

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **MCK RELEASES 220 NEW HEALTH REPORTING GRANTS This Brings The Total Number Of Grantees Under The Programme To 320**

**NAIROBI, JULY 3, 2020** – The Media Council of Kenya (MCK) today released the third cycle of their Health Reporting Grant programme. Through it an additional 220 journalists will receive between Kshs. 4,000 and Kshs. 70,000 in support to produce high quality stories on health issues around the country, with a particular focus on the COVID-19 pandemic.

Speaking during the launch, MCK Council Chairman, Mr. Maina Muiruri, acknowledged the difficult period that the media sector is facing, with budget cutbacks and layoffs, and commended the MCK Secretariat for mooted the grant programme which has had a positive impact on journalists across the country.

“It is now estimated that at least 400 journalists have lost their jobs while numerous small media houses have been forced to close down completely. This grant, conceptualised and effected by the MCK Secretariat, was a timely idea,” said Muiruri.

Muiruri appealed to journalists not to lose hope, instead encouraging them to “rise up, innovate, be creative and do whatever it takes to stay afloat”.

MCK CEO, David Omwoyo, on his part, highlighted the work that the MCK has been doing in the past two months to support journalists, media associations and media houses and keep as many of them operational during the pandemic.

“Over the last two months, we have provided funding to 320 journalists, 33 media associations, and 149 media houses to help them deal with the effects of the pandemic,” said Omwoyo.

Three hundred and twenty (320) out of a total of four-hundred and seventy (470) applicants were selected through three cycles of the grant programme by a panel of veteran journalists and editors working with the MCK’s Training and Development Department, headed by Mrs. Christine Nguku. The grantees were assigned mentors drawn from the MCK’s Africa Media Academy who helped them in conceptualizing and developing their stories.

MCK Council Member and Chair of the Media Development & Training Committee, Ms. Susan Karago, congratulated the new grantees, reminding them that they will receive training and mentorship that will enable them to produce high quality stories.

“The Media Development and Training Committee have looked at the ways we can empower health reporters through top notch training, and are now looking forward to read, watch, and listen to the high-quality stories that will be crafted as a result of this grant,” said Ms. Karago.

In his remarks, MCK’s Head of Media Development & Strategy, Victor Bwire, reminded the grantees of the MCK’s proposed media diversity fund geared towards supporting media sustainability and the resultant quality content in the medium to long-term.

“While the health reporting grant has given us an entry point, we are pushing towards a long-term media diversity fund that will go a long way towards supporting journalists and the media to produce quality content. Similar funds are being used in South Africa, Canada, Denmark, and Sweden,” said Bwire.

#### **About the Media Council of Kenya**

The Media Council of Kenya (MCK) is the principal body mandated to develop and regulate the media industry in Kenya in order to promote media freedom, professionalism and independence. It is established by law under the Media Council Act of 2013 to fulfill Article 34 (5) of the Constitution of Kenya which enshrines media freedom.

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