

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi – 110001

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PRESS NOTE

KENYAN DELEGATION FROM JUDICIARY COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS VISIT TO ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

A 12-member delegation from the Judiciary Committee on Elections (JCE) in Kenya, led by Hon. Justice Paul Kihara Kariuki, President of the Court of Appeal in Kenya and comprising Hon. Justice David Majanja, Vice-Chairman, JCE; Hon. Justice Smokin Wanjala, Judge, Supreme Court of Kenya and Hon. Justice Richard Mwongo, Principal Judge, High Court of Kenya and other officials of the JCE visited the Election Commission of India today. The High Commissioner of Kenya to India, H.E. Mrs. Florence Imisa Weche accompanied the delegation. The main focus of the visit was to learn about India's election dispute resolution mechanisms including mode of operation, legislative and administrative frame-works, in preparation for August 2017 General Elections in Kenya. The delegation met the Chief Election Commissioner, Dr. Nasim Zaidi and Election Commissioners, Mr. A. K. Joti and Mr. O. P. Rawat.



Chief Election Commissioner of India, Dr. Nasim Zaidi, in his welcome address, referred to the age-old and strong relationship between India and Africa, particularly in view of the bridges made by Mahatma Gandhi during his sojourn in

Africa. He also spoke about the close cooperation between the Election Commissions of India (ECI) and the Independent Election and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) of Kenya. He briefed the Kenyan delegation about the Constitutional provisions and the strong support provided by the judiciary in India to ECI in electoral management. He expressed ECI's desire for further strengthening of the cooperation with IEBC through continued exchange of experiences and skills.

Election Commissioner, Mr. A. K. Joti, in his welcome remarks, talked about the close relations between India and Kenya. He mentioned that dispute resolution is an important part of our electoral management in which judiciary is an active participant. He briefed the visiting delegation about the innovations and initiatives introduced by the ECI in managing the Indian Elections including the evolution of our voting system from paper ballot cast manually in 1950s to the Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) being used in India for the last more than thirty years and the introduction of Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT). He emphasized the role of Information Technology in elections and stated that EVMs had been successfully used during the last several decades and their reliability, authenticity and stability had been proven beyond doubt.

Election Commissioner, Mr. O. P. Rawat, in his welcome remarks, talked about the differences and similarities between the electoral systems in India and Kenya. Mr. Rawat commended the efforts made by the Kenyan side and lauded their success in curbing electoral violence in Kenyan elections, due to better administrative and security arrangements made by them, measures which the ECI had always implemented to keep Indian elections free of violence and strife. He also mentioned that as per Article 329 of the Constitution, the courts in India cannot interfere in the election process and all dispute resolution during the elections rests with the ECI.



In his welcome remarks, Mr Umesh Sinha, Deputy Election Commissioner conveyed warm felicitations to the JCE delegation and stated that ECI and IEBC enjoy good bilateral interaction and senior officials from both sides have exchanged visits regularly in the past. He referred to the recent visit of Mr. Ahmed Issack Hassan, former Chairman, IEBC and Advisor to Cambridge Conference on Electoral Democracy in the Commonwealth as Visiting Faculty for the training course on ‘Voter Education’ organised by IIEDEM, ECI for election officials from South Asian countries from 19-23 June 2017. Later he made a power-point presentation to the Kenyan Delegation about the structure, role and work of ECI in managing the largest election exercise in the world.

Mr. S. K. Mendiratta, Legal Advisor briefed the Kenyan delegation about the legal framework in place for dispute resolution mechanisms in India. This was followed by a Question and Answer session wherein queries from JCE delegates relating to gender equality, appointment of CEC/EC, voter turnout, role of media etc. were answered. The Kenyan delegates were overall impressed by the success achieved by ECI in conducting free, fair and credible elections consistently for the past so many decades and conveyed their thanks and appreciation to the Commission for the time and efforts made to provide an exhaustive briefing for their benefit.

(Dhirendra Ojha)
Director