



INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL AND BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

SPEECH OF THE CHAIRPERSON I.E.B.C AT THE KARA BI-MONTHLY TALK SERIES FORUM MONDAY 29TH OCTOBER 2012 SAROVA PANAFRIC

I invite you to reflect with me the words of Dwight D. Eisenhower who once said that:

“The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionably integrity. Without it, no real success is possible, no matter whether it is on a section gang, a football field, in an army, or in an office.”

There is a great deal of lip service paid to the role of integrity in the leadership circles; however, integrity means different things to different people and varies based upon circumstances.

I was invited here to speak on *Leadership and Integrity: what role for citizens towards realization of the Constitutional provisions*. The framework on leadership and integrity **Ladies and Gentlemen** is laid out in **Chapter Six** of the Constitution to principally guide the process by which occupants of public offices are to be determined.

However at an individual level, integrity is more than ethics; it's more than going to a shop and purchasing it; it is all about the

character of the individual. Real integrity is doing the right thing, knowing that nobody's going to know whether you did it or not.

Mahatma Gandhi once said that;

“You must be the change you want to see in the world.”

The strength of a nation derives from the integrity of a home; it is those characteristics of an individual that are consistently considerate, compassionate, transparent, honest, and ethical. The characteristic of trust is closely associated with integrity. While the definition may seem vague, we characterize individuals with integrity as individuals that we can count on to do consistently what is “right” and what is expected of them.

Ladies and Gentlemen the issue of Leadership and integrity is pertinent when cast against the background of our recent electoral and constitutional history. The aftermath of the 2007 General Election serves as a painful reminder of what can go wrong when we compromise our integrity.

Friends, I was privileged to head the Interim Independent Electoral Commission (IIEC), the caretaker body that replaced the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK.) and now the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC). From the onset, we appreciated for a fact our main task was winning back the public confidence in the EMB as a competent and impartial umpire in electoral contests. We also appreciated restoration of faith would not be achieved merely because of new faces in the EMB. Rather,

we had to conduct business differently and be seen to be genuinely different in the public eye. It had to start with us appreciating that we have a role as individual citizens before appreciating the role as an organization.

THE ROLE OF THE CITIZENS

Cast against the road map to the General Election, I wish to further address the following areas with regard to the role of the citizen in exercise of integrity.

Voter Registration

Every qualified citizen has a right to be registered to vote; you have a duty to ensure that you exercise the right with utmost integrity. Previously cases of double registration have been reported and this contributed to what was witnessed in 2007/2008 post election violence.

Voter Education

As the KARA has a role to disseminate the right information to the public and to the neighbors, to the people you work with and even the articles you author. It is acknowledged overtime that you are a master of the words you don't say and a slave to the ones you do. You can in the same magnitude build this nation or destroy it through the information you choose to give through the voter education process.

Disputes resolutions

In the words of Carl Sandburgh;

“Anger is the most impotent of passions. It affects nothing it goes about and hurts the one who is possessed by it more than the one against whom it is directed.”

We all remember painfully the post poll violence of 2007; we have a duty ladies and gentlemen not only to wait until the disputes occur, but to address the red flags. Its starts with you, yes you. Man has never been an island to live alone. We need each other; we have a nation to build.

Voting

Voting is the most precious right of every citizen, and we have a moral obligation to ensure the integrity of our voting process.

It's your role and right to ensure that you are registered as a voter, and to ensure to get the right people for the Job (Article 73). The Leadership and Integrity Act 2012 has been enacted to provide less-ambiguous basis for assessing individuals' moral and ethical standing. It's your role to vet your leaders against the provisions of the Constitution and those of the Leadership and Integrity Act 2012. We know our leaders and we know what we want from them, we have seen what they have done, we know their capabilities and we understand them all so well.

Integrity in Campaign

Our electoral history points to a strong link between campaign fundraising and corruption. Unchecked access and use of money in electoral campaigns is dangerous as it perverts the electoral market by reducing competition to a mere auction of votes. Needless to say, the corrupt lack integrity. Such people must never be allowed to lead because leadership to them is primarily just another business front with service to the electorate a mere by-the-way!

I am therefore gratified to note that the Campaign Financing Bill is at an advanced stage of consideration. I have faith that if vigorously legislated and enforced, such a law has the potential to inject integrity in our campaigns and politics. I know it is not truism that all good men-and women- are necessarily poor men. But I also know too many good men and women are discouraged from politics by the highly monetary nature of our politics.

In conclusion ***ladies and gentlemen*** integrity is a prerequisite to personal success and for developing leadership skills. Individuals that have integrity build trust in their relations with others; they become valued as great leaders, friends, colleagues, mentors, and supervisors. They are respected and counted on to do what is right. They are able to balance respect and responsibility, and they are able to share their values with others. You should ask yourself where you stand to be counted.

At the corporate and National level, it takes individuals of integrity to develop a consensus around shared values. They must be able to discuss these values openly as well as live to the values they espouse.

The Commission remains committed to deliver free, fair and credible elections. We will not shy away from engaging the electorate on what constitutes good leadership. On this, it is imperative to note that personal integrity for candidate's features prominently in our voter education content.

Finally a story from India is told that:-

“In one of the Elections in India an aspirant was trounced by a vote and it is said that he did not challenge the winner. After doing some investigation he discovered that his wife and daughter did not vote as they were in the temple praying for him to win the elections” such is the integrity and credibility, where the one vote difference does not raise an eyebrow.

God Bless you and God bless Kenya