**KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE DURING ELECTION**

The Ministry of East African Community, Labour and Social Protection has the mandate to coordinate child protection services and activities in the country. The ministry facilitates this mandate through the Department of Children’s Services. The Department need to ensure that there is coordination of services to children at all levels and in any situation.

The concept of child protection is outlined in many legal instruments both locally and internationally. Locally its stressed in the supreme law (Constitution) observing the human rights especially rights for children is paramount. Other legal instruments are the Children’s Act 2001, Bill of rights, Sexual offences Act 2006, labor laws and many children policies. Internationally it more emphasized in the UNCRC and the African Charter on the Rights of the Child.

Child Protection is the key role of the Department of Children Services. It has to protect children in every situation even in emergencies basing on the principle of “non-discrimination”. It is for this reason that it has developed election messages to protect them during the coming election. The messages have been developed to suit different groups of people in the society including the children. They are meant to prevent any harm to the children before, during and after election

The dissemination of the messages can be done through various ways such as word of mouth, publications, media or non-verbal methods and open forums such as Chief’s barazas. Awareness creation on Child protection need to be a continuous process in the community and at family level.

The messages are as outlined below:

**MESSAGES FOR CHILDREN**

* Children should be encouraged to participate in preaching peace in any forum or opportunity availed to them
* Know the names of your parents/guardians, contacts, where they work, live and the schools the go to.
* Avoid campaign forums, public drinking places and unsafe zones in their area of residence
* Children should not leave home without permission of their caregivers
* Report any form of abuse to their parents, authority or any person they trust.
* Protect one another and move in a group
* In case of separation from their parents, they should be encouraged to seek refuge in hospital, schools, churches, mosques or call Child Helpline 116 or Gender Based Violence line 1195
* Don’t take part in political violence

**MESSAGES TO PARENTS/CAREGIVERS**

* Always know the whereabouts of your children at all times
* In case there is sexual abuse report to authority and seek medical services within 72 hours
* When children are using public means they should be accompanied by their parents or an adult
* Avoid tribal political discussions before their children.
* In time of violence move to safety with your children
* Loss of children should be reported to the nearest police station, community elders, local administration, churches, mosques and schools.
* Parents should be aware of safe spaces in their hubs in case of violence within their reach
* Preach peace at all times
* Should not go with their children to political rallies.
* Don’t take part in political violence

**MESSAGES TO THE COMMUNITY**

* Create a violent free and child friendly environment
* Be sensitive to vulnerable groups (Children, elderly, people with special needs and breast feeding and pregnant mothers.
* Preach peace in the community
* Should avoid counter attacks and report any incidents of violence
* Identify places of safety in case of violence within their reach
* Set strategies on conflict resolutions

**MESSAGES TO POLITICAL LEADERS**

* Should not use children for campaigning
* Campaign peacefully
* Their campaigns should be issue based and not name calling
* Should avoid education institutions during campaign
* Uphold to children welfare and rights during and after elections.
* Political rallies should not be held near schools