



INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL AND BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

**CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS AT THE LAUNCH OF THE OF THE
NATIONAL TALLYING CENTER IN NAIROBI 1ST MARCH 2013 AT
THE BOMAS OF KENYA**

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

Observe Protocol,

Allow me to invite you and reflect in the words of Anuj Somany who once said that:

“If the road is not patchy, rough and on a hilly terrain, then the journey is not often worth undertaking as all destinations are already enough crowded.”

Ladies and Gentlemen we have come this far, we are at the threshold of an epic general election that has drawn immense interest both locally and internationally. The long journey is finally drawing close, unless of course, we will have a run-off.

The tremendous excitement and high expectations it has elicited is understandable. The elections are being held under a new constitution which offers more elective positions - from three to six. It also ushers in devolved government through County governments.

The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission is committed to managing the voting process to ensure it's free, fair, credible and peaceful. We have the experience and passion to get it right.

Today **Ladies and Gentlemen** we officially unveil the National Tallying Centre here at the Bomas of Kenya. Although we have a tallying centre each at Constituency and County level, the National Tallying Centre is where all results will be converged. We have tallying rooms, ICT facilities, a press centre, a call centre and results display screens.

The National Tallying Centre is indeed a culmination and array of professional efforts in results aggregation and dissemination both from the Commissions and our partners and stakeholders. It is the embodiment of the painstaking planning and logistic that elections are made of.

I want to thank all those who contributed their time and resource towards the realization of this great facility.

I want to especially thank development partners IFES, UNDP and Ford Foundation for financial and technical Support.

Despite the challenges that come with such a massive national event, the Commission is adequately prepared. We are happy to report that all ballot papers have been printed and delivered. The ballot boxes and other materials have also been delivered as close as possible to the polling stations. We have accredited 2600 (international) observers 20,000 (domestic) Observers and 5000 media personnel (both local and international).

The polling officials have been trained and arrangements for robust security measures have been made with the security agents. We have set up hotlines for members of the public to engage and interact with the Commission before and during the election period. Members of the public can call on **0711035606 or 0711035616**.

Fellow Kenyans it will be recalled that we carried out mock elections in two constituencies last year and did a simulation at the 1450 County assembly wards last Sunday the 24th February, 2013. We have paid attention to every detail and thought through the process to identify possible hiccups and from what we learnt, we have been able to rework our strategies.

Although we have made efforts to increase the streams or service points at polling stations with high numbers, long queues may not be uncommon. But whatever the hitch, all those who registered and show up to vote will vote. There may be some delay but never some disenfranchisement. The polling stations will open at 6am and close at 5pm. However, those who will be in the queue at closing time will be allowed to vote.

From today we will give regular briefing from the National Tallying Centre. We will inform and update on the voting process. We will try as much as possible to meet the expectations of voters and candidates and address any concerns they may have.

In addition I would like to take this opportunity to clarify the issue of polling officials who were offered temporary jobs which were later cancelled. This was regrettably caused by unforeseen financial constrains which called for the review of the budgets.

I call upon all Kenyans who registered to come out and vote in large numbers. The value and meaning of an election is found in the casting of the vote. Our job is to give you the opportunity to cast your vote and Count it because it counts.

I urge all Kenyans to maintain peace throughout the Voting process. Candidates should avoid addressing crowds on the polling day, especially after casting their votes, as this may be construed as campaigns which come to an end 24 hours to polling. They should restrain their supporters and avoid paying their agents on polling day for there is a thin line between salary and bribery on such a day.

In conclusion ladies and gentlemen, I urge voters to cast their votes and proceed home to wait for results. We will not tolerate groups that mill around the polling stations discussing politics for such actions have the potential of igniting conflicts among people with opposing views. Political party agents will be inside the polling station to keep vigil and ensure that the process is transparent.

I thank all those organizations and individuals who have come out to support our voter education efforts. We have used 92 radio stations this time round for Voter education and media campaigns in over 7 television Stations, church organizations, civil society groups, schools and colleges who run various initiatives for peaceful elections. Together we will realize great elections. Elections are competitions not conflicts. We should enjoy and not agonize over them.

Thank you.