

Constitution Reform Forum TT

From maximum leader to maximum participation

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Political Leader

Dear Political Leader

CRF Support for *Disclosure Today's* Political Finance Transparency Initiative 2015

On behalf of the Constitution Reform Forum (CRF), I write to support the Political Finance Transparency Initiative that *Disclosure Today* urged you to consider through its correspondence to you, dated June 12, 2015. In particular, the CRF strongly supports *Disclosure Today's* request that you and your party commit to the eight (8) Obligations and Voluntary Disclosures outlined for both the party as a whole as well as for individual candidates.

Even as we endorse all eight public commitments, the CRF would like to make special mention of the eighth, the Request for Political Party & Electoral Finance Reform. In that regard, we strongly support *Disclosure Today's* call for open and adequate public consultations on this critical matter and call on all parties and candidates to state in clear terms their unequivocal commitment to ensuring the widest possible participation in such discussions. In underscoring our own commitment to that process, the CRF hereunder restates its own proposals for regulating the financing of political parties, which were outlined in the 2013 update of our *People's Manifesto on Constitution Reform*.

- *The status of political parties should be recognised in the Constitution.*
- *The limit on spending for election campaigning should apply to candidates as well as to parties. The current regulations that set a limit on candidates only, lend themselves to abuse.*
- *There should be some regulatory body with oversight for the functioning of political parties.*
- *Advertising for election campaigns on the public electronic media using state resources should be banned.*

Drawing on practices that obtain in other countries, we are also suggesting legislation/regulations that,

- *Require political contributors ... to declare the quantum provided, once that quantum exceeds some agreed upon specific amount.*
- *Put in place a system to ensure greater equity in the funding of political parties. A possible mechanism for effecting this (may) entail the following:*
 - *Either set a ceiling on total contributions a party may receive OR*
 - *Provide an estimate of what could be a reasonable annual budget for a particular party.*
 - *Allow parties to make up any shortfall not met by public funding through private donations.*
- *Set criteria to determine how a political party would qualify for State funding.*
- *Require parties to publish annual accounts, and be subject to external auditing, with supervision provided by an official agency like the Elections and Boundaries Commission (EBC). (pp. 12-13)*

The CRF is hopeful that the COP will be responding to *Disclosure Today* within the timeframe set to affirm its commitment to the eight Obligations and Voluntary Disclosures.

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Yours sincerely

Olabisi Kuboni

Chair, CRF.