



## **STATEMENT DELIVERED BY MEC CHAIRPERSON, JUSTICE DR JANE**

### **ANSAH SC DURING A PRESS CONFERENCE HELD 5<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER**

### **2018 AT THE CENTRAL OFFICE OF INFORMATION, LILONGWE**

#### **Salutations**

- My Fellow Commissioners
- MEC Chief Elections Officer, Mr Sam Alfandika
- Management and members of staff from MEC
- Members of the Press
- Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning

I take great pleasure to welcome you to the press conference we have organised today to give an update regarding the progress of the voter registration for 2019 Tripartite Elections. MEC recognises the importance of the media in relaying the crucial information to the public. That is why we have made it a point to meet with the press as often as we can. The press conference also offers a platform for MEC

to address, clarify issues or clear misunderstandings surrounding the preparation for Tripartite Elections.

As a matter of background, the Malawi Electoral Commission started voter registration on June 26, 2018 and will run up to November 9, 2018. The exercise is being conducted in eight phases which are having a break for transition. So far the Commission has done 6 phases. We are now going into phase seven which commences on Monday, October 8, 2018 and runs up to October 21, 2018. This phase will cover the following councils:

- Chitipa
- Karonga,
- Rumphu,
- Machinga and
- Chiradzulu.

All the preparations for this phase have been finalised. The staff have been trained and materials deployed. The Commission has already been to the areas to conduct public mobilisation.

### **Registration figures for phase 6**

Phase six covered the following councils:

- Mangochi District,

- Mangochi Town,
- Zomba District,
- Zomba City and
- Nsanje District.

For this phase the Commission has registered **866,985** voters against a projection of **1,064,376** in all the councils representing **81** percent. A total of **521,381** voters are women while **345,603** voters are men. The total registered voters for this phase is also **92 percent** against the 2014 registered voters which were **944,586**.

### **Registration statistics for phase 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6**

For these six phases, the Commission has registered a total of **5,522,926** voters against a projection of 6,835,358. This translates into 81percent. Of the total registered voters, 3,055,813 are women representing 55 percent and **2,466,605** are men representing **45** percent. The total for six phases is also 91 percent of those that registered in 2014 which were 6,038,527 voters.

Of all the total registered voters for the six phases, the number of youths, aged less than 35 years, registered is 3,134,651 representing 57 percent. Of the total sum for registered youths, 1,711,945 females representing 55 percent and 1,422,706 are males translating into 45 percent.

The breakdown of total registered voters for each council is as follows:

| Voter registration statistics |                           |                        |                            |         |                  |                       |                    |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|---------|------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| District                      | 2014 registration figures | 2018 projected figures | Number of registrants 2018 |         |                  | % to 2014 projections | % 2018 projections |
|                               |                           |                        | Female                     | Male    | Total            |                       |                    |
| Kasungu                       | 375,447                   | 438,584                | 167,267                    | 158,034 | <b>325,301</b>   | 87                    | <b>74</b>          |
| Salima                        | 183,874                   | 204,834                | 96,483                     | 73,944  | <b>170,427</b>   | 93                    | <b>83</b>          |
| Dedza                         | 333,082                   | 363,654                | 174,385                    | 128,238 | <b>302,623</b>   | 91                    | <b>83</b>          |
| Dowa                          | 334,014                   | 395,141                | 172,546                    | 152,009 | <b>325,062</b>   | 97                    | <b>82</b>          |
| Nkhotakota                    | 177,988                   | 201,889                | 94,652                     | 83,954  | <b>178,606</b>   | 100                   | <b>88</b>          |
| Mchinji                       | 261,029                   | 300,705                | 126,712                    | 114,778 | <b>241,490</b>   | 93                    | <b>80</b>          |
| Ntchisi                       | 131,536                   | 150,346                | 69,015                     | 60,965  | <b>129,980</b>   | 99                    | <b>86</b>          |
| Lilongwe                      | 1,080,439                 | 1,249,339              | 522,965                    | 490,449 | <b>1,013,414</b> | 94                    | <b>81</b>          |
| Ntcheu                        | 264,983                   | 294,769                | 129,764                    | 98,815  | <b>228,579</b>   | 86                    | <b>78</b>          |
| Blantyre                      | 598,162                   | 686,206                | 257,154                    | 241,845 | <b>498,999</b>   | 83                    | <b>73</b>          |
| Mwanza                        | 54,673                    | 58,068                 | 27,682                     | 20,643  | <b>48,325</b>    | 88                    | <b>83</b>          |
| Chikwawa                      | 244,862                   | 275,639                | 141,443                    | 117,525 | <b>258,968</b>   | 106                   | <b>94</b>          |
| Balaka,                       | 186,678                   | 212,478                | 93,595                     | 62,159  | <b>155,754</b>   | 83                    | <b>73</b>          |
| Neno,                         | 62,096                    | 74,888                 | 31,795                     | 24,203  | <b>55,998</b>    | 90                    | <b>75</b>          |

|              |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |     |            |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----|------------|
| Thyolo,      | 316,274          | 339,331          | 163,104          | 110,531          | <b>273,635</b>   | 87  | <b>81</b>  |
| Phalombe     | 179,979          | 199,579          | 98,435           | 69,178           | <b>167,613</b>   | 93  | <b>84</b>  |
| Mulanje.     | 308,825          | 325,532          | 167,435          | 113,732          | <b>281,167</b>   | 91  | <b>86</b>  |
| Mangochi     | 447,703          | 515,758          | 249,193          | 152,970          | <b>402,163</b>   | 90  | <b>78</b>  |
| Zomba        | 370,247          | 408,749          | 187,521          | 131,772          | <b>319,294</b>   | 86  | <b>78</b>  |
| Nsanje       | 126,636          | 139,869          | 84,667           | 60,861           | <b>145,528</b>   | 115 | <b>104</b> |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>6,038,527</b> | <b>6,835,358</b> | <b>3,055,813</b> | <b>2,466,605</b> | <b>5,522,926</b> | 91  | <b>81</b>  |

From the totals we have so far, Nsanje is the only district that has recorded above the 2018 projection. The district has registered 145,528 voters which is 104 percent of the 2018 projection and 115 percent against the 2014 total registered voters for the district. Second on the ladder is Chikhwawa which registered 94 percent of the 2018 projection and 106 percent against 2014 figures.

These are preliminary statistics and there will be variations with the final figures after removing duplicates and effecting transfers. Therefore, we urge stakeholders to exercise caution when using the figures and always check with the Commission.

### **Challenges of violence during phase 6**

- **Stoning of MEC Community Cinema and Dialogue vehicle and loudhailer vehicle:**

On 20<sup>th</sup> September 2018, a vehicle that was engaged to conduct community cinema and dialogue was attacked by unknown criminals who smashed its rear windscreen with a half brick. This incident happened at Bala 2 Village in Sub Traditional Authority Nkaputa in Zomba Chingale Constituency. No one was injured in the attack, except for the damage to the vehicle

On 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2018 a loudhailer van that was mobilising people around Zomba Lisanjala Constituency was also stoned but there was no damage to the vehicle.

All these incidents were reported to the Police who provided an escort to these civic and voter education teams up to the end of the voter registration exercise in Zomba.

MEC wishes to express its utter disappointment over this conduct. It has the potential of imparting fear among the voter education staff who at times have to work at odd hours just to ensure that they catch on people whom they could not reach out during the day. We therefore call upon the community and their leaders to join the Commission in condemning these barbaric acts.

- **Accident involving road show promoters:** One of the road show promoters, Dzukani Direct Marketing which was led by Mr Andrew Kachale was engaged to sensitise the public in Mangochi. On Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2018 the Activation Truck that they were using was involved in a road accident as they were coming from Makanjira to Mangochi boma. Upon reaching Malindi trading centre the driver was trying to avoid a cyclist and the truck lost control and swayed into drainage line. As a result of this, three people who were in the Activation Truck fell down and got injured. Two sustained minor injuries and the other one who was operating the music equipment sustained a deep cut on his head and scratches on his right arm. They were all treated as outpatients at Mangochi District Hospital on the same day.
- **Shortage of transport:** The Commission continues to face transport challenges. For phase six MEC has hired 36 buses at a cost of K74 million for transition of registration staff to phase 7 councils.

### **Positive impact of mosquito net distribution**

The Commission has noted that the free mosquito net distribution in Zomba on September 25, 2018 had a positive impact on voter registration. The number of people registering almost doubled because people were required to have a national ID in order to receive a mosquito net. This forced many to register with the NRB

and also the MEC as voters. This is enlightening the debate on why some people choose not to register and that some were registering in the past because they wanted to get the voter certificate to benefit from social services like free farm inputs. Some sample statistics are as follows:

| Centre name                       | Daily voter registration statistics |                         |                            |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
|                                   | Day before                          | Day of net distribution | Day after net distribution |
| Chiphoola School, Zomba Likangala | 121                                 | 446                     | 68                         |
| Mikundi School, Zomba Likangala   | 135                                 | 686                     | 168                        |
| Nanjiwa school, Zomba ntonya      | 149                                 | 446                     | 72                         |
| Sunuz school, Zomba Thondwe       | 103                                 | 230                     | 58                         |
| St Martin, Zomba ntonya           | 241                                 | 496                     | 117                        |
| Nanjiri School, Zomba Ntonya      | 66                                  | 154                     | 63                         |
| Dindi School, Zomba Changalume    | 74                                  | 178                     | 24                         |



|                                |     |     |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Chikala School, Zomba Ntonya   | 217 | 471 | 227 |
| Misangu School, Zomba Nsondole | 95  | 413 | 143 |
| Havala School, Zomba Chisi     | 26  | 160 | 74  |

### **Collection of national IDs by registrants from DC offices**

As we continue with the voter registration exercise, I wish to send a reminder to all the people in the North about collection of national IDs. All those who registered with the National Registration Bureau (NRB) should know that their IDs are out and they should go and collect them from the District Commissioners' offices. Suffice to say that even without the national ID, as long as you are registered with the NRB, you will be assisted to register. However, using the national ID makes the registration process simple, fast and straight forward. However, in the absence of the national ID or the proof of registration with NRB the registration staff will need to search for your details in the computer either using your finger print or your name details. This can take more than a minute. That is why the Commission is encouraging everyone to collect their national ID if they registered.

### **Recording of national ID numbers**

Complaints have been raised in several meetings organised by the Commission regarding recording of national ID numbers by unknown people for various purposes. These exercises have created fear amongst some people that the information can be used to produce fake voter certificates that can be used to vote in place of the rightful holders. I wish to assure the Malawi nation that this is impossible. It is not possible to create a voter certificate and vote on behalf of another person. All people should know that in the voters' register there will be faces of the ID holders which were taken during national registration. During polling, monitors will have a copy of their own voters' register and will be checking if the person voting is the one in the register, corresponding to the photograph in the register.

People should also know that the voters' register will not use the national ID numbers, therefore, they are inconsequential beyond registration.

The Commission appreciates that the national ID is being used for various purposes. The Commission cannot stop that but we urge for orderliness amongst those that wish to conduct activities linked to the national ID, especially during the election period to avoid raising unnecessary suspicions.

### **Launch in the Northern Region**

In phase 7, voter registration is moving to the northern region for the first time. So the Commission has planned for launch meetings to

explain to all stakeholders on how it has planned for the voter registration exercise and roles are expected from them. Therefore, the Commission is inviting all political parties, aspiring candidates, civil society members, faith leaders, traditional leaders to the launch meetings which will be held at council chambers from 8AM in Chitipa, Rumphi and Karonga councils on Sunday, 7 October, 2018.

### **A call for responsible reporting**

The Commission is appealing to the Media and all electoral stakeholders to desist from negative reporting of the voter registration process. Any negative reporting on this very important exercise will have a negative impact on the turn-out of eligible voters to register. We should therefore work together to encourage all eligible voters to come out in their large numbers and register to ensure the success of the entire electoral process.

With these few remarks allow me to bring my report to an end

May God bless our country and may He bless everyone of us

**END**