

4th April 2008

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH RESPONDS TO HONORABLE ASMAN KAMAMA'S 6-DAY WORK WEEK PROPOSAL

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kenya is a community of about 3 million believers who observe Saturday as their day of worship. The headquarters of the church in Kenya is known as the East African Union situated in Nairobi. We the East African Union of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and indeed the entire Adventist fraternity in Kenya have noted with great concern the announcement by the Minister of State for Public Service the Honorable Mr. Asman Kamama that civil servants should be prepared to work on Saturdays once a team researching on the new working modality presents its recommendation to the ministry of Public Service.

We have been taken aback at the seeming finality in the ministers pronouncements which does not seem to factor in that a large section of the civil service will by that one act have been denied their fundamental right to worship on a day of their choosing as enshrined in our constitution. Section 78 of our constitution provides that "Except with his own consent, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of conscience, and for the purposes of this section that freedom includes freedom of thought and of religion, freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and both in public and in private to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in **worship, teaching, practice and observance**".

While appreciating minister's zeal to drive our nation to a 24 hour economy, we are of the opinion that any moves in that direction should be sensitive to the fundamental and God given rights of all Kenyans. We cannot overemphasize that these rights as enshrined in Chapter V of our constitution are God-given and not enjoyed as a result of the largesse of the state. The role of the state is just but to guarantee and safeguard these rights.

We are calling upon the government and the minister to suspend the proposal because it will take away the rights of our members to worship on the Seventh-day Sabbath (Saturday) which is guaranteed in our constitution and is a biblical commandment. We believe compelling the civil service to work on Saturdays may lead many of our church members to be terminated from civil service because they cannot compromise their faith for work. Many others may be closed out from recruitment into the civil service and this is tantamount to our church members being denied their rights to observe their day of worship and is persecution of our church members.

The minister will need to find out how the five-day work week started. The Seventh-day Church members appealed to the government and it was granted to accommodate them. In the proposed six-day work week we need to know how the Seventh-day Adventist Church members will be accommodated because "We must obey God rather than men!" - Acts 5:29 (New International Version).

We trust that our leaders shall take cognizance that "If the Lord does not build the house, it is useless for the builders to work on it" (Psalms 127:1). Let us not disregard God our creator and sustainer in our efforts to build our economy. Let him be the very bedrock upon which we build our economy.

God bless Kenya.

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