



INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL AND BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

CHAIPERSON'S TALKING NOTES DURING OFFICIAL HANDOVER OF THE VOTER EDUCATION MATERIALS BY THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR TO KENYA, H.E MARGIT HELLWING-BOETTE

(16TH JANUARY 2013)

Observe all Protocol....

“The ignorance of one voter in a democracy impairs the security of all.” – John F Kennedy

Background Information on GIZ

- GIZ was formally known as GTZ but the name changed in January 2011. It operates under the aegis of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
- GIZ has operated in Kenya since 1975 with priority focus on promoting local social-economic development , good governance and democracy and security stability
- GIZ is working closely with the Ministry of Justice, National Cohesion and Constitutional Affairs- IEBC parent ministry- especially under the Governance, Justice, Law and Order Sector (GJLOS).

Benefits of Voter Education/Voter Information

“Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity.” Martin Luther King jr

- Voter education is an important antidote against honest ignorance famously captured in Winston Churchill observation that “the best argument against democracy is a five minute conversation with the average voter,” or American writer Arthur Melvin Spender observation that “the great thing about democracy is that it gives every voter a chance to do something stupid.
- The non-formal public education meant to inform and empower voters to understand their rights and responsibilities in the electoral process is an important pillar of democracy.
 - Voter education has specific advantages including:-
 - It creates a well-informed citizen who is conscious of his/her rights in relation to the electoral process
 - It promotes citizens knowledge of the relationship between elections and good governance and their relevant responsibilities in creating and sustaining a democratic society
 - It helps fight voter apathy by encouraging voters’ active participation in the electoral process.
 - It provides information on the electoral process e.g. the positions available in an election, the attendant roles and responsibilities and qualifications
 - It provides information on ideal leadership qualities thereby providing basis for informed election choices

- It promotes peaceful pre and post-elections environment by encouraging healthy competition and tolerance of different opinions

Voter Education Challenges in the General Election

- Expanded elections (six different ballots): the challenge of comprehending the positions and their roles and the risk of fatigue to individual voters
- Explaining provisions for independent candidates, women, youth, Persons With Disability and marginalized groups needs to be clearly explained
- Voters need to be adequately informed of coalitions, running mates, party lists, independent candidates and other issues that were introduced under the Constitution
- Voters need to comprehend the various positions and to appreciate the link between the positions and their private lives in practical ways
- Education on proper ballot marking e.g. through simulations is essential to minimize spoiled ballots
- Technology involvement in elections e.g. poll books, e-tallying of results must be adequately explained to win requisite public faith and confidence in emerging trends

IEBC Proposals for Voter Education for General Elections

IEBC will use several forums including but not limited to:

- Media: Radio, TV and newspapers
- Social media
- Stakeholders forums including CAW-based gatherings
- SMS platform
- IEC materials including posters, stickers and booklets

Specific Information on the Handover Material

Handbook on Elective Positions

- It summarises elective positions provided for under the Constitution in both the national and county governments, relevant(dis)qualifications, leadership requirements, nomination processes, election dispute resolutions and the role of citizens in elections

Poster:

Ni Kugombea si Kugombana (Its Contest not Conflict) pitches for peaceful elections and political tolerance

Challenges in Voter Education

- Inadequate resources: voter education is generally an expensive venture
- Limited time to conduct voter education
- Entrenched misconceptions/misinformation
- Expanded elections

Thank You....