

Ambassador Godec Remarks for Launch of IPOA ECM Strategic Plan
Sarova Panafric Hotel
Monday, April 30, 2018

Macharia Njeru, Chairman of the Independent Policing Oversight Authority Board, other IPOA board members, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you to the Independent Policing Oversight Authority for inviting me here today for the launch of IPOA's Enterprise Content Management project and for allowing me to offer my sincere congratulations on this important achievement.

IPOA's mandate is to investigate allegations of death and serious injury at the hands of police. This responsibility was of vital importance during the recent elections; it is no less vital now, when Kenya is confronted daily by unexplained killings, police abuse and corruption.

Security services everywhere have a special responsibility to show maximum restraint in the use of force. They must resort to lethal force only when there is no other means available to protect life. Human rights abuses occur in all countries, including the United States. What is important is that the individual who perpetuated the crime and at times the superior who endorses excessive force face justice. No one is above the law. No one should be protecting an individual who has committed abuses like extrajudicial killings, just because that person wears a uniform. Everyone has the duty to uphold human rights and to let the rule of law prevail.

IPOA has existed only a few years, yet it has proven itself ready to investigate allegations against police for using excessive force and to bring such cases to court as appropriate. The people of Kenya now have the means of reporting such actions, knowing IPOA will investigate the reports effectively and

efficiently. Now citizens have the means to confront the killing of innocents by the state. Security forces personnel have the special responsibility to report human rights and law violations when they see it, even if it committed by a colleague or a superior.

Kenya is up to the challenge of doing this: being self-critical, looking at its own problems in order to see how to fix them. The very existence of IPOA is emblematic of the profound social change that Kenya is undergoing, emblematic of the values enshrined in its Constitution, and emblematic of the culture of accountability and integrity that Kenya is striving to adopt.

We all know that security is vital for every society's prosperity and quality of life. The bombing of the U.S. embassy here in Nairobi in 1998 killed and injured thousands of Kenyan citizens. Today Kenya's security continues to be challenged by Al-Shabab and its sympathizers, who are bent on perpetrating terrorism and violence.

We all know that the police play an integral role in providing personal security in Kenya. They accomplish that by being alert to criminal activity, by using their skills to track down perpetrators of crime, and by maintaining their integrity while doing their jobs.

An especially brave group of Kenya's police saved hundreds of lives in those first few terrifying hours of the horrifying attack at Westgate Mall here in Nairobi. That same unit responded to the attack in Garissa. We will always be thankful for their courage.

The reputation of such brave police officers should not be tarnished by the undisciplined behavior of others. IPOA exists as a safeguard against such behavior, working to preserve the honor earned by the many thousands of police

officers who faithfully serve the citizenry. We proudly support IPOA in this endeavor, as we know the Government of Kenya does as well.

The United States has been deeply engaged in developing accountability in the Kenyan police services, supporting the establishment of IPOA.

The United States has supported technical experts who have helped IPOA develop its operating procedures. We helped set up IPOA's investigations unit and trained its officers. Instructors from the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation have taught the skills of interviewing and interrogation to IPOA's investigators.

I am also proud that the United States financed the \$6.5 million Enterprise Content Management project –“IPOAccloud CONNECT”– that IPOA is launching today. I applaud the U.S. firm that designed and built it: the INFO Gains Division of Dominion Energy.

Our role does not end here. The United States will continue to support IPOA and the vital work it is doing to end impunity in Kenya and make the National Police Service even stronger than it already is.

Thank you again for including the United States on this important day and *Pongezi Kubwa* on the launch of this system.