



PRESS RELEASE

Progress on Malawi Electoral Commission Audit Report Review

1. Background

On 24th August 2016, the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) sent on administrative leave some of its staff members to pave way for an independent investigative audit following allegations of mismanagement of the Commission's funds. An independent review panel was jointly appointed by the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development (MoFEPD) and MEC, to carry out a review of an audit exercise conducted in mid 2015 by the Central Internal Audit Unit (CIAU) of the MoFEPD. The panel presented its report on the findings emanating from the review exercise to both the MoFEPD and MEC in January 2016.

2. Key findings

In relation to the CIAU report, the report of the independent review panel has broadly confirmed the following managerial weaknesses and other concerns at MEC:

1. Violations of financial laws and regulations;
2. Inadequate responses to audit queries;
3. Manual processing of accounting transactions; and
4. Gaps in interpretation and understanding of Sections 6(1), 12(3), 13(1) and 13(2) of the Electoral Commission Act.

3. General recommendations

Based on the findings, the independent review panel has recommended that MEC should:

1. Conduct disciplinary proceedings against specified employees.
2. Put in place operational guidelines and policies;
3. Use Accounting Software Packages;
4. Conduct a forensic investigation; and

In the interim, the Commission has commenced the process of conducting disciplinary proceedings against some of its employees. The Commission will expedite the process of developing policies, procedures and guidelines to guide the Commissioners and Staff in their day to day work, and will orient Management and Commissioners on the approved policies, procedures and guidelines. MEC plans that this orientation on key financial legislation and associated policies and regulations should be an ongoing exercise. Moreover, MEC commits that measures to institute discipline and accountability in the use of public resources will be put in place without delay. In the long run, the Commission undertakes to assess its various sections and conduct a functional review exercise, in order to place staff in their rightful positions.

The Commission has also recalled the following members of staff; Mr. Harris Potani (Deputy Chief Elections Officer- Operations), Ms Chimwemwe Kamala (Procurement Officer) and Mr. Sydney Ndembe (Assistant Procurement Officer)

The MoFEPD commends MEC for the bold steps hitherto being taken to address the observed financial management weaknesses, in order to safeguard public trust in the utilization of public money by the Commission. The Ministry will continue to monitor the situation as required by law.

Signed this 13th day of February, 2017 at Lilongwe.



Justice Dr. Jane Ansah SC,
Chairperson, MEC



Dr. Ronald Mangani
Secretary to the Treasury