



COMMISSION CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS DURING THE CONSULTATIVE ROUND TABLE MEETING BETWEEN IEBC AND THE MEDIA ON WEDNESDAY, 6TH AUGUST, 2025 AT RADISSON BLU- UPPER HILL, NAIROBI

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

IEBC Commissioners,

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

The Executive Director of ELGIA, **Felix Owuor**

The President, Kenya Editors Guild, **Ms. Zubeidah Kananu**

The Secretary General, Kenya Union of Journalists (KUJ), **Eric Oduor**

IEBC Senior Management and All Staff Present,

Members of the Fourth Estate,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning!

1. This morning, I come as a listener more than a speaker, so I will keep my remarks brief.
2. First and foremost, I wish to thank our development partner, ELGIA, represented by my good friend Felix Odhiambo, for organizing this important forum that has brought the Commission and media together to this round table. I thank the media too for honouring this invitation.
3. Since we took oath of office on 11th July 2025, we have been on a continuous learning curve. We recognize there is still much to learn in this space and are committed to paying attention to every detail. The policy decisions we make must be based on knowledge and information.

4. Today's meeting is the first of many such engagements. The train has already left the station, and all of us, the Commission, the media, political parties, development partners, voters, civil society, state and non-state actors, and many other stakeholders are on board, riding together towards our democratic destination. It is my hope that we will deepen the existing partnership with the Commission by reviewing and signing a new Memorandum of Understanding.
5. As members of the fourth estate, your role cannot be gainsaid. You are the window through which the public sees what the Commission is doing, our CEO, Mr. Marjan has indeed captured rightly what you people do. Our role is to ensure that that window is clear and un-tinted from inside. Your role is to keep that window dust and dirt free, and shape reflections that provide the public with a clear and accurate view. Particularly, the factual and true workings of IEBC.
6. Election is not an isolated one-day event. An electoral process comprises a series of interconnected elements and activities that occur before, during, and after election day. This Commission is committed to sharing accurate and timely information about its plans and processes. We will enhance voter education and stakeholder engagements throughout the electoral cycle. The success of voter education is a shared responsibility between the Commission and the media. In addition, we need to mobilize members of the public to participate in all electoral processes. This will not only lead to voters making informed choices, but also a rise in voter turnout, which dropped to 64.77% in 2022 compared to 74% in 2017. I invite you to walk with us on this journey of service to our country.
7. We recognize that a strong, trust-based working relationship with the media is essential. With that in mind, in our second plenary meeting, we assigned Commissioners to lead various dockets. The docket that concerns you is led by Commissioner Dr. Alutalala Mukhwana. Dr. Alutalala is not a stranger to the media space; You've one of your own.

8. Regarding results management, as the Commission Secretary/CEO has stated, I commit to improving the framework that builds public confidence in election outcomes and reduces anxiety and mistrust. I look forward to hearing from you about how we can streamline processes for tallying election results. We need not confuse the public but rather create a peaceful environment through a well thought out tallying process.
9. **Ladies and gentlemen,** AI, digital and social media are probably three of the greatest innovations to have widely, rapidly and seamlessly influenced the globe. The speed, the near to perfect accuracy and volumes of AI produced outputs, make it the most enticing, persuasive and unavoidable technology to adopt in this era. However, there is a dark side in every valley of hope. How can we, together, address the potential risks of these tools that can ruin the gains made in building confidence in election administration?
10. Further, the media and social media is awash with mis/disinformation. I challenge you to help the nation entrench accountability in the democratic space by flagging out fake news and calling out careless utterances.
11. Trust cannot be bought. It is a collective responsibility, especially for the media due to its powerful influence. The Commission and media should ensure that at all times peace prevails in our country. Let despair, violence and hate speech have no space in our democracy.
12. As I said, today is about listening and discussing how we move forward together. Together, through strengthened partnerships, enhanced communication, and improved infrastructure, we aim to build on experiences of the past and deliver even more transparent and credible elections. Therefore, I will not take much of your time but rather look forward to hearing your invaluable suggestions during the plenary session.
13. Thank you once again for your indispensable partnership. We can only empower and strengthen the cordial relationship you have had with the Commission. We remain open to positive criticism, and we will not in any way infringe on the

role the media plays as a watchdog but expect cooperation and collaboration. Let us continue engaging constructively as we work towards a stronger democratic process in Kenya.

14. It is, therefore, my singular honour and privilege to declare this roundtable consultative meeting between the IEBC and the media officially opened.

15. May God Bless you, May God Bless Kenya.

**Erastus Edung Etheke, HSC
Chairperson IEBC**