



**SPEECH BY MEC CHAIRPERSON, JUSTICE DR JANE ANSAH SC JA
DURING NECOF MEETING ON OCTOBER 31, 2018**

GOLDEN PEACOCK HOTEL

LILONGWE

SALUTATIONS

- My fellow Commissioners of the Malawi Electoral Commission
- The Chief Elections Officer, Mr Sammy Alfandika and all members of staff from MEC
- All Senior Government Officials, and representatives of various Ministries, Government Departments and Agencies
- The Chief Director of the National Registration Bureau, Mr Harry Kanjewe
- UN Women Country Representative, Ms Clara Anyangwe and representatives of all Development Partners
- Advisor to the President on Women Affairs, Hon Clara Makungwa
- Representatives of the Army Commander, and the Inspector General of the Malawi Police Service
- Secretaries General, Directors of Elections, and leaders of various political parties
- The Chairperson for Parliamentary Women Caucus, Hon Dr. Jessie Kabwila, MP
- Paramount Chiefs, Senior Chiefs, Traditional Authorities and all traditional leaders present here

- Members of the Clergy and leaders of religious and faith-based organisations
- The Chairperson of MESN, Mr Steve Duwa
- Chairperson of the NGO Gender Coordination Network, and representatives of various civil society organizations and International NGOs
- Members from the Academia
- Members of the Press
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Greetings and welcome to you all.

I take great pleasure to welcome you to the NECOF meeting today which has been convened for the Commission to give an update regarding the progress of the voter registration for 2019 Tripartite Elections.

A number of events have taken place since we last met on August 31, 2018 and it is my intention this morning to give you an update on each one of them so that you are kept abreast.

Training of MPLCs

The Commission with support from UNDP has developed and printed an MPLC Conflict Management Manual and MPLC Operational Guidelines. The Commission has since embarked on training of all members of the MPLCs across the country. We are holding the meeting in clusters of an average of three councils. So far we have done in the most councils and we are remaining with Likoma, Nkhata Bay, Ntcheu, Dedza, Lilongwe, Mchinji, Chikhwawa, Nsanje, Kasungu, Ntchisi, Dowa, Nkhotakota and Salima. Participation is for party members at council level, not regional or national level. I should mention here that it is the responsibility of political parties to inform the District Commissioner or Chief Executive Officer regarding change of membership and your representation in the MPLC.

The Commission is grateful to all Development Partners that are contributing to the basket fund because their immeasurable support has made this possible.

Registration of voters up to phase 7

When we met on August 30, 2018 we were in phase four. We have moved and now voter registration is in the last phase covering NKhata Bay, Likoma, Mzuzu City and Mzimba.

For the past seven phases, the Commission has registered a total of 6,264,183 voters against a projection of 7,745,095. This translates into 81 percent. Of the total registered voters, 3,487,230 are women representing 56 percent and 2,776,444 are men representing 44 percent. The total for the seven phases is also 91 percent of those that registered in 2014 which were 6,857,189 voters.

Of all the total registered voters for the seven phases, the number of youths, aged less than 35 years, registered is 3,423,623 representing 54 percent. Of the total sum for registered youths, 1,943,820 females representing 57 percent and 1,479,803 are males translating into 43 percent.

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.

The projection for phase 8 is 766,245. This means we may not attain the projection of 8,527,100 for the entire exercise considering that for the 7 phases, we have registered 6, 264, 183 representing 91% of the 2014 registered voters and 81% of the national projected figures. The total registered voters for 2014 was 7,532,238 voters.

Outstanding six centres in Thyolo

By the time we were releasing the voter registration statistics for phase 5, there were six centres that were outstanding.

Five of the centres were uploaded during end of Phase 6 without any problems.

As for the last centre, all the registrants were captured using a wrong centre code. They therefore added to the count of another centre. The centre code was corrected and all these registered voters are now in their correct centre and the count of the other centre has come down. These two centres are Mangunda Court whose count has since come down and Ntawa School.

Figures for these centres have since been added to the statistics for Thyolo and the figures for the centres are as follows:

- Methiwa school 1,469
- Namiyanga School 1,184

- Ntawa School 1,541
- Mpeni School 864
- Milole School 1,210
- Sukamayere School 766
- Magunda Court 1,358

With the addition of these centres, the total for Thyolo comes up to 279,128 from 273,635 which was previously announced. All stakeholders are free to crosscheck these statistics with what was collected by their monitors.

Challenges faced during voter registration

The Commission faced transport challenges for ferrying registration staff. We were forced to hire buses. So far the Commission has spent K157.7 million as hiring costs for 113 (60-65-seater buses).

The Commission had requested for a maximum of 44 (60-65-seater buses) to be used for the exercise but we were only given 39 (30 - seater minibuses).

Missing BRK kit in Mwanza

The Malawi Electoral Commission would like to explain to the Nation, circumstances regarding the missing and recovery of a biometric registration kit (BRK) number 1962.

It is important to note that this particular kit is a Biometric Registration Kit (BRK) and not a Biometric Voter Registration Kit (BVRK). This Kit was being used to register citizens by the National Registration Bureau under the National Registration Act. As you are aware, the Commission has been conducting the voter registration process concurrently with the registration of citizens.

The total number of kits we have for the registration exercise is 1,499 and those in actual use are 1,445 kits while 54 are on reserve.

Stakeholders should take note that normally MEC transports the kits in locked vans and also in an open truck provided by the government because the locked vans are not enough. As is custom from time immemorial, government provides vehicles for election logistics.

While MEC staff were busy following up on the kit, the Commission received a report on 29th September 2018 from Vale Logistics that a kit similar to the ones the Commission was using for Voter Registration had been found in Mozambique on one of their coal trains.

MEC picked up the kit from Vale Logistics and confirmed that it was one of the kits used for national registration purposes. The matter was later reported to the Police and NRB. Our IT expert will explain in details what happened after the kit was recovered.

Vandalised kit in Mzuzu

Another kit, number 1241 has been discovered vandalised in Mzuzu during transition to phase 8. This was at the Nerve Centre which is located at Katoto Secondary School.

The kit was used at Chibungumire School in Mahowe Ward, Chitipa South Constituency for voter registration in Phase 7. At the end of the exercise, the voter registration data was successfully uploaded into our mobile servers in Chitipa.

During deployment for phase 8, one team mistakenly picked kit no. 1421 instead of kit no. 1241. Upon reaching their centre at Chiputula School on the night of 23rd October 2018, they discovered that they had picked a wrong kit.

When they reported, the Team Leader advised them to bring it back. On the morning of 24 October 2018, they handed over kit 1421 and were issued with their correct kit no. 1241. When they inspected kit no. 1241 it was discovered that there was no laptop, power bank and the harness cable was damaged.

The matter was reported to Police for investigation.

Stakeholders may wish to note that the Police are still investigating both incidents and we will provide a full report once these investigations are concluded.

Concluding remarks

With these few remarks allow me to once again assure everyone of the highest commitment of the Commission to conduct credible elections in Malawi.

May God bless our country and Bless every one of us.