



NATIONAL INITIATIVE FOR CIVIC EDUCATION PUBLIC TRUST



## PRESS RELEASE

### “RADIO DISTRIBUTION – A TOOL FOR VOTER MOBILIZATION”

#### Press Statement

The National Initiative for Civic Education (NICE) Trust is a Malawi Government Civic and Voter Education initiative which was turned into a trust on 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2012 from a Project. NICE is currently funded by the European Union and its overall objective is to contribute to the strengthening of the democratic process, increase citizens’ participation and promote good governance in Malawi.

NICE is one of the key institutions that has been accredited by the Malawi Electoral Commission to conduct civic and voter education in the run up to the May 20, 2014 Tripartite Elections.

NICE has a number of strategies that it uses to conduct civic and voter education as well as to mobilize people to participate in the upcoming tripartite elections. In line with its civic and voter education strategy called 360 degrees, NICE planned to use different strategies for mobilization such as rallies, print media, road shows, sports bonanzas , interactive dramas, branding of rocks in the mountains along the main roads with registration messages, distribution of radios, hot spot interaction ( drinking joints ) voter education on wheels approach ( Volunteers have been paid for and will be paid for to travel through buses and minibuses across the country and hold voter discussions with travellers).

#### Facilitate establishment and strengthening of radio listening groups

NICE understands that Radio listening clubs are an important tool in mobilizing communities to participate in developmental issues including democracy and governance. As such NICE undertook the task of strengthening Radio listening clubs and encouraged all members to be listening to the radio in order to listen to various radio programmes on civic and voter education messages.

#### The Role of Radio in the May 20, Tripartite Elections

Radio has proved to be the most powerful means of information dissemination in developing countries. A majority of people In Malawi get information through the Radio or informal circles (friends) PE 1 being an election-oriented PE, through radio distribution NICE will contribute to free flow of electoral information thereby contributing to fair electoral process. Citizens in

organized groups will be able to exchange information with other Malawians thereby promoting electoral processes.

Radio reaches potential voters due to its airwaves that reaches everywhere despite demographic barriers. Radio is also an integral part of many individuals' lifestyle, especially in the communities where majority of Malawians reside. On a daily basis, radio serves as a news source and those who turn to radio for the news mostly are eligible voters. Radio also target Specific Groups of people such as visually impaired and those people who live in communities without TV or newspapers even people in prisons who can't access the outside world or attend mobilization campaign. That is why NICE recognizes that radio will play a very crucial role in spreading electoral messages, civic education messages and that it can mobilize the majority of Malawians to vote during May 20 Tripartite Elections.

### **The Distribution of Radios**

NICE being aware of the role of radio in the electoral processes, has adopted radio distribution strategy in order to reach broad groups of potential voters. The radios being distributed do not require batteries or electricity for charging. They are solar power generating radio which means anyone can use it without any challenges. NICE also recognizes that the poverty levels in Malawi make it difficult for many people to own radios hence the need to distribute radios. This strategy is also in line with NICE's 360 degrees of civic and voter mobilization campaign.

### **Radio Distribution Target groups**

The major target groups of these radio distributions are the disadvantaged such as prisoners; NICE has made it deliberate to distribute radios to prisons knowing the fact that it is very difficult to get electoral related information to the inmates since campaign is not allowed in the cells. The radios will also provide a platform for the prisoners to have access to party manifestos and policies, also to listen to what the candidates will offer once elected. NICE has also sponsored a number of programs on Radio and TV which shall complement this initiative by sharing some radio schedules with the radio listening clubs for them to easily follow such programs.

Some of the target groups are as follows; Clubs of people with blindness Clubs of people with physical disabilities, Groups of PLWHA, Orphan groups, The Widow Groups (in rural areas), Traditional leaders in remotest parts of the district, Youth Clubs, Community based Radio Listening Clubs, Farmers' Clubs, Hospitals, Police Officers at Road Blocks, Village Beach Committees (Lakeshore Areas), Bawo Clubs, Some vulnerable families in hard to reach areas and Citizen Forums in district where there is Water Aid programme

NICE's Radio distribution exercise will cover the whole country with special focus on the rural communities. The radios to be distributed are 2690 in total and they will be distributed per region.

