told him that I wanted to see the plot, because I had already paid for it. He told me to go to court. I told him that I could not go to court because I did not have money. So, I went to the then chairman, whose name was Kabaigo and I went to see the Clerk with him. I was not shown the plot. I then went to the DC. The DC sent me back to the Clerk - he is now still the Clerk. The Clerk told me to go to the Lands office in Nairobi. I still had the letters that I had written to them.

When I went to the Lands office, I was sent back to the DC. Then again I was sent back to the Clerk who told me that I did not have a plot. When I went to look for the plot, I found it was under somebody else's name that was Margaret Muthanji, who is a public officer there. So, I wondered what I could do. I thought that I could go to an advocate, so that he or she could push for my money to be refunded or get my plot. I was still holding my documents which included the letter. They said that the chairman had already been given a letter, which said that I was not among the beneficiaries of the plot. They said the people who had received my money for the plot had received it by mistake. So, I am wondering how they received my money by mistake and the plots were there.

So, I went to an advocate and they wrote a letter indicating that they either give me my plot or they refund me my money. I still have the letter that asked that I either be given back my money or they give me the plot. Let me ask you my people: Since 1980 when I paid money for the plot, where did my plot go to? Commissioners, I wrote a statement at Makuyu with the TJRC team and that is why I am here today. I had gone to complain in Nairobi and they told me to go to the Lands office. I do not know where else to go. Hon.

Commissioners, please help me to either get my plot or they refund my money, so that I can go and purchase another plot; that is my wish; I am retired and that is where I was planning to build a house for my children. I am affected by this issue deeply because they took away my property and they chased me away as if the office is not for the public and those people are still there. They told me to go to several places. Thank you. I have been depressed by these things for three years.

(The witness sobbed)

Commissioner Chawatama: Thank you. We understand your position. You have waited for so long for this matter to be resolved and we are so happy that we are here today to listen to your complaint and we have heard you. What is important is that that you kept documents. Amongst the documents, do you have the official receipt?

Ms. Jane W. Karemi: Yes, I have it.

Commissioner Chawatama: We are happy that you have the official receipt.

Ms. Jane W. Karemi: I have got all the receipts from Makuyu and from the lawyer; I have got a letter from the Lands office which I wrote on humanitarian grounds; I know these people who have given me stress and they are still there.

Commissioner Chawatama: We will make copies of the documents that you have and look into your issue. We are sorry for the pain that you have suffered for so long. This is an issue which should have been resolved.

Ms. Jane W. Karemi: Thank you very much for listening to me. I will produce the copies.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: Maybe one of our statement takers can follow up to take the copies from her, please. *Asante sana na pole.* We know that the issues that you will speak about here today are very painful, but we thank you because you will be able to speak; the way to get solutions is to say what your problem is, so that we can get a solution. Thank you very much for your courage.

As you have been told earlier, all that you are saying here today will remain here, unless you go and announce it out there; we are not going to speak about your issues. Whatever you say, we will hear it here and take it very cautiously. As women, let us agree that what we hear here today will remain here. Who else would like to speak?

The Acting Chair (Commissioner Namachanja): Mama Jane, why do you think that you were denied this plot? Is it because you are a woman? In your view, where is the problem?

Ms. Jane W. Karemi: I think it is because I was seen as a single lady; that was why they did not give me my plot; I also did not have money to bribe them. I do not know, but that is what I think. I think it was because I did not have money like other people.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: Who else would like to speak?

Ms. Alice Nyambura: My names are Alice Nyambura Muchiri. I live here in town and so most people know me as Wachiru. I am happy because I have had so many problems, and now I have an opportunity to air my views. I separated from my husband and children. When I separated from them, the person whom I became friends with started torturing me. I left my husband and children and came here, Murang'a Town. There is one person who made me leave my home. I stayed with him. He got an opportunity to know me, my former husband. I stayed with him and he was transferred to Makuyu Hospital. I went with him to Makuyu; I stayed with him there because I was naïve about town life. I decided I was not going to talk to him. I remained with problems. I accepted all that because it was me who had agreed to leave my family. I had been in marriage for about 13 years. I kept encouraging myself.

I wondered how I could go back to my former marriage and I had already destroyed it and my husband knew about my new lover. I continued staying with my new lover until I felt that I was losing energy, because he was drinking a lot of alcohol and he would beat me. So, I made a choice to leave him. When I separated from him, I started looking for casual labour. I worked as a bar maid for about one year and then God helped me. Since I had saved enough finances I went to do business. He was then transferred from Makuyu to Murang'a. When he came back to Murang'a, he apologized to me and he was willing to change; because I had not found a new lover again, I accepted him back. He continued taking beer and again he started beating me up. He beat me and I went to the police; it reached a point where we had to separate. I opted to go it alone.

He would come from the hospital and threaten that he would destroy my property, but I continued being honest and persevering; I continued having those tussles with him. There was a time he wanted to knock me with a Range Rover, but I was rescued and he was stopped by people. He was still drunk at the time. He continued disturbing me. But by good luck, he was transferred to Nairobi, where he was a driver with a health organization. While in Nairobi, he continued inquiring about me as I continued living here in Murang'a. I continued doing my business and went back to church. We stayed for about four years and then he came and knelt down and called four women who were my friends; he told them he had become a gentleman and he had come back to me. I did not reject him because he had come with my friends who were elderly. So, I accepted him back. I saw that since he had changed we could assist each other. He started calling me to Nairobi and I realized that he had not stopped drinking. I remember in 2007, he called me to Nairobi and when I went there I found that he had a wife in the house. He opened the house for me and told his wife that I was her co-wife. His wife had a lot of humility and I told him that since he had another woman I could not go in. I went with his wife to a separate place and talked with her. I narrated to her the entire story and she told me that it was not the first time that he was bringing another wife to her. She told me that I was

better since I was elderly. I told the woman not to leave her children because of me which she said she would not do. So, somehow I became friends with this other woman, although she felt bitter because I was a mistress who was eating her husband's property.

I continued being friends with the wife but I decided that I would not go to Nairobi again. In 2008, my father died and I called my lover and informed him. He told me to go to Nairobi and collect money for the funeral. So, I went to Nairobi and when we met, he gave me Kshs1, 000 and he told me that since it was late at night, there was no need for me to go to Murang'a, and I spent the night at his place. So, believe it or not, he went, drank and brought another woman. So, we were supposed to sleep the three of us in one bed. I was so bitter as I remembered that my father was in the mortuary. That was what he was doing to me, yet he had declared that he had changed. There was a lot of fighting that ensued and many people in the plot knew me. As the fighting was continuing, the people claimed that the lady he had brought was his cousin. She was sent away. I was also able to run away; I got a hotel room and slept there. I had been beaten and had lost my teeth. The following morning I went to the chief. He was living in Ngara. The chief told him that I could not start a case since my father was in the mortuary. He said that he could not remember beating me, but I explained the whole scenario and what had happened the previous night.

So, from there I went and buried my father. I felt I was done with him. After burying my father, I continued undergoing treatment. I had so many problems because of the beatings. I got treatment and he was willing to pay my hospital bills, but he said that he would not pay the last hospital bill. When I went to the chief's office in Nairobi, he promised that he would pay but he did not. Since then he keeps calling but I tell him that my dealings with him had ended. In 2010, the wife whom he had showed me got sick and was admitted to hospital. By then I had separated with him, but because I have a lot of godliness in me, I found him really drunk and I took him to my place and he slept there. By bad luck, the wife died last year and so he is alone now. So, since he is single he has been coming here in Murang'a and drinking at a pub called "Friends" and claiming that I am his wife. He does not pay my rent. My landlord has given me an eviction notice because I am not in a position to pay rent. I told him about the eviction notice and he told me to go to Nairobi. That was this year in July. When I went there I found a woman's clothes---

Commissioner Chawatama: We have heard the nature of your complaint. We have heard the violence. We have heard that you went to the police. Did the police assist you in any way? We also heard that you went to the chief and we do not know what assistance you got from the chief. In all this it seems you have suffered a lot. The best we can do is to get your particulars and refer your issue to a woman's group, who will be able to help persons such as yourself because you are a victim who has suffered violence and the offices that you have gone to have not given you any help. So, we will get your details and ask someone to come and assist you. Could we hear the next person please?

Ms. Alice Nyambura: When I went to the chief this year, and he told me to appear before him with the man, he did not come.

(The witness sobbed)

Commissioner Chawatama: Could one of our counsellors attend to her and can she be debriefed? Please, report back to us. Thank you.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: There are a lot of women who want to speak, but tell us briefly what has happened and how you want the Commission to help you, so that many women can get a chance to speak.

Ms. Peris Nyambura Mwangi: My names are Peris Nyambura Mwangi. The problem that I have is that I was working as a civil servant since 23rd April 1979 and I resigned in June, 2005. There is no benefit that I received apart from the NSSF pension which was not even Kshs90, 000. I went to the labour office and I was told that there was nothing that I paid. An officer told me to get a lawyer who would write a letter for me.

I went to a lawyer who wrote a letter to the Attorney-General (AG) and the AG wrote to the Permanent Secretary (PS), but the PS did not reply the letter. Then I went to another office; the PS's office and the Prime Minister's office. We have dealt with them this year and there is no assistance I got. I have problems because there is nothing they gave me. I just went home like that, after working for all those years. That is why I felt that it is necessary for me to come and air my wails before this Commission and that is my problem.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: So, it is about the pension which you were not paid. Who employed you?

Ms. Peris Nyambura Mwangi: I was employed by the Forest Department.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: Is this the first time you are appearing before this Commission?

Ms. Peris Nyambura Mwangi: This is my first time; I have never reported this matter again.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: Please, write a statement and give us copies of all the letters in your possession. Maybe the Commissioners have some questions to ask you.

Commissioner Chawatama: Well, the question is whether or not you have a copy of the contract that you signed.

Ms. Peris Nyambura Mwangi: Yes, I have it.

Commissioner Chawatama: What was the retirement age in the department where you were working?

Ms. Peris Nyambura Mwangi: I worked for 26 years and retired at the age of 55 years.

Commissioner Chawatama: Were you 55 years when you left?

Ms. Peris Nyambura Mwangi: Yes.

Commissioner Chawatama: You were 55 years?

Ms. Peris Nyambura Mwangi: Yes.

Commissioner Chawatama: So, you were entitled to a pension or a retirement benefit?

Ms. Peris Nyambura Mwangi: It was a retirement benefit that I was to get.

Commissioner Chawatama: Okay. We have to look at the documents because there is a difference between resigning and retiring. If you resigned, sometimes you would---

Ms. Peris Nyambura Mwangi: It was a retirement.

Commissioner Chawatama: So, let us have the documents so that we can look at them clearly and then know how to proceed.

Ms. Peris Nyambura Mwangi: Yes.

Commissioner Chawatama: Thank you.

Ms. Margaret Wanjiru: My problem is that my child was killed in 2006.

Commissioner Chawatama: What is your name?

Ms. Margaret Wanjiru: My name is Margaret Wanjiru; I come from Mugoiri-Karibe, Murang'a District. The problem is about my child who was killed and he used to support us with the money that he was getting. He was brought from Nairobi after we had searched for him for about four months. They claimed that he was a *Mungiki*.

My son had harvested three lorries of cabbages and after selling them, he had about Kshs700, 000. I told him: "You see people will be looking for you, do something good." He had already made a plan to build a house. So, I told him to buy stones and sand for constructing his house. He told me that he was not a woman to be evicted from his place. I advised him against struggling with the Government. He refused to leave the place. His father was living in Nairobi, so I left him alone and I went to live in Nairobi for about two weeks.

While in Nairobi, I heard that my house of five rooms had been burnt down and nothing was rescued. His cows and one of mine were picked by the Government. His brother was told to say who would graze them or they would be left to die.

My younger son took courage and came to graze the cows. When the Government officers came to inquire from the people in the neighbourhood who was feeding the cows, the neighbours would say they did not know. The intention was that the cows should die of hunger. But by God's grace, my son had not been arrested then; he came and sold the cattle secretly. I do know whether he was given money for the cattle, but later he was killed in Nairobi and that is when my house got burnt. I heard he was in Nairobi but we never met.

The last time I saw him was in Koinange Street. We talked and he took me to a flat and asked me what I wanted. I told him I wanted nothing except for God to help him because he already had money. He told me: "Mother, if we meet again, it is through God's Grace. If I will be able, I will build you another house". About three days after that, he was arrested again at Koinange by the police from Kamukunji Police Station and he was brought to Murang'a. He was taken to Nyeri and back to Murang'a again. He was then taken to Kahuro.

In 2006 I had gone back home. I did not have proper accommodation. He was killed at a place called Kareng'a. So, people called me and told me that Kiunjuri had been brought at around 5.00 a.m. and killed. I told them that I could not go there. My family told me not to dare go there. Some people were happy, others were clapping and others were screaming.

There was a crackdown on *Mungiki* youth and they were claiming that Kiunjuri was their leader. He was buried by the Government and at that time he had more than Kshs50,000. We were not given any money. His father was picked and there was no postmortem done on my son's body. My husband was told that he was to pay for all the burial expenses. No child was allowed to go for the funeral. The only people who went for the funeral were my neighbours and my daughters. My husband pushed to get the remaining amount of money after Kiunjuri's burial.

When I was told that my house had been burnt down, I asked God to give me energy and strength. Every day I told God to give us enough energy and finances to rebuild my house. My children and I had suffered so much. When my son would come home, he would live like a thief because every time people were looking for him.

My son got lost in Muthurwa. So, in my homestead, we have so many problems; my co-wife and I are having many problems. If it were not for humility, we would be having so many problems. I have left everything to God because I cannot be able to defend myself. I always pray to God and I always encourage myself because God has continued being grateful to me since I lost my son.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: We are very sorry for what you have gone through. You have also had courage to speak out because those are the issues that most people fear to speak out. I do not have questions for you, but perhaps, Commissioners may ask you questions.

The Acting Chair (Commissioner Namachanja): *Mama* Margaret, sorry for what you went through. To you and to me as mothers, a child is just a child and it is our baby; it does not matter whether he is lame, a thief or a *Mungiki*! You are the mother to that child. So, we are sorry that he was killed in that manner and you were not somewhere near to even be consoled.

More so, we are concerned about what you went through. You said that your house was burnt down, who burnt your house?

Ms. Margaret Wanjiru: It is the Government.

The Acting Chair (Commissioner Namachanja): So, how did you know that it was the Government that burnt your house?

Ms. Margaret Wanjiru: People from the neighbourhood saw them because when they ignited the fire, the people of the neighbourhood tried to extinguish the fire, but they were prevented from doing so.

The Acting Chair (Commissioner Namachanja): Were these men in uniform?

Ms. Margaret Wanjiru: They were policemen!

The Acting Chair (Commissioner Namachanja): How do your neighbours look at you? This is because you said that when your son was killed, some of them celebrated. What is the relationship between you and your neighbours?

Ms. Margaret Wanjiru: The ones who are with me right now; most of them are my in-laws. I do not have any problems with them. This is because as an adult, you can see how someone treats you and the attitude towards you depending on how they speak to you. Except for two gentlemen who I am very sure they are not in line with me, the rest are okay with me and I always try to avoid them. I have even stayed for so many days without talking to them. You know one needs to socialize with the people who are living in the neighbourhood. I do not go to their place but nowadays they come to my place.

The Acting Chair (Commissioner Namachanja): How rampant is this problem? Are there other mothers like you who lost their children or brothers this way?

Ms. Margaret Wanjiru: Yes, there are others and one of them is here!

The Acting Chair (Commissioner Namachanja): Could they just stand up in their places so that we can see them?

(Several mothers of the victims stood in their places)

For the mothers who have stood up, we do not have time maybe to listen to everybody. That is why we have a few of you representing many of you and we are sorry for what you went through.

Mama Margaret, as you said, everybody can deny you or reject you, but your God will never reject you. What recommendations do you have and were you having any message to the Government or the people who made you go through what you went through?

Ms. Margaret Wanjiru: One person called my husband and told him that we are the ones who killed Kiunjuri. That person works with the Government. Three days after Kiunjuri was killed, policemen came from Kahuro. For about three weeks, they came to protect the grave where he had been buried. So, we had fear as they were leaving their vehicle on the road and visited the graveside.

The Acting Chair (Commissioner Namachanja): Where did they bury your son?

Ms. Margaret Wanjiru: He was buried at home.

The Acting Chair (Commissioner Namachanja): What do you want this Commission to do for you?

Ms. Margaret Wanjiru: I would like to be assisted from the sufferings that I am undergoing today. For example, my husband is not in any position to work because he was bartered and, therefore, he may not have sufficient energy to work. He just stays at home doing nothing.

The Acting Chair (Commissioner Namachanja): What she has said is that she needs assistance. We will hear you, please, get seated!

Commissioner Chawatama: I just have one question. Mama Margaret, you said that your house was burnt and that you were picked by the Government. Do you know who picked you and where you were taken?

Ms. Margaret Wanjiru: They were chasing me so that I can also be killed together with my son because I was aware of what he was doing and I never went to report.

Commissioner Chawatama: So, you were picked up by the police or were you----?

Ms. Margaret Wanjiru: When they tried to look for me, I ran away. I only came back home when I heard that he had already been killed.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: Sorry, I just want to follow one thing. Did you say that you were aware of what your son was doing or is it that they thought you were aware of what he was doing?

Ms. Margaret Wanjiru: I was not aware, but they claimed that I was aware of what my son was doing.

(Technical hitch)

Ms. Ann Njambi: My name is Ann Njambi Maina. I was a teacher at Murang'a County Council and I am talking on behalf of all the teachers. We were fired and we are about 180 teachers. Some of them are here with me in this hearing. I can ask them to stand so that they can be seen.

(Ms. Ann Njambi's former colleagues stood up in their places)

On 6th April 1968, the head teachers of the schools where we were teaching were called for the meeting together with the chairman and treasurer. They were called at the County Council's office. They came back and informed us that all teachers of the council had been fired. So, we said that we were not going to agree with that verbal communication; but we waited for formal communication. However, the formal letters delayed a bit. They came to us at around June after we had taught in the month of May and even started teaching in June. When we were given formal letters, we were shocked because we had not been given the reason why we had been sacked. We were told that it was necessary for the parents to start employing us. So, when they were giving us those formal letters, we had stayed for about ten months without any payment. So, they started giving us about three months payment and there was a remaining payment of salary arrears of about seven months that was due. So, they said that they were going to pay us until they get us into our normal days.

So, we were really puzzled to see that instead of being paid our arrears, we were being sent home so that parents can pay us. So, this really shocked us and made a majority of the teachers get so shocked. In fact, some of our colleagues passed on. Our children had stopped going to school. For example, my son was at Kerugoya Boys but he dropped out of school because I did not have money. We had started a case with the council and the council was not willing to co-operate.

When we went to the union, those who were heading the union were told that they would be fired because they were defending us. The Murang'a County Council was claiming that it did not have enough funds to pay us; yet during that time when we were being fired, other people were being employed. There was no any other part that was affected apart from the Nursery Department. So, we were wondering even if it is retrenchment, there is an appropriate formal way of retrenchment where you are given your share of salaries so that you can start a new life but there was nothing we were given!

After struggling with them, on around 24th June, each and every one of us was given Kshs10, 000. We were told to forget that there was any other payment that was would receive. We screamed and we did some bad actions which even rendered some of us to be injured and even got admitted into hospital.

We struggled and worked hard and went through troubles and yet we could not be paid our dues and our children slept hungry and we stayed without paying rent. I was not working in the place where I was born. I worked near here and my formal maternal place is at Saba Saba. So, I have so much rent arrears to an extent that I tried to work at night selling commodities to afford food for my family. We used to have one meal per day, and that was dinner. So, we have tried so much and we have even seen Ministers and every person. Those who came to campaign for elections always told us that they were going to revive our case. We are tired! For example, my son left Kerugoya High School and it is now that he has been cleared after doing an exam from a private school. I am so bitter because my resources got lost and I used the money I had to hire a lawyer. The only gave us a quarter of the pay that we were entitled to. They forced us to sign for that quarter pay because we did not have anybody to push for our case.

You know a hungry person can receive even one shilling instead of rejecting the whole amount. So, we have really struggled. When we heard about the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC), we felt that, maybe our God had come near to us because our salary was not calculated in the right way and we were not given the right pension. Up to today, some of us were not even given anything after retrenchment.

With regard to women, after their husbands died; they went to ask for the money because they were the beneficiaries, but they were not given. We still have the retrenchment documents yet our lives got messed up since that time to date. So, that is why I was inquiring whether the Commission is in a position to help us so that the council can sit down and calculate our money and all our funds because we had not reached the retirement age, so that they can give us our rightful dues.

We even know that there are some other places where there had been retrenchment but they were given Kshs200, 000 and then they were told to resign. But for us, how could they just chase us away and they are the people who had given us formal employment. We had not been employment illegally. That is why we are seeking help from the Commission because we do not have any other place where we can air our grievances. The files are not even there but we still have the payslips. When we go there, we see that our employment number had been given to other people showing that they are employing other people while they retrenched us. That was my problem.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: Thank you very much for representing others. I would like to know whether the nursery school teachers were only women or there were also male teachers teaching together with you.

Ms. Ann Njambi: In Murang'a County Council, majority of the teachers were women and there was one man who was from Kabiti. After investigation, he was retained because he was crippled. But what is very bitter for us is because we were not given our rightful amounts. They later re-employed the people they knew. The people who did not have people to stand out for them were the ones who were retrenched.

Commissioner Chawatama: Thank you very much for sharing with us your troubles. It is really sad because loss of employment leads to a lot of hardships. You have expressed the kind of hardship that you and your former colleagues have suffered including the fact that you could not pay rent and that your children could not continue with their education. A normal retrenchment would mean that the employer would have to enter into consultations with people. I do not know whether or not you prepared a statement or indeed a memo. Did you give us a memo?

Ms. Ann Njambi: Yes, we have written some statement with the TJRC. We also have our own records and, therefore, if you need anything from us, we can always forward it to you.

Commissioner Chawatama: That is probably what is best. We need to study your statements or your memo. If we need further information, we can get in touch. But there are laws that govern the way in which a person is retrenched. We would be interested in finding out whether the law was followed. We will also be interested in knowing whether or not you were merely dismissed in order to make room for employing other people. So, we will study the statements you have given us and also take into consideration what you have told us today. Thank you.

The Acting Chair (Commissioner Namachanja): I think as much as she says that they recorded statements with us, it would be good if they are helped to come up with a common memoranda because they are over 180 teachers. Thank you.

Ms. Grace Wambui Mwangi: How are you? My name is Grace Wambui Mwangi. I come from Murang'a District, Milela Sub-location; Gethetho Sub-Location. My problem is that I am being tortured by someone.

On 20th April, 2007, I met a man while I was doing business of selling cabbages and Kales. On my way home from the market, at around 7.00 p.m., a man came from behind and hit me with a metal and I fell down.

That day I had received the group money and I had the sales money in my pocket. I did not know whether this person knew that I had such money because I used to pass through that route and I had never seen such person. So, he came from behind hit me with the metal and I fell down.

The Acting Chair (Commissioner Namachanja): Please, repeat the few sentences that you have said.

Ms. Grace Wambui Mwangi: On 20th April, 2007, I was on my way from selling cabbages and Kales; the foodstuffs that are used for cooking. On that day, I was having money from our group in my pocket. I heard someone coming from behind me and he hit me with a metal and I fell down. Before I lost my conscious, I felt him frisking my pockets and he picked everything that I had. I had Kshs10, 000 from the group and the

sales money from the sale of kale and cabbage. I could not know the amount because I had not counted it.

So, he moved me from the road and dragged me to the other side of the road and left me bleeding. At one point, I lost my consciousness. When I delayed going home, my husband felt that it was so late and he came to search for me along the road. On his way out, he heard someone groaning and by then, I had lost my consciousness. When he tried to check, he found that I was the one. So, he tried all he could and picked me up and took me to Murang'a District Hospital. At the hospital, he was told that he needed to get a letter from the police. He came with the police to the hospital to record a statement because I could not walk.

So, I was taken and admitted in hospital.

The following morning, which was on Saturday, an X-ray was done on me. The X-ray equipment in Murang'a was not working. So, my husband was told to look for funds to take me to Thika so that I could be scanned. So, he was told to look for Kshs10, 000 and Kshs2, 000 for the Ambulance. He went and looked for the money and then on Monday, I was taken to Thika District Hospital where a scan was done. It showed where the problem was. I was brought back to Murang'a District Hospital for treatment. My bones have had problems since then. Even as I am standing now, you would just see that I fell down and lost my consciousness. So, I have had health complications since then.

My children started suffering because they could not continue with their education and so many domestic problems followed and up to now, I have so many problems. So, I have been wondering how I could be helped. How can the Commission assist me?

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: Do you want to be assisted with medication or what help do you need?

Ms. Grace Wambui Mwangi: I have been purchasing drugs but with the education of my children, I am really struggling because previously I was selling *sukumawiki* so that I could assist my husband as I know that education is very paramount nowadays. So, I can be assisted.

Commissioner Chawatama: Was the person who assaulted you ever found?

Ms. Grace Wambui Mwangi: No one knew who that person was because he came from behind assaulted me and after I lost my consciousness, he went away. When my husband found me, I was just alone.

Commissioner Chawatama: When you came to appear before us, did you have an idea of the kind of help that you would be asking from us? What help are you asking from this Commission?

Ms. Grace Wambui Mwangi: Because I buy drugs every day, I would be happy to be assisted to purchase drugs or maybe to educate my children because I was selling vegetables to educate them.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: We have heard what you have said and in our recommendations, we will take into consideration what you have said about assistance so that we can see how you can be assisted.

Commissioner Chawatama: When the police came to get a statement from you, did you feel that they were helpful in the way they treated you and did they follow up later?

Ms. Grace Wambui Mwangi: No, they did not follow up.

Commissioner Chawatama: You also said that you went to Thika District Hospital for a scan because the x-ray equipment at Murang'a was not working. Was this a district hospital?

Ms. Grace Wambui Mwangi: Yes, it was Murang'a District Hospital.

Commissioner Chawatama: Is that district hospital well equipped today?

Ms. Grace Wambui Mwangi: I am not certain because the x-ray equipment was not working and that is why we were sent to Thika and there, it was working.

Commissioner Chawatama: In some of the places where we have been, we have heard from women and especially those pregnant that they need to be assisted by being taken to hospital. They have complained that often the hospitals are not well equipped and that they do not have doctors or trained staff to attend to them. What were your findings or the experience that you had when you went to the local district hospital here?

Ms. Grace Wambui Mwangi: For the x-ray at Murang'a District Hospital, I still have them but they were not very clear. That is why they found it very necessary to send me to Thika and I have the Thika X-rays. That is where I was able to get assistance.

Commissioner Chawatama: I wanted to establish the sufficiency of healthcare. So, maybe if there is a woman in the audience who has had challenges, maybe we would like to hear from her and find out the position. Thank you.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: As Commissioner Chawatama has said, we have heard from other places about the problems of getting medical attention---

The last speaker touched a little bit on this issue. She did not get sufficient medical attention in Murang'a and she was transferred to Thika hospital. I would like to know if there was a person who underwent such a problem of getting medical services. Is there any person who would like to speak about that?

Ms. Esther Muthoni: How are you? My name is Esther Muthoni. I am from Murang'a. I have a son who has been sick for the last 17 years. He suffers from diabetes which has affected his kidneys. There is nothing he can do. I do everything for him. I normally take him to hospital. Sometimes we are unable to buy drugs for him because they are very expensive and we are poor. We have been relying on well wishers to give us money. So, medicine has been a problem to us and we would like to be assisted. Every time we visit Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH), we spend over Kshs1, 000. It is not easy for me to raise this money.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: Does he get medicine here?

Ms. Esther Muthoni: Yes, sometimes we get medicine here. We have qualified doctors. They are friendly to us. In case you have complications, they refer you to KNH. After the referral, we are unable to go to KNH immediately due to lack of finances. Even if we went there, we are unable to buy the medicine prescribed for us.

Commissioner Chawatama: What is your recommendation for people who find themselves in a position that you have found yourself where the local hospital, maybe is not well equipped to deal with particular conditions, and you have to be referred to a hospital outside your area?

Ms. Esther Muthoni: I would request that all facilities be availed to all hospitals. As I said, we have qualified doctors in Murang'a District Hospital. However, there are no facilities and that is why they normal refer us to other hospitals.

Ms. Asha Guyo: My name is Asha Guyo from Isiolo. At the moment, I am a resident of Makuyu Town. I came to this town in 1996.

We were affected by fights around here. In 2000, we went to live in Athi River Town. On our way to Athi River, I was involved in a road accident. I was treated at Mater Hospital. I stayed in ICU for three weeks. I was discharged after paying Kshs574, 000.

I hired a lawyer from Machakos to follow up the case for me. His name is Francis Mulu. Fortunately, God saved my life. When I was paid, I bought a plot in Isiolo Town and built a two bedroom house. In 2008, there were conflicts and I lost donkeys and goats. This forced me to move from that town with my children. One of my children was injured. I recorded a statement at the District Commissioner's office. The Red Cross assisted me. My children were in primary school. They did KCPE. However, they did not go to secondary school. I have been struggling in life. I do menial jobs like washing clothes in Nairobi. Sometimes, I used to sleep on veranda with my children.

I am appealing to the Government to help me by paying my hospital bill. I have a son who did KCPE yesterday and I hope he will pass and go to secondary school. I cannot do any business. I am really asking for assistance from the Government.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: Thank you very much, Ms. Asha. You said that there were fights in 1996 at Isiolo. The fights were between who and who?

Mr. Asha Guyo: It was in 1996 during KANU regime. Again, in 2000, there were conflicts in Isiolo. That is when we sought refuge in Athi River. My son died at Athi River and we buried him in Machakos. I was also involved in an accident in May. I have a lot of problems. I am now mentally disturbed. I can even be knocked down by a vehicle due to stress. It was not political fight.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: Do you know the people who were shooting? Were they police officers or who?

Ms. Asha Guyo: Yes, I know them. They were Samburus.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: You said you managed to build a house. Is that correct?

Ms. Asha Guyo: Yes, I bought a plot and built a two bedroom house in Isiolo. I would even ferry firewood to people using handcarts. I also bought donkeys. However, they were taken away when a conflict erupted in Isiolo Town. As I said, one of my children was injured. We ran to a different town.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: Who grabbed your land and property?

Ms. Asha Guyo: Samburu warriors.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: How do you know that it was the Samburu community?

Ms. Asha Guyo: Because of their dress code.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: So, at the moment, how many children do you have?

Ms. Asha Guyo: I have three children. One of them finished doing his KCPE examination yesterday. He is my first born child.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: Thank you very much, Asha. Maybe, the Commissioners might have questions for you.

The Acting Chair (Commissioner Namachanja): Thank you madam for sharing what you went through. My question is not directed to her. But I just want to get some clarification concerning the mandate of this Commission. This Commission is expected to look at long term issues concerning historical injustices, social economic crimes, and gross human right violations, most of which, my fellow women have been sharing. Then, at the end, the Commission is supposed to come up with a report highlighting these violations that have taken place, the context under which they took place, the circumstances, who were the perpetrators and who were the victims.

I see most of the issues that my fellow women are sharing need immediate attention. I want to be frank and tell my fellow women that we are sorry; we do not have immediate solutions for most of the issues they are raising, especially concerning school fees. So, I do not want to leave false hope from here, that when we leave this meeting, women who have shared concerning school fees, maybe expecting something from us. No, we do not have that support. However, we will take your recommendations on board as we write our report. At the end of it, we expect the Government to formulate policies, so that such situations do not occur again.

So, my appeal here is I am hoping that we have women leaders among you. We have heard about drugs and school fees. There are bursaries. If somebody could hold the hand of this mama, and go to the bursary committee, probably she will be assisted there. So, fellow women we shall disappoint you because we do not have immediate support. Maybe in the areas of the drugs, we may appeal to some of the institutions such as AMREF to highlight the problems and see how they can help you. But for school fees, my fellow women, I am sorry to disappoint you. We can mobilize ourselves through the bursaries. I wanted to highlight that, I do not know if the Judge has anything to add.

Commissioner Chawatama: In trying to manage the expectations of the people who give their testimonies, we also realize there are long term and short term solutions to some problems. Indeed, what the Acting Chair has said is true. It is not every issue that we can immediately deal with. Some of the issues require long term solutions. However, in the past, we have partnered with other organizations and have been able to provide counselling. We have provided wheel chairs and, in some cases, medical attention. So, what we do often depends on the need, and what our partners are able to offer. We have then been able to direct persons to our partners who have assisted them. Indeed, one of the things we are going to look into is the issue of compensation. But even with those, we will have to go back. We will study the cases. We shall make recommendations as the Acting Chair has said. Those are long term. But that is not to say, that there are no instances where we can offer immediate help. Once we identify this, we then tell the person concerned what we are able to do for them.

So, even as we contribute, let us bear that in mind. We would like to thank the last witness. Indeed, we have heard from a lot of women the hardships that they suffered as a result of clashes that have taken place. We have heard of losses of life. We have heard of property being lost, and the issues of being displaced. During clashes, it is women and children who suffer most. So, we are aware that at different times, especially at election time, those elections are a trigger for some of the things that you have complained about.

Indeed, we have also seen that clashes between clans have also contributed to some of the problems that you have brought forward. So, your voices add to many voices that we have heard concerning the challenges that women have suffered, and even when they have tried their best to put their lives together again. Clashes take place and they suffer losses. Women like you have given us a message and that is the message of peace. Women want peace in Kenya. It is only with peace that they can see development and

educate their children. So, we have heard you. We have heard what you said. We thank you for your contribution.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: Sorry fellow women, as we are speaking there are certain issues that we want to hear about. In each area, we should be able to hear issues that affect you. So, for now, we would want to hear issues of rape, defilement of children, boys or girls, or rape of women. If there is any woman who would like to speak on those issues, the floor is yours. Is there a woman who has gone through such and she would like to share with us?

Is there a woman here who has such a problem? We know that those are issues women would fear to speak about. But it is good if we can hear about them, so that it can be recorded. Maybe, when you went to report in the court what happened?

Ms. Anna Wangechi: My name is Anna Wangechi. I have two issues. One, I had an accident in 2002 on my way to Nairobi. I used to sell second hand clothes. So, on our way to Nairobi around Thika we had an accident and fell into the river. We were taken to Thika Hospital. Later on, I was transferred to Murang'a District Hospital. My mother bought me medicine and my condition improved. That was when I was able to talk to my mother and my three year old child. My child accompanied my mother to the hospital. Initially, I had thought we were involved in accident together, but I as told my child was safe. He was not with me when I was involved in accident. I was treated for a period of one month. I was very weak because I had a fracture on my hand. I was not able to turn on side of my body. So, my mum paid hospital bills and I was discharged. It was not that I had fully recovered, but it was because we wanted to cut down on the bill. I told her my future looked bleak, but she encouraged me.

In 2003, I was married. My husband promised to take care of me and my child. He told me that he did not have parents. One day, his uncle came to our place and promised to give us some land. We were so happy, but when we went to take possession of it, we were told it had been sold. His uncle meant well for us. He wanted to improve our living standards. We reported the case to the chief. He took us to the DO in Murang'a who told us the land had been sold and it was not possible for us to get it. We were chased away from that land. Our house was demolished. So, we are renting a house. My husband works in Nairobi as a casual labourer.

I appeal to the Government to give us a place to build. As I said, I was involved in an accident. After the case, I was not paid anything. In fact, I am finding it hard to raise money to buy medicine.

Commissioner Chawatama: The land that your uncle wanted to give to your husband; was it the uncle's or it belonged to his father who left it behind for him?

Ms. Anna Wangechi: It is my husband's grandmother who had bought it.

Commissioner Chawatama: Was it supposed to be inherited by your husband?

Ms. Anna Wangechi: Yes. It was the wish of the grandmother for my husband to stay on that land. But the uncle decided to sell it. He shared out the remaining piece of land with his children. But we were evicted.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: Sorry, I would want to follow up what she has said. I had asked a question earlier, and I would go back to it. But for now, we want to hear about lack of inheritance. She was not able to inherit her husband. Is there an incident, where a woman was not able to inherit her father's land or husband's land?

Ms. Grace Waithera Kimani: Praise be to God. I heard about this hearing and I thanked God for it.

My name is Grace Waithera Kimani. I come from Musugusa. I am not married. My brothers are alive, but they indulge a lot in alcohol. They do not know a thing or two. We have also a case of land. We have lived in Murang'a for more than ten years. Our case has never been heard and determined. They have always lied to us that the case is continuing. I have done some photocopies and took them to Nyeri. My father is the eldest son in their homestead. They are now fighting for this land with his younger brother. They keep arresting us. We have never known peace. They are even planning to evict us from where we stay. So, I am pleading with the Government to make sure that my father gets justice in this case. .

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: How many children were you?

Ms. Grace Waithera Kimani: They are two sons. Others are daughters.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: They are five. How many---

Ms. Grace Waithera Kimani: I have one son and three daughters.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: So, all of you do not have land. How many children are they?

Ms. Grace Waithera Kimani: They are four. Us, we are five. So, them, they are economically empowered than us. They are able to contribute money and get their way. My father died long time ago because of that land. So, we have suffered for many years. We do not know where to go. I am so happy that you people are here.

Commissioner Chawatama: The witness says they have been to court, but their case is dragging. She has documents to show that they have been going to court. We need to look at these documents and try to piece her testimony together to establish how much land was left, who the beneficiaries were, and why the court has not delivered judgement?

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: What you would do, we have an officer here from the TJRC Commission; you could give them those documents. There is one officer here. The other

one is outside. So, when you finish with us, you could go and see them. Give them photocopies and you keep the original documents.

Commissioner Chawatama: Just talk to Ann.

What did you say the chief said when you took the land issue to him?

Ms. Anna Wangechi: He told us there was nothing he could do because the land had already been sold. The title deed bears my uncle's name.

Commissioner Chawatama: Your husband's uncle had held the title deed to this land. Your husband was supposed to be beneficiary. Did you ever take the matter to court?

Ms. Anna Wangechi: No.

We went to see the DO and to the Lands Board. He told us he could not do anything because the land had already been sold. We came to know about the story when we were being evicted. So, we were not in a position to reclaim it because it had been sold.

Commissioner Chawatama: What did the Board say?

Ms. Anna Wangechi: They gave an okay for it to be transferred in the name of the person who had bought it.

Commissioner Chawatama: The person who purchased the land; was he ever informed that the land belonged to you and the person who sold it had no business selling it?

Ms. Anna Wangechi: He knew everything.

Commissioner Chawatama: And still he went ahead and bought it?

Ms. Anna Wangechi: He had promised to surrender one acre to us, but he later changed his mind.

Commissioner Chawatama: When you went to see the chief, the man who bought the land promised to give you an acre. Do you have a witness?

Ms. Anna Wangechi: We did not have a witness. He told us there was nothing he could do for us. He advised us to rent a house.

Commissioner Chawatama: Could you give us a statement?

Ms. Anna Wangechi: I have not carried them today.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: I had asked earlier issues concerning rape, but nobody has talked about it.

Ms. Felistus Wandia: Thank you very much. I work with the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission in Muranga. I help the community in different issues, all the injustices done to the people in diocese of Muranga, which covers Kirinyaga, and Murang'a County. So, I have several cases of sexual abuses, land issues, denial of rights like compensation, and many others. There is lack of maintenance for children in homes, denial of conjugal right to wives. So, I have a wide view of different cases. In Murang'a, we have a case, from Ithanga, that is in Gatanga, where a girl was defiled by a policeman. We liaised with several organizations to help that child. We have several cases which are documented.

We have had an incident, where a father defiled his child. The child became pregnant. Her father helped her to procure an abortion. I just want to give a hint of several cases, where the mothers become helpless. Others are afraid to talk about these problems.

In Kirinyaga, we have homes, where two year old children were defiled. This is an issue which is all over. Women come to us, telling us that their children have been defiled. We have tried to intervene and help them. The issue of conjugal rights in the family is caused by the problems of illicit brews. Men are no longer responsible. They have ran away from their responsibilities.

Men have run away from their responsibilities from home. It is terrible for women in Kirinya and Murang'a counties. I am a witness of that even though we do not speak about those things. Because of such things, the boy child faces lots of problems in Central Province.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: Thank you for your work in terms of advocacy and raising these issues together with referral and assisting. We are very pleased to hear that you have documented the cases and we want you to present a memorandum stating what you do, the cases you have, the challenges you have found and the successes, if any, and what your recommendations are, particularly on sexual violence or the other cases that you handle.

Commissioner Chawatama: You are not alone in raising the issues that you have raised. We have heard witnesses who brought up the issue of poverty, family values and the drug and alcohol abuse and that babies are not being born in this place. Thank you for making time to appear before us.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: I am going to give an opportunity to one woman.

Ms. Flora Muthoni Mwangi: My name is Wa Mwangi and I am saved. God has given me energy to raise the children because Mwangi was shot dead one house away from my house. We were working during the Mau Mau and I was seated under a tree and I was so sad. My husband did not have siblings but he had bought me land. I stayed with the children on that land and I left the village and went to Majeshi until today. I have not had any help from the Government and that is why I am here to see if you can get someone else to assist me apart from God. That is all I have to say.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: When did your husband die?

Ms. Flora Muthoni Mwangi: Way before Independence! If I was educated, I would tell you the exact date.

Ms. Nancy Kanyago: Thank you very much!

The Acting Chair (Commissioner Namachanja): On behalf of the Commission, I would like to thank you Mama Flora and your family for the struggles that liberated this nation. We are independent as a nation because of the blood that your husband shed. I know nobody may have said thank you but I would like you to know that we appreciate. You have helped to contribute to a historical record that this Commission will come up with. You have helped us to re-write the history in the manner that you experienced. I want to find out for people like Mama Flora whether there is money for aged people. I know they are doing a pilot project but I do not know if Muranga is part of it and if Mama Flora is a recipient of such funds. It may be little but are you are aware?

Ms. Flora Muthoni Mwangi: I have never been given!

The Acting Chair (Commissioner Namachanja): Would somebody know?

Ms. Flora Muthoni Mwangi: I have never been there! Never seen it! It is not my fault but maybe it is because the Government has not mobilized me to go there. So, how would I know and they know very well that they killed my husband during the Emergency? If you ask my place, you will be shown.

The Acting Chair (Commissioner Namachanja): I know that the Government sampled a few counties to start this project. So, maybe, Muranga is not part of it. But thank you for coming before this Commission. Do you have any recommendations for such people who lost her family like her?

Ms. Flora Muthoni Mwangi: I do not have any! All I need is financial help and nothing else; just something to buy food.

The Acting Chairlady (Commissioner Namachanja): Thank you!

Nancy Kanyago: Thank you! We have come to the end of this session but I would like to give a chance to the co-ordinator of this place.

Ms. Jane Kamwaga: Before I say what I want to say, I would like to sing a song for the women to encourage them.

(Ms. Jane Kamwaga sung)

I am happy and thankful for this hearing because women have had an opportunity to air their problems.

We may look like we have no problem here in Muranga because we engage in many activities but I am happy for those who came. We have seen the Chairperson and we were so happy to hear that she was the one to get that post. You have issues about Muranga but there is a serious issue about women being raped. You did not hear any woman talk about rape because most of us suffer from inside and we do not want to air our views publicly. There are cases of defilement but people cover them up and because it is our children who are raped and defiled, they are covered up by the people. Even families prefer to deal with that issue privately but it affects us. So, maybe, you are thinking there are no issues in Muranga but there are problems. Our issues vary from one person to another. Our children are being killed in the name of Mungiki yet we do not even know who they are because there are men who have been killed and they claim that it is Mungiki. But there is no establishment to show that, that person is a Mungiki and so, the person who goes through the pain is a woman. It is like we are dying inside; we are killing ourselves from inside but what has saved women are the women groups and that is how we support ourselves.

There is one thing I would like to ask this Commission regarding the witnesses who said their children were killed by a certain policeman or leader, when we go from here, these people are afraid and so this should remain confidential. Is there witness protection because we need it? As I finish, I would like to say that a time has come for us to educate our people. We need to carry out civic education so as to know which posts are available for us. The Commission should look for a way to educate us; as you all know that multiparty democracy was born here in Muranga; Matiba was born here but he is now sick because of how he was treated when he was trying to fight for us. In short, if we cannot meet that capacity, is it possible for the Commission to build it for us so that we can stand like other people? The challenge of not involving women in leadership means there is a problem and that is what needs to be looked at.

Finally, we would like to be educated on the Constitution and I thank you again and again for your coming.

The Acting Chair (Commissioner Namachanja): Thank you Nancy for facilitating this wonderful meeting. As a Commission, we would not have gained this much had we not had other sisters in other institutions supporting us. Today we are privileged to have such a sister from GTZ and the German Embassy and before I give my closing remarks, I would like to invite them if they have anything to share with these women.

Ms. Heidi Romlout: Thank you but we are unprepared so we would like to share spontaneous words. We want to thank all the women present for having allowed us to witness this women's hearing. We are touched by the different issues raised and I underscore the importance of sharing experiences and trying to unite as women together in the community for the integration of women in society. So we wish this community and the TJRC all the best in these tasks.

The Acting Chairlady (Commissioner Namachanja): Thank you Heidi and sorry for ambushing you. It is the nature of the African woman; that is how we do things. If you go to the shamba and as you finish your shamba work you realize there is no firewood. So you collect the firewood and as you are about to leave, you realize there are no vegetables. Then you look for the vegetable and on the way you realize there is no water. So you will see an African woman with a pot on the head carrying water, with firewood and on top of that firewood you will see a vegetable and on the shoulder you will see the jembe for digging. Thank you for coming to be with these women.

My fellow women, first I would like to thank you for sparing your time to come and be a part of this process of truth seeking for the TJRC. Indeed, I would like to thank my sister Jane with whom we have also come a long way in this struggle of peace building and women empowerment for insisting that Muranga should not be left out.

Today, we are happy that we have had a chance to hear women. For those of you who were not in the public hearing, we had both men and women participating in this process. It has been our nature that wherever we go, we get a special session for women so that we talk to each other on experiences that we have had concerning historical experiences and gross human rights violations. Such informal meetings like what we have had have been very enriching especially for our report. It is unfortunate that time is not on our side. This is, I think, the fifth region we are covering now. We had finished North Eastern, Upper Eastern, Mount Elgon, Nyanza and Rift Valley. Now, we are in Central and this is the second area in Central. We have covered Nyeri, we are here today and we are moving to Rumuruti. Time is not on our side. We wish we came with a video clip of what other women have also shared. You would realize that your testimonies here are just an affirmation of what women all over have gone through.

While we were in Kitale, I remember one statement. When one woman got so annoyed and said, owing to the humiliation they had gone through, landlessness, being unable to educate their children, displacement and since nobody cared, she thought it was high time for us to sell Kenya so that each one of us can get a bit of it instead of Kenya belonging to few people. There are such feelings and frustrations that made the Government to enact an Act and come up with this truth seeking process. Maybe, it is not too late. We will get these testimonies and statements but more importantly, your statements on how we can move forward and prevent the violations we have experienced from taking place and how we can move forward so that we feel like we belong to Kenya. If you visit some areas, you will see that they do not belong to Kenya at all. How can we come up with one nation with everybody belonging to Kenya? We value the testimonies you have shared with us. The fact that the testimonies have been heard in public, when we write this report, nobody can deny that such violations took place and that Mama Flora did not lose her husband in her prime age. As a result, she brought up her children single handedly and participated in liberating this country. So, we value the testimonies you have given us. We have heard you on disinheritance. We have heard you on extra-judicial killings; we heard you on the impact of displacement and on the impact of militia in this section and it is not only in this section but all over.

So, I want to assure you that whatever you have shared with us will form part of the report that the Commission is expected to come up with. The recommendations you have shared with us; we will put them in the report and they will influence policy making and reform changing in this country so that our new generations do not suffer what we went through. We may even have solutions for some of the immediate problems you have shared. There was a question that was asked and I would like to respond to it. This is concerning the witness protection. It is a major issue and that is why we have provision for an in-camera session. When we were conducting public hearings yesterday, we also had in-camera sessions where witnesses had a private session with the commissioners to share what they went through so that nobody else gets to hear what you have shared. For very sensitive cases, we do not hear them in the areas that they took place. We transfer them and hear them elsewhere so that people do not get to hear them. So, once again, I would like to thank you very much for sparing your time to come and share with us. Jane, I would like to leave a responsibility for you. Everywhere we have been going, we do not have sessions to share such stories. We have realized that sharing such stories is part of trauma healing. I do not know what you will do but if you can partner with other organizations to support such meetings, even if they came once a month to share what you are going through as women, it will help a lot.

Thank you and God bless you all.

That is the end of our hearing.

(Closing Prayers)

(The Commission adjourned at 1.30 p.m.)