

REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN IEBC DURING THE LAUNCH OF ELECTION REPORTING GUIDELINES FOR JOURNALISTS ON TUESDAY, 7TH MARCH 2017 AT INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL.

Mr.Samuel Itemere, PS Ministry Of ICT,

Mr.Francis Ole Kaparo, Chairman National Cohesion and Integration Commission,

Dr Haron Mwangi, CEO and Secretary Media Council of Kenya,

Mr.Francis Wangusi Director General Communication Authourity

Mr.Charles Kerich, Chairman MCK

Ladies and gentlemen.

The launch of media guidelines for covering the 2017 general elections is an important event because it is a demonstration of the level of preparedness of the media to report on elections.

By coming up with the rules of the game, we are essentially saying we are ready and we are going to do it differently.

The media is a key stakeholder in elections and must therefore be prepared for the general elections. How can the media perform its duty of informing the society if it does not understand and appreciate the electoral process?

The Electoral Management Body, IEBC, is happy to have been given a chance to make its contribution to the document for which i am privileged and honored to unveil today.

I want to thank the media council of Kenya, UNDP, the media and other professionals who contributed to the success of this new document.

It is evident that much effort went into making the 2017 poll media coverage as comprehensive and updated as much as possible.

I have had a quick look at the provisions and proposals on the content and formats, duties and responsibilities. They make strong foundations for fair and accurate reporting.

It is said that integrity is the foundation of ethical journalism. Integrity is the currency both the electoral commission and the media are expected to trade in.

The society expects us to be fair, accurate, accountable and transparent. We are given duties on one hand and responsibilities on the other. They are a package, not choices.

The IEBC will do what it takes to promote integrity. We wake up every day to work on systems and processes that improve the voter's experience and make elections credible and peaceful.

It is our hope that those who seek to tell our story will be fair, accurate and sensitive to the dynamics of the society.

I believe if we all adhered to the media guidelines presented to us, the need for rejoinders, rebuttals, rights of reply, apologies, libel and defamation litigations would be minimized, if not made unnecessary.

The commission will do its part to ensure there is no temptation for scandal and bad press.

The commission has stepped up the dissemination of information in a bid to enhance transparency and accountability.

We have weekly updates in addition to social media engagement. We are setting up a communication centre and revamping our website.

We want those who seek to tell our story to find it easily.

The media is increasingly shaping public opinion in Kenya. It therefore has a duty to provide election coverage that gives the voter sufficient, accurate and reliable information on all important electoral matters so as to make informed choices.

The politicians are entitled to have their say, and the voters are entitled to hear them but journalists have a responsibility to question and examine all that is said without appearing to be inclined on any side.

The media must unmask stereotyping, incitement and lies. Journalists must never allow themselves to be used to unfair profile candidates and parties.

They must never be induced or cajoled to depict anything outside the reality.

The media guidelines, if adhered to, will let the story be the story. It defines the ethical principles that must be adhered to by all.

Once again, i thank you all for the efforts to develop this tremendous resource.

I now take the opportunity to declare the media guidelines for the 2017 General Elections officially launched.

Wafula Chebukati

Chairman Independent Electoral and Independent Commission