



REMARKS BY THE COMMISSION SECRETARY/CEO DR. SKITTER W. OCHARO, HSC, DURING THE SIGNING OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE NATIONAL COHESION AND INTEGRATION COMMISSION AND MERCY CORPS AT THE COMMISSION'S BOARDROOM – BRITAM TOWERS ON 2nd FEBRUARY 2022

- **Mercy Corps Kenya Country Director - Yohannes Wolday;**
- **Chairman National Cohesion and Integration Commission, Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia;**
- **NCIC Commissioners;**
- **NCIC and Global Peace Foundation Staff;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

I am pleased to grace this important occasion of signing a Memorandum of Understanding between the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) and Mercy Corps (MC). Indeed, this MoU is the culmination of a consultative process that involved both the leadership and the technical teams of NCIC and Mercy Corps. I commend the teams for their commitment to deliver this MoU. On the same note, I thank most profoundly the leadership of Mercy Corps and NCIC for supporting this process.

The National Cohesion and Integration Commission is a statutory body established by the National Cohesion Integration Act, No 12 of 2008 (NCI Act, 2008). The object and purpose for which the Commission is established as espoused in the National Cohesion and Integration Act No.12 of 2008, is to facilitate and promote equality of opportunity, good relations, harmony and peaceful coexistence between persons

of different ethnic and racial communities of Kenya, and to advise the Government on all aspects thereof.

The Commission in its endeavour to deliver on its mandate has achieved a number of milestones:

1. Strengthened peace building, national values and cultural systems in institutions of learning
2. Influenced the Cohesion and Integration Agenda in Public Institutions
3. Enhanced inter and intra communal relations through dialogue and mediation processes
4. Promoted Compliance and Enforcement of Hate Speech Law
5. Strengthened Early Warning and Early Response Mechanisms for peaceful elections
6. Increased generation of knowledge on cohesion issues through research

Despite the aforementioned achievements, the Commission has encountered several challenges which including: Budgetary constraints; Limited understanding of the Commission's mandate by the Kenyan public; Limited resources to ensure sustainability of community social contracts and peace agreements; Multiplicity of drivers of conflict and violence; the Statutory nature of the Commission; and the Slow judicial process.

The signing of this MoU is of mutual benefit as it will enhance collaboration and partnership by building linkages and synergies of both institutions and complement in the realization of the respective mandates of the institutions.

This partnership is specifically key for the Commission as it implements its Elections *Bila Noma* Roadmap. It is key to note that the delivery of a peaceful electoral process cannot be achieved by one. Partnerships such as the one being formalized this morning will go a long way in assisting the country realize a peaceful electioneering period.

The MoU envisages the two institutions collaborating in the following three main areas:

- 1 Civic Education and Advocacy;
- 2 Reconciliation and Integration; and
- 3 Information sharing and awareness creation

The areas of cooperation are however not limited to these and I am certain should an area of mutual interest come up, the two institutions will be happy to take it up.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I am aware that as of 2021, Mercy Corps has presence in about 9 Counties in Kenya with 7 of these Counties being in ASAL areas. As you are aware the Commission is yet to decentralize its offices and the presence of partner institutions such as Mercy Corps in different areas of the Country can play a significant role in NCIC spreading its gospel of peaceful co-existence. Indeed, one of the broad strategic objectives of Mercy Corps is the promotion of peace and stability and this objective mirrors the main theme of the Elections *Bila Noma* Campaign.

This MoU therefore, opens a new area of strategic partnership between our two organizations. In view of this, the Commission will leverage on the strengths and comparative advantage of Mercy Corps to ensure that the envisaged areas of collaboration and partnership are explored and fully implemented. I look forward to a fruitful and long-term partnership.

Thank You and God Bless Kenya

SKITTER OCHARO, PhD, HSC
COMMISSION SECRETARY/CEO, NATIONAL COHESION AND INTEGRATION
COMMISSION