

**STATEMENT BY STEPHEN MUTORO, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE CONSUMERS FEDERATION OF KENYA (COFEK) ON THE OCCASION OF THE CONSUMER DIALOGUE FORUM HELD VIRTUALLY ON MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2020 VIA WEBO DIRECTORY/FCC**

- Director General, Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority (EPRA)
- Cofek members
- Invited guests,
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of Cofek, I am delighted to welcome you all to our 31<sup>st</sup> Consumer Dialogue Forum. This is our first virtual CDF following the outbreak of the deadly Corona virus. That Corona cannot stop our engagement is a milestone that must be appreciated. To this end, allow me to thank EPRA management and particularly the Corporate Affairs directorate for making this event possible. Indeed, the success of this event will go a long way in confirming the high level competency of the Authority in engaging its primary and secondary stakeholders through information technology.

Fellow participants, Cofek is keen to see a continuous improvement in the regulation of Kenya's energy sector. In this endeavor, we continue to work closely with the EPRA in ensuring that both the market is well regulated and that consumers are sustainably protected.

The forum today is about the Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) regulations. LPG, also known as cooking gas, is important for many reasons – saving our forests from charcoal burners as well as being pro-health on account of reduced use of kerosene for cooking and lighting among poor households.

The LPG regulations are important in ensuring the stability in the market as well as consumer protection. They primarily ensure that consumers have sustainable and affordable access to safe and good quality cooking gas.

EPRA has prepared an excellent presentation on this. We recommend that you take time and go through the presentation before the meeting. We have also dedicated enough time for the plenary question and answer session.

Our technical partners in South Africa, Webo directory, have developed an integrated platform using the FCC in which you will be at liberty to use the chatbox so as to let us know the issues

that mean dear to you as an LPG stakeholder. Among other features, we are happy that we have taken time to upload a questionnaire that will help us to go beyond the event – straight into the process of understanding your needs as a consumer and or any other LPG stakeholder. Please take 5 minutes to fill it – after the evaluation link goes live after the meeting.

By way of highlights on the LPG regulations, definition of the brand owners and their roles and responsibilities is key. That the new regulations allows for the minimal gas cylinder exchange pool. This means the only common aspect of gas cylinders is the universal valve. Such exchange pools are subject to further review by EPRA.

While the EPRA has done its' best to implement the new regulations, faulty containers and unregulated gas filling from inappropriate places is still rampant. Consumers end up risking their lives.

Consumer sensitization on LPG regulations is, therefore, very important. In order to suppress demand for bad products in the market, LPG included, information, education and communication campaign on the part of consumers is critical. It must not be pegged to an event like this but indeed a clear and inclusive process.

Our CDF sessions seek to accord consumers and various other stakeholders an opportunity to relay their experience on diverse facets of a give topical issues. The forum today will focus on stakeholders in Isiolo, Wajir, Mandera, Wajir and other Northern Kenya counties.

Some of the forbidden actions including refilling of a cylinder by a person or entity other than the brand owner or refilling of a cylinder without the prior written consent from the brand owner provided that such consent shall have been submitted to the Authority.

Refilling of a cylinder that does not bear the embossed markings of the brand or trade name or is defaced, tampered or bears illegible markings; or refilling of a cylinder from a facility or such other source that is not licensed by the regulator constitutes a punishable offence.

This forum seeks to create an opportunity for information, education and awareness on the provisions of the law. Other issues of importance will revolve around quality, safety and seamless access to LPG.

Once again, I welcome you into this virtual meeting room and do hope that it will offer you and other stakeholders a ready value addition. Thank you.

**Stephen Mutoro**, Secretary General, Consumers Federation of Kenya (Cofek)