



PRESS STATEMENT ON NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THE FILMING REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS BY DR. EZEKIEL MUTUA, MBS, CEO KENYA FILM CLASSIFICATION BOARD ISSUED ON 19TH SEPTEMBER 2019 IN MOMBASA.

Kenya Film Classification Board notes with grave concern the influx of unrated and inappropriate content circulating on diverse media platforms, including social media, prematurely exposing our children to adult content.

Further, the Board notes some unscrupulous filmmakers have resorted to filming without obtaining filming licenses from the Kenya Film Classification Board (KFCB), while some film exhibitors are violating the Films and Stage Plays Act, Cap 222, particularly in regard to the watershed period by airing content that is unsuitable for family viewing and listening. Exposure of children to pornography and obscenity is on the increase, especially on the internet and measures must be put in place to stop this trend.

It must be noted that making, exhibiting and distributing unrated films is illegal and any person involved in the same will be arrested and charged in accordance with the law. The Board is currently investigating some unscrupulous film operators as well as those operating unlicensed video dens who continue to engage in unlawful film business by exposing children to adult content. We would like to put on notice such operators and remind them that if caught, they will be arrested and have their licenses revoked.

A video of a child using foul language, which has gone viral on social media platforms, is a true depiction of the depth of the detrimental effects of consumption of unrated content on young children who are easily impressionable. In this regard, the Board has received concerns from many parents and the general public concerning the interventions available for child online safety. The Board has been in touch with the various parties involved including the parents of the minors in question and has approached other relevant Government agencies to assist in stopping further creation and distribution of this kind of content. We have also approached the relevant institutions including educational and faith-based bodies to provide counseling to the concerned minors and their parents.

Yet, even as we do this, we are aware that there is a systematic, deliberate and coordinated effort to destroy the morals of our children through unrated and inappropriate content. There are unscrupulous companies and individuals operating in Kenya who appear hell-bent on exposing

children to pornography and other forms of inappropriate content through children TV programs, cartoons, and music that promotes obscenity, violence, and drugs.

Many of the cartoon programs previously considered as safe for children are no longer safe and we have received numerous complaints that a lot of the content, including that on children's television stations, on pay to view TV is not suitable for children. The Board has received complaints on some horrifying, dirty and unpalatable content in a program called "Family Guy" on Zuku and DSTV while some content on Disney Channels appears to be aired without consideration for age suitability. We are investigating several cartoon programs on pay to view channels following complaints that they are not suitable for children and that they bear the wrong age rating. Foreign content distributors who put the wrong rating on their programs will not be allowed to distribute their products to the Kenyan market.

Even some textbooks have content that is inappropriate for young children. The Board's attention has specifically been drawn to a Class Six Text book selling in bookstores across the country containing adult content that is absolutely unsuitable for children of the age group for which it is intended. We have asked the Ministry of Education to have this book withdrawn from circulation immediately and thoroughly investigate the matter.

We also call on the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government to consider the exposure of children to pornography and other adult content as a threat to national security and use its structures across the country to stem this wave of moral decay. Anyone poisoning the minds of our children through inappropriate media content should be treated as a saboteur of national development. Anyone distributing or exhibiting unrated content should be arrested and prosecuted.

Content with extreme violence on play stations and computer games must be made unavailable for children and those who provide access to such be prosecuted. Books such as Blood Ties: Story Moja Life Series by Zimkhitha Mlanzeli, taught at class six bear adult language and is a perfect example of how adult content and foreign ideologies are indirectly being inculcated into our children, thus corrupting their morals and sense of judgment.

It is important to note that moral values are the basis of national development and societal stability. Media is a two-edged sword; a powerful agenda-setter that can make or break society. When media houses play dirty music, our national leaders use vulgar language to address their counterparts and religious leaders court fame through controversy, our vulnerable children are left devoid of role models. Indeed, this makes our children think that vulgarity is cool and that content has to be dirty to sell.

As a nation, we must be cognizant of the fact that the kind of media our children are exposed to on TV, radio, online and print will lead them astray and determine the quality of society we have in future. To this end, the Board appeals for support from the public in our efforts to clean the airwaves of dirty content and protect our children from exposure to harmful media.

Lastly, the Board would like to commend the responsible and law-abiding filmmakers for complying with the Films and Stage Plays Act Cap 222 Laws of Kenya as well as broadcasters who observe the requirements of the Programming Code for Free-to-Air TV and Radio Services in Kenya during the Watershed Period, which in Kenya is between 5.00am and 10.00pm.

KFCB will continue cooperating with other Government Agencies such the Department of Criminal Investigation, the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to ensure compliance with the Act by all film operators in Kenya.

Thank you.