

# CCK steps up consumer protection

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The Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK), the telecommunications industry regulator, has stepped up consumer protection following the creation of a Consumer Affairs Division. The new division will be responsible for strengthening the Commission's capacity to discharge its consumer protection roles.

The creation of the division has been necessitated by the increase in the number of players in the communications sector, incidences of non-compliance to licence conditions and violation of the rights of consumers. According to CCK Director-General Eng John Waweru, the Consumer Affairs Division would be expected to empower consumers through education and the provision of requisite information.

## Role of the division

The department will handle complaints and disputes, review regulations on consumer protection from time to time and undertake reviews of consumer contracts and Service Level Agreements and provide advice to consumers. The Kenya Communications Act requires the Commission to ensure that communications services are provided throughout Kenya and that the interests of all users of these services are protected with respect to prices, quality and variety of services, amongst other responsibilities.

"The introduction of the division marks the second phase as the Commission discharges this mandate," Waweru notes.

In the first phase, the Commission embarked on sector liberalisation by introducing competition into the communications sector. The licensing of new players and putting in place regulations spelling out guidelines on various issues ranging from interconnection to fair trading practices characterised the first phase.

## Attaining universal access

Meanwhile, the newly appointed minister for Information and Communications Samuel Poghiso has lauded CCK for its commitment to implement ICT programmes that will lead to low cost provision of ICT goods and services, in line with the overall policy objective of attaining universal access at efficient and affordable costs. Speaking during a tour of CCK's offices, the minister urged the regulator to continue striving to bridge the digital divide between the urban and rural population, to enable the majority of Kenyans who live in the rural areas enjoy the developmental benefits associated with ICTs.

On post election skirmishes, Poghiso said the media must be responsible and be part and parcel of the reconciliation

process. The minister said CCK should strengthen its oversight and regulatory role with a view to monitoring the media more effectively once the proposed Kenya Communications Bill comes into effect.

"CCK should strive to work better with media houses to ensure all of them are in harmony, especially at times like these when the slightest mistake can lead to loss of lives and destruction of property," Poghisio added.

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