# CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS DURING THE STAKEHOLDERS' ENGAGEMENT FORUM IN MOMBASA COUNTY AT MOMBASA BEACH HOTEL ON 13TH AUGUST 2025

Vice Chairperson, **Ms. Fahima Araphat Abdalla, OGW**

Colleague Members of the Commission,

The IEBC Commission Secretary/CEO, **Marjan Hussein Marjan, MBS**

IEBC Senior Management and All Staff Present,

Members of the Civil Society, Community Based Organizations, Special Interest Groups and Social Media Influencers

Ladies and Gentlemen,

**Good morning, friends and partners.**

Let me begin by sincerely thanking you for answering the Commission's call today.

Your presence here speaks volumes. It shows that you care — not just about the next election — but about the future of our country.

Indeed, your voice matters now more than ever.

1. We are not just addressing an audience today — we're speaking to the pulse of the nation.

   Before us are bloggers, influencers, digital creators, Gen Z leaders, civil society champions — the heartbeat of public opinion in Kenya.

   You are often the first to break a story, spark a conversation, or start a movement. And with that influence comes great power — and great responsibility.

2. Let's be clear: elections are not just about voting day.

   They are a journey — a process that begins long before the first ballot is cast and continues long after the last result is declared.

   That journey is built on credibility, trust, participation, and peace — and you are co-authors of that journey.

3. The digital space is powerful — but it is also fragile.

   Recently, the Commission has faced a wave of misinformation, disinformation, and coordinated online attacks.

   Let me be clear — we are not here to silence anyone.

We are here to partner with you — because Kenya's democracy must be built on facts, not fear.

4. Technology has changed everything.

   AI, digital platforms, and social media have revolutionized how we connect and communicate.

   They break barriers and build communities — but they also come with risks: deepfakes, fake news, bot farms, and echo chambers that can destroy trust in seconds.

   We must confront this digital dilemma together.

5. So here is our challenge to you — the digital defenders of truth:

   - Call out fake news.
   - Flag misinformation.
   - Elevate verified content.
   - Hold power to account — responsibly.

   Let's make truth trend again.

   Trust isn't bought. It's built — with every post, every share, every conversation.

Kenya's democracy cannot be sacrificed at the altar of virality.

6. The IEBC is committed to transparency and open communication.

   We are working to expand voter education and deepen community engagement — but we can't do it alone.

We need your help to:

- Mobilize the youth,
- Reach marginalized voices,
- Encourage participation.

Because when voters are informed, they show up — and when they show up, democracy wins.

7. Let's not forget: in 2022, voter turnout dropped to 64.77%.

   That's not just a number — that's millions of unheard voices.

   We must reverse that trend in 2027.

And in this digital age, every post counts. Every conversation matters. Every vote changes lives.

8. This moment — this meeting — is more than a conversation.

   It's a call to action.

   August 10th, 2027, may seem far — but election preparedness starts now.

   Let's promote elections that are peaceful, inclusive, and credible — together.

9. Here's my message to you — the friends of IEBC:

   - To influencers: Use your platforms not just for products, but for nation-building.
   - To bloggers: Let's move from clickbait to truth-bait.
   - To Gen Z champions: You are not just the future — you are the focus.
   - To civil society and media: We see you. We respect your watchdog role. Let's keep engaging — constructively, boldly, and with purpose.

We welcome feedback.

We are open to criticism.

We are ready to collaborate.

Can we change the narrative?

Yes — I believe we can.

Let's rise above the noise.

Let's amplify truth.

Let's secure Kenya's democratic future — together.

Thank you all for coming in such strong numbers.

10. And with that, it is my great honour to officially launch this engagement between the IEBC and Kenya's vibrant community of digital leaders, civil society, media, influencers, and election stakeholders.

I wish you fruitful and honest discussions.

May God bless you all — and may God bless Kenya.

Thank you.

**Erastus Edung Ethekon, HSC**

**CHAIRPERSON IEBC**