

CLOSING REMARKS BY MR. AHMED ISSACK HASSAN
CHAIRPERSON OF THE INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL AND
BOUNDARIES COMMISSION BIENNIAL CONFERENCE 23RD –
24TH JUNE 2014 NAIROBI, KENYA AT INTERCONTINENTAL
NAIROBI

EMAIL: ahmedissack786@yahoo.com / ahmedissack786@gmail.com

Observe protocol

The Secretary General Dr. Kamalesh Sharma, Ladies and Gentlemen

The two days of deliberations and networking in this conference have indeed been stimulating and empowering. On behalf of the Kenyan voter and the electoral authority, IEBC, I want to thank you all for taking time to attend the commonwealth forum on elections. We feel proud and honored to host such an important global event.

We converged here yesterday with one overriding object, that is, to interrogate our electoral practices with a view of identifying the best practices for strengthening them. The candid sharing of experiences during the breakout sessions and the plenary reports has yielded invaluable knowledge and suggestions for election management. Our objectives have therefore been largely achieved.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Great minds have given great ideas. No single institution would have come up with the wealth of knowledge that has been shared here - even if they have done elections in the last 100 years. But what we need to ask ourselves now is whether these deliberations will inform our practices and process and translate into real benefits for people and democracy.

I did mention at the beginning of this conference that Kenya is proud to be a member of this network. As a newly established institution under the New Constitution we have a lot to learn from established democracies and institutions. It comes as consolation to us in Kenya that the difficulties we continue to face in executing our constitutional mandate are not unique to us, and more importantly that there are solutions to the challenges.

This forum would not have come at a better time for Kenya's EMB. We at IEBC have recently concluded our review of our performance in the 2013 general election. The election was huge and unprecedented- 6 elections one day. Most of you have probably not conducted such an election. The ideas we have gathered from this meeting will enrich our strategy for future elections. We also hope you have all picked an idea or two from us.

We note with concern the myriad challenges that various EMBs encounter and have to contend with. By nature, our merchandise is political and polarizing. But it must not be allowed to be so. We came here to learn from each other on how to make elections more free, fair and even friendly. We all have similar challenges and therefore the solutions are equally similar.

Implementation of Observers' reports, and necessary electoral reforms should be done in good time. This therefore calls for engagement of EMB's and their various key stakeholders.

Professionalizing the management of elections is critical in preparing the next generation for Electoral Operations and strengthening electoral institutions. Adequate training and retention of staff of the Electoral bodies is key in ensuring the smooth implementation of the mandate of individual EMBS. Continuous Career development networks have come out as being very necessary in the enhancement of election professionalism.

There is need for EMBS to address the decline of youth and other marginalized groups participation in elections and providing the necessary framework for their engagement.

The independence of these electoral bodies as of necessity must be enhanced. It is something that should neither be compromised nor denied.

Ladies and gentlemen a journey of a thousand miles starts with one step. We are not lost to the aim of this Network in advancing norms and good electoral practice among EMBS, with the view to promote integrity and credibility of elections across the Commonwealth. Let us all embrace these values and nurture them for the good of our people.

Finally, I wish to reiterate the commitment of the Kenyan EMB in implementing the aspirations of CEN. We will also remain a committed partner of the network.

Once again I cannot forget the tireless effort and display of teamwork by the secretariat and the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission in ensuring the success of this conference. We are more than grateful. Thank you for coming to Kenya even despite the insecurity concerns we have been facing. You are truly great friend.

We look forward to many other conference being held in Kenya because all is well here-Hakuna Matata.

GOD BLESS YOU AND THANK YOU