

REMARKS BY DR. FRED MATIANG'I, EGH, CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND CO-ORDINATION OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE ROADMAP TOWARDS PEACEFULL 2022 GENERAL ELECTIONS ON 10TH DECEMBER 2020 AT THE KENYA SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT NAIROBI

- **The Chairman of the National Cohesion and Integration Commission, Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia**
- **NCIC Commissioners**
- **Chairpersons of Commissions and Independent Offices**
- **Government Officials**
- **Development Partners**
- **All Stakeholders**
- **Distinguished guests**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

Good afternoon!

I am pleased to join you today on this important occasion that marks the launch of the Roadmap Towards the 2022 General Elections, not to mention the timeliness of the initiative.

Background

1. From the very onset, I wish to lay great emphasis on the fact that **Elections make a fundamental contribution to democratic governance.** It is through elections that the people are accorded

the opportunity to elect their leaders. In view of this therefore, the citizenry must be accorded an enabling and conducive environment within which to exercise their political rights.

2. In the recent times we have experienced political violence and chaos proportions during elections, both within the region and beyond.
3. On the Kenyan scene, general elections held since Kenya's transition from a single to a multi-party state in 1991 have been characterized by cycles of violence that often times take an ethnic dimension that regrettably result in loss of lives, injuries, displacements, destruction of property and infrastructure, among others.

Ladies and Gentlemen

4. **Research reveals that some roadblocks to cohesion include:**
 - **Lack of Trust:** The 2013 Social Cohesion Index established that the levels of trust between Kenyan communities are very low. In addition, the trust between state and society is largely in question.
 - **Sub-Culture of Violence:** It has been proven that politicians use violence to demonstrate their political might; ethnic groups

to express their grievances; school children to complain about unsatisfactory conditions; and even religious leaders to express their dissatisfaction. In the electoral process, citizens are even manipulated to participate in violence through persuasion, payment and benefits.

- **Divisive and Selfish Politics:** Regrettably, most leaders in Kenya today have abdicated their cardinal role of pursuing overall national interests in preference to the acquisition of political power and personal wealth. Unashamedly, some leaders are said to manipulate vulnerable populations to engage in violence by paying handouts, appealing to emotional persuasion, and providing drugs and alcohol among other things in total disregard of the resultant consequences.
- **Ethnic Polarization:** In Kenya today political support is mobilized along ethnic lines. The resultant polarization is often manifested through heightened hate speech and ethnic incitement that includes fake news and misinformation. These negative messages may be sent out by political leaders, musicians, political analysts, journalists or bloggers among others.
- **Untimely and Inadequate Response to Conflict:** Admittedly, there has been inaccurate predictions and inadequate linking of operational responses to conflict warnings. There is a critical

need for stakeholders to ensure that real-time information is collected and transmitted for real-time action to ensue.

- **Structural Inequalities:** Of great significance are the prevailing structural inequalities in the distribution of both economic and political resources. The resulting violence is only a symptom of broader failures to address grievances within a society.

Ladies and Gentlemen

5. Some suggested strategies for implementation in an effort to address these challenges:

- **Conflict Prevention and Disruption:** Intensive and targeted forms of prevention are needed if the risks of violence are to be reduced. This Strategy will ensure the collection and transmission of conflict early warning information in real time to facilitate timely and adequate rapid response.
- **Citizens' Empowerment:** The whole society including women, youths, men, and children will be adequately empowered to play their optimal role as active agents of peace. Efforts will be made to improve the capacity of communities to resist manipulation and shun perpetration of violence.
- **Trust Building:** Trust within a society, as well as between the society and state is a critical element in any democracy.

Promotion of within communities and between communities and state agencies remains critical.

- **Long-Term Transformation:** Nelson Mandela remarked, “..if people can learn how to hate they can be taught how to love”. We urgently need to change mindsets by infusing cohesive values into the socialization process for attitude and behavior change.
- **Servant Leadership:** Leaders should operate from a desire to better serve others and not to attain more power. It is fitting for leaders not only to engage in behavior that put citizens first, but also to empower and encourage them to be the best version of themselves, for a better Kenya. We need to encourage conversations that will sensitize leaders on patriotic leadership in a bid to encourage them to adopt a leadership style that transcends self-interest.
- **Hate Speech Management:** The freedom of speech in Kenya is limited by speech that incites ethnic hatred. I note with appreciation that the Commission aims at monitoring and regulation of hate speech, ethnic incitement, fake news and misinformation that accentuate the prevailing negative cultural and ethnic differences.

Ladies and Gentlemen

- 6. As mentioned above, electoral violence has devastating effects on the national economy and social relations between communities.** Analyses show that our economy slumps in the year after an election and takes more than two years to recover. For instance, our GDP significantly plummeted from 7.1% during the last half of 2007 to 1.7% in January 2008 following the Post-Elections Violence. Notably, ethnic polarization and intolerance also deepen before and after elections. This historical pattern has raised public anxiety that violence could erupt again before, during or after the 2022 general elections.

In policy circles, concerns about electoral violence have informed a flurry of activities to prevent escalation of tensions, institutional preparedness to effectively and efficiently manage the elections, and measures to respond to violent conflicts should they arise.

- 7. Indeed, the Roadmap whose launch we are witnessing today is a true demonstration of this commitment to ensure that the 2020 general elections are free, fair, transparent and peaceful.**

8. It is my hope that the authors of this Roadmap have learnt lessons from the great achievements made by the UWIANO Platform for Peace that facilitated the delivery of a Peaceful 2010 Constitutional Referendum and Peaceful Elections in 2013 and 2017.

9. **In conclusion, I urge all stakeholders** including the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP), the National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management (NSC), National Police Service (NPS), National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR), Media Council of Kenya, Private Sector, Civil Society, Development Partners, Inter-Faith sector, Women and Youth **to work together to not only deliver a peaceful electoral process, but ensure security, safety, peace and development of our country.**

10. The COVID-19 Pandemic has already sent shockwaves in the global economy. Evidently, our Country's has equally felt these shockwaves.

11. We cannot therefore sit back and fold our arms to let electoral violence consume us. The National Government will work closely with County Governments and all other stakeholders to ensure that the period before, during and after the 2022 general elections is stable and peaceful. I expect the Lead Implementers of this Roadmap to submit progress reports on the implementation status of this Roadmap to my Office on quarterly basis, with regular Briefs from time to time.

12. I urge Kenyans to exercise a culture of tolerance and diversity. We are never going to agree all the time. Our opinions are always going to be different but we should learn to welcome all debates and express our diversity. It is no excuse to insult one another in order to spark problems.

13. I urge politicians, religious leaders, civil society organisations and the media to avoid inciting and insulting others.

14. As we approach Christmas I encourage all Kenyans to participate in and promote national unity, social justice, cohesion and sustainable development in their communities for the benefit of present and future generations.

15. With the raging BBI debate there is heightened political temperature in the country and I appeal to leaders to desist from utterances that provoke hate, ethnic division and other unlawful behaviour

Thank You and God Bless Kenya.

**FRED MATIANG'I, PHD, EGH
CABINET SECRETARY**