

Statement from Michael Nyangi

Ladies and gentleman, allow me to say good afternoon to you all. My name is Michael Nyangi from Kenya, Kibera slum in Nairobi. Kibera is the second largest slum in the world, after Soweto in South Africa. It is only 1.5 square miles, with a population of 1.5 million, which is the same as Manhattan in New York City.

Today is a very important occasion as we mark and take part in the events of poverty eradication. Poverty is a situation that every man and woman, young and old would like to escape. Of all pollution we face, the worst is poverty. There is no more situation more difficult than poverty. Poverty is much deeper, broader, amorphous and insidious than the mere absence of money. It is not only the lack of health care or food, but also a violation of human dignity and lack of expression among the poor who are just to be seen but be heard. It is my pleasure to be here to represent the people of Kibera which started as a slum in 1920. That is a difference of 88 years.

My question is where are the leaders, but even if they are there, what are they doing, or what have they done towards poverty eradication? Poverty is not permanent and it can be changed if we team up together as leaders and be a good example. As I finish, I would like you to ask your neighbor, "what have you done towards poverty eradication?"

Last but not least, I welcome you all to Kenya and Kibera slum to see for yourself. Kibera is having all of the 42 tribes of Kenya. The area is overpopulated and the rate of poverty is very high. It is in this place where there is no sanitation, health care and clean, safe water. Because of poverty, young girls are being denied their rights to go to school. And instead, they are forced to work for the rich as maids to allow their parents to earn a living. This is very painful.

You will see people working very hard to earn a living, but they lack those to empower them for a brighter future. The people of Kibera really need change. How then can this be realized? Only if the poor are not sidelined but given the chance and opportunity to express themselves for they have a wider knowledge on poverty. So this is my message on behalf of the Kibera people.

God bless you all as we fight for poverty eradication.