



**CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF
THE NATIONAL ELECTION CONFERENCE HELD AT THE
KENYATTA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE (KICC),
NAIROBI**

JUNE 13, 2017

- ✓ Your Excellency the President of the Republic of Kenya & Commander in Chief of the Defence Forces,
- ✓ Former Prime Minister Right Honorable Raila Odinga
- ✓ The Chief Guest, the Chairperson of The African Union Commission Faki Mahamat, who is Represented by the Vice Chairperson,
- ✓ African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Her Excellency Minata Samata Cessouma,
- ✓ The Chairperson, Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, His Grace, Arch Bishop (Rtd) Dr. Eliud Wabukala,
- ✓ The Executive Director, Kenya Human Rights Commission & Co-Convenor, Kura Yangu Sauti Yangu, George Kegoro,
- ✓ The Chief Justice and President of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Kenya – Honorable Chief Justice David Maraga,
- ✓ Director General, United Nations Office in Nairobi, Her Excellency Ambassador Sahle-Work Zewde,
- ✓ Your excellences, Members of Diplomatic corps, Religious, leaders, civil society,
- ✓ Distinguished Guests,
- ✓ **Ladies and gentlemen,**
Good morning!

I am pleased to welcome you here today, Kenyans and friends of Kenya, from all walks of life to reflect on the values that define us as a Nation, and chart a path together towards the 2017 General Election.

It is a time to focus on what we collectively need to do, to keep our country on the right footing on this 55th day to the 8th August General Election.

But even as we focus on 8th August, let us not forget our history. A history that our fathers and mothers tirelessly worked together, to bring all our different communities into a single cohesive nation. They built a nation that chose to celebrate our diversity,

rather than use it to divide us: They rallied us around our national anthem that places particular emphasis on justice, unity, peace and liberty.

Ladies and gentlemen, this, is what our heritage is. This, is what we must strive to defend and protect as we consolidate our democracy.

It is important, however, to emphasize that the protection of democracy requires all of us, to work together. It is fundamental to the protection of the sovereign power of the people of Kenya. The people of Kenya exercise this power “either directly or through their democratically elected representatives”. As leaders seeking political office, those positions constitutionally belong to the Kenyan people.

As institutions given the responsibility to midwife democratic elections, the enormity of that responsibility cannot be over-stated. Each of us has a task to ensure that the electoral process is transparent, just and peaceful.

All stakeholders, state and non-state actors have their responsibilities carved out. A responsibility to protect individual rights and freedoms of all Kenyans during the electoral process.

The collaboration in the hosting this event, is self-evident. I recognize the contribution of the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, the ‘Kura Yangu Sauti Yangu’ Initiative, the Government of Kenya and our development partners who have made this occasion possible. Thank you very much.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We meet here to assess the progress thus far and to reflect on the challenges we face as a people, committed to providing solutions and steering our nation in the right direction on matters elections.

On our part as the Commission, we successfully completed the registration of voters increasing the national coverage by 26% of voters. Out of the 19.6 million voters, 49% are women and 51% men.

What we also observe is that majority of the registered voters are youths standing at more than 50%. We are at the moment, working on improving the quality of the register based on the findings of the recently finalized KPMG audit. We wish to conclude this exercise in a week or so.

The Commission also just concluded the process of candidate nomination. The process was successful in many respects except for a few notable challenges. A total of **14,552** candidates have so far been cleared to compete for the available 1,882 seats across the country.

Sadly, the participation of women and youth in the nomination is still a matter of concern. It is our hope that political parties will do more to increase the interest of women and youth to participate in election.

We are also pleased to announce that 45,000 KIEMS kits (the Kenya Integrated Election Management System) are now in the country, with the last batch having been delivered yesterday. The Commission has sought to ensure that it puts in place a more reliable electronic system for purposes of voter identification and results transmission. This assurance shall be obtained through a series of tests that the Commission shall carry out

on the technology before the elections. The Commission is also investing in information security to ensure reliability, availability and integrity of our systems.

The Commission developed the elections results management framework, that will guide election officials and stakeholders on election results. Our aim is to ensure that there is greater transparency in the manner in which the results are tallied, collated, announced and declared at the different stages.

We are pleased to announce, that the National Tallying Centre for the Presidential Election shall be at Bomas of Kenya. The Tallying Centre has been redesigned informed by principles of transparency and accountability in results management.

During the course of this conference, there will be detailed presentations on the issues that I have briefly touched on. You will also be issued with a report that captures in greater detail the state of preparedness for the General Election.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There have been moments when justice, peace and liberty have come under trial in our country. Our memory is still fresh to events of 1992, 1997, and 2007, all sadly related to elections. But in all these situations, we were able to retrace our steps and chose justice and peace over anarchy and war.

The importance of electing leaders with Integrity in compliance with Chapter Six of the Constitution and the Leadership and Integrity Act cannot be over emphasized. I quote Dr. Rajendra Prasad, a former President of the Assembly of India, who stated that;

“If the people who are elected are capable, and men of character and integrity, then they would be able to make the best even of a defective Constitution. If they are lacking in these, the Constitution cannot help the country. After all, a Constitution like a machine, is a lifeless thing. It acquires life because of the men who control it and operate it, and India [like KENYA today] needs nothing more than a set of honest men who will have the interest of the country before them ... It requires men of strong character, men of vision, men who will not sacrifice the interests of the country at large for the sake of smaller groups and areas ... We can only hope that the country will throw up such men [and women of course] in abundance.”

We have collaborated with the Hon Attorney General, the Ethics and Anti-corruption Commission, Office of the Registrar of Political Parties, Office of the Director of Public Prosecution and other state and non-state agencies to ensure that as we cleared candidates for nomination we adhered to the tenets of Chapter Six. This collaboration can only be done within the law, and there are serious challenges. This chapter Six working group must live beyond this election. I hope Parliament shall enact laws to remove the legal roadblocks that this working group has encountered during this electoral period, to secure its longevity.

I urge all of us to work together in the next 55 days towards a transparent, just and peaceful electoral process. Let us desist from the politics of division and embrace the politics of unity. Do not let this election, be a pretext that threatens communities that have always lived in peace. Let us protect women, children and the vulnerable from violence and threats of violence. And let the young people, stand out, to be counted as agents of peace and democracy.

For those seeking political office, I urge you to campaign with grace and humility, remembering that the sovereign power still belongs to the people of Kenya.

On my own behalf and that of my team, I pledge our unwavering commitment to deliver a free, fair and credible election.

As the theme of this Conference states, “LET US WORK TOGETHER FOR A CREDIBLE AND PEACEFUL GENERAL ELECTION IN 2017”.

I thank you.

W.W. CHEBUKATI
CHAIRMAN