



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**THE DRAFT
PUBLIC RELATIONS
AND
COMMUNICATION POLICY**

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

1. BACKGROUND

Growth and development of Public Relations and Communication from pre-independent Kenya to present

The history of Public Relations (PR) and communication in Kenya is as long as the history of Kenya. Indigenous African communities were known to engage in communication activities, including having their own spokespersons.

Likewise, when Kenya became a British East Africa Protectorate in 1895, the British colonial government used PR to enhance relationships between white settlers and the local people.

The British used PR with a view to building mutual understanding between the white settlers and the local people. In a memorandum dated 1947, *Public Relations Work in the Colonies*, the Chief Secretary to the colonial government describes PR as “the art of establishing and maintaining within a community, a spirit of fellowship and co- operation based on mutual understanding and trust.”

Regarding the qualifications of the head of the PR Department, the memo stated that “he must have a sympathetic approach to the public, he must have feelings for the colonial people, and he must believe in the future of the Colony. In addition, he should be a person of some seniority, “with administrative ability, with a flair for publicity, and with a sincere and sympathetic approach to his work”.

The industry progressed during this period with the first Public Relations consultancy established in East Africa in the mid-1950s, and parastatal organizations such as the East African Railways and Harbours Corporation set up PR departments and hired consultants from London, United Kingdom. The first Public Relations consultancy in the country was Dunford Hall & Partners that was established in 1955 from a partnership of Michael Dunford and Andrew Hall.

Shortly after independence in 1965, the permanent secretary/accounting officer to the Ministry of Information, Broadcasting and Tourism established the department of Public Relations in the ministry.

Subsequently, the Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) was established in 1971 to bring together PR practitioners in Kenya. PRSK was formed by a constitution and is a registered Society. Full membership to the society was restricted to those who had proven experience and/or approved academic qualifications including membership to any other international public relations bodies with entrance qualifications no less strict than the PRSK. The membership of PRSK had to subscribe to the society's code of professional conduct. The application of the code had its desired effect, providing for the first time in Kenya criteria for judging the professional qualities of the PR practitioner.

In June 1975, the society organized the first All Africa Public Relations Conference to coincide with the annual general assembly of the International Public Relations Association (IPRA). This was the first time that IPRA, founded in 1955, met in Africa during which the Federation of African Public Relations Association (FAPRA) was formally established with its interim headquarters in Nairobi.

Great strides have been made by Kenya in the public relations and communication industry culminating in Kenya hosting the prestigious Global Alliance’s World Conference on Public Relations in Emerging Economies (WCPREE) in 2015 co-sponsored by the Ministry of information, Communications and Technology and the Public Relations Society of Kenya.

Today, the Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) is the umbrella body for all public relations and communication practitioners in Kenya with an overriding purpose to advance excellent performance in the practice. The Society maintains local and international affiliates, which include the Eastern Africa Public Relations Association (EAPRA), the African Public Relations

Association (APRA), and is a founding member of the Global Alliance for Public Relations & Communication Management.

Article 35 of the Constitution and Access to Information Act, 2016 provide for citizens to obtain information held by the State. In order to professionalize information sharing between institutions/organizations and their publics, PRSK seeks to transform into a statutory self-regulatory body for the Public Relations and Communication practitioners both in public and private sectors in Kenya fully backed by law.

2. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS:

The practice of public relations and communication has advanced. Globally, practitioners and PR organisations continue to define the practice, formalise its structure and seek to regulate the industry. In the US, for instance, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) is the nation's largest professional organisation serving the communications community. Public relations associations regulate the practice among public, private and not-for-profit organisations operating within national borders of several countries.

In Kenya, professional standards are vested in the Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK), a body corporate established and registered under Chapter 108 of the Societies Act. However, the Society lacks the legal instrument to enable it enforce professional ethics and standards in the practice of public relations and communication in the country. The Society intends to transform into an Institute of Public Relations and Communications (IPRAC) under an Act of Parliament as an instrument to professionalise and regulate the PR&C practice in Kenya.

The Public Relations and Communications (PRAC) Policy will provide the required framework for the development of a statutory self-regulatory and effective IPRAC that will be the centre of information for all matters to do with the practice.

3. CHALLENGES FACING PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION PRACTICE IN KENYA

Kenya has a vibrant PRAC industry. However, it lacks the legal framework to regulate the manner in which professionals conduct the practice. The country lacks mechanisms to enforce the code of conduct for the PRAC practitioners as well as standards for their training. Together with the lack of a coherent understanding of the PR and communication practice, the industry has been subjected to manipulation, resulting in negative perceptions that have injured the profession. It also poses a challenge to implement article 35 of the Constitution of Kenya and the access to information act, 2016 in a manner that embraces national values and principles of governance as provided under article 10 of the Constitution.

4. ANALYSIS OF EXISTING LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) is a body corporate established and registered under Chapter 108 of the Societies Act. In formulating the IPRAC Act, will be informed by the following instruments:

- The Constitution of Kenya, 2010
- Access to Information Act, 2016
- Public Sector Communications Policy 2017
- Kenya Information and Communications Act, 2013

- Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act, 2014
- Kenya Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act, 2018
- Media Council Act, 2013
- Kenya Copyright Act, 2001
- Public Service Commission Act, 2017
- Public Officer Ethics Act, 2003
- Public Participation Guideline for County Governments
- A Guide to the Legislative Process in Kenya (by Kenya Law Reform Commission)
- PRSK Constitution, 2016
- PRSK Strategic Plan; 2018-2022
- Global Alliance for Public Relations instruments (such as the Global Capabilities Framework for Public Relations and Communications Management) and best practices from international and local professional associations (such as UK Chartered Institute for Public Relations, Law Society of Kenya, and the Institute for Human Resources Management).

5. OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES OF THE POLICY

5.1 Objectives

- a) Develop a legislative framework for Public Relations and Communication practice
- b) Standardise the practice of Public Relations and Communication in Kenya
- c) Promote the PRAC practice in Kenya

5.2 Strategies

1. Initiate mechanisms to develop a legislative framework for PRAC practice through development of the IPRAC Bill
2. Transform Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) into an institute of Public Relations and Communication (IPRAC)
3. Charge the Institute with operationalization of the IPRAC Bill

6. REGULATION OF PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION PROFESSION

6.1 Promotion of Professional Standards & Ethics

- a. The Institute shall establish internal accreditation systems and code of conduct for its members.
- b. The Government in collaboration with the stakeholders in the industry will encourage and promote acceptable standards by providing incentives and an enabling environment for the practice.

6.2 Code of Conduct/Ethics for PRAC Professionals and Practitioners

At a minimum, the code of conduct/ethics for PRAC practitioners shall include commitment to the principles and national values as is prescribed in the Constitution of Kenya 2010

6.3 Public Relations and Communication Practice in Public Institutions/Private Sector/Not-for-Profit Sector/Academia

This policy document seeks to address the PRAC practice in the following sectors:

6.3.1 Public Relations and Communication Practice in Public Institutions

The role of public relations and communication in Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) entails among other functions identifying significant events which require packaging of Government information for dissemination to the public; organizing fora where Government policies, programmes and projects are propagated and promoted; advising Ministries/Departments/Agencies on matters of public communications and dissemination and management of public information; and, formulation of National Public Communications Policies and design of a Government communications infrastructure.

According to the Public Service Human Resource Manual (2016) and the Public Service Act 2017, Ministries, Departments and Agencies are expected to maintain regular liaison through public communications units to ensure the fullest possible publicity for Government policy, programs and plans. The PSC Human Resource Manual also provides for professional public servants to strengthen their skills by subscribing to relevant professional bodies while the Public Communications Policy identifies the Public Relations Society of Kenya as the suitable body to build the professional capacities of public relations officers in Government.

6.3.2 Public relations and Communication Practice in the private sector

The private sector plays a critical role in national, social and economic development. The partnership between the public and private sector is important in creating national cohesion, integration and prosperity. Public Relations and Communication practitioners in the private sector manage relationships between institutions and their stakeholders inclusive of Government in creating understanding promoting business and job creation.

Their roles of those in the private sector includes; stakeholder management, media relations, external relations, internal relations, Government relations, public policy affairs, corporate communications, campaigns, advocacy, research and information management, community relations, regulatory affairs, political advisory and parliamentary affairs. In addition, they provide counsel to management and create positive perceptions on the organization among publics.

6.3.3 Public Relations and Communication Practice in the Not-for-profit sector

The Not-for-profit (NFP) organisations are dedicated to furthering particular social causes or advocating for a shared point of view. In Kenya, the NFP sector is large and diverse. It covers activities and services including health, social services, education, sport and recreation, arts and culture, environment, animal welfare, human rights and religious practices. NFPs are accountable to the donors, funders, volunteers, program recipients, and the public community. The activities that NFPs undertake can help build the public's trust and confidence in them. The nature of their operations requires them to build and nurture relationships with their stakeholders, thus the increasing realisation of the need to engage PRAC professionals.

6.3.4 Public relations and communication practice in academia

Institutions of higher learning are an important segment in building skills and human capital for both public and private sectors. Academic training in public relations and communication grounds students in theory and practice in preparation to engaging in strategic public relations and communication work in the industry. Learners are prepared to conduct research and tackle emerging issues and trends in the industry in order to effectively and innovatively manage national challenges.

6.4 Human Resource Development

Human capital development feeds the national development agenda. IPRAC shall be responsible for building skills and competencies for communication professionals in both private and public sectors for effective practice and good of the country. It will offer professional training and administer examinations to assure standards and quality of service among the professionals.

7. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

The existence of a cohesive and well-functioning institutional framework is essential for the attainment of all the objectives of this policy. The aim is to ensure that the various institutions within the PRAC sector effectively play their respective but interdependent roles to ensure an efficient and sustainable PRAC industry. The following will play important roles in the development of the public relations and communication industry:

- a) Government;
- b) Institute of Public Relations and Communication
- c) PRAC professionals/practitioners

7.1 Role of the Government

The role of government will include, inter alia:

- a) the development, implementation and coordination of this policy including the establishment of a legal framework that guarantees and allows PRAC professional to exercise their profession freely;
- b) provision of an enabling environment for PRAC Practice and investment in the sector

7.2 Role of the Institute

- a) The IPRAC Act will provide the requisite legislative framework to regulate PR&C practitioners;

The Institute shall–

- i. Implement provisions as provided for in the IPRAC Act
- ii. Promote, maintain and enhance the reputation and standing of the profession and of the Institute and represent the profession and the views of members, both nationally and internationally;
- iii. Advise examinations Board on matters relating to examinations standards and policies;

- iv. Advise and make such recommendations to the Cabinet Secretary on matters relating to public relations and Communication in all sectors of the economy and on all other matters relating to the profession, as it may deem appropriate;
 - v. Maintain, monitor compliance with, a regime of continuing professional development through the commissioning and provision of general and specialized post-registration and the promulgation of best practice rules and guidelines, standards, ethical guidance and other services as it may deem necessary to maintain and enhance professional integrity, independence, knowledge and competence;
 - vi. Liaise, co-operate and collaborate with Kenyan, regional and foreign regulatory bodies in the field of public relations, communication management, branding, public affairs, corporate social responsibility and oversight of the public relations and Communication profession;
 - vii. Promote and encourage entry into the public relations and communication profession through the study of public relations and related disciplines and the provision of bursaries, scholarships, prizes and other incentives to students;
 - viii. Provide for resolution of disputes on professional issues involving members;
 - ix. Establish such branches and chapters that support the mandate of the Institute.
 - x. Prescribe a remuneration order for the Public Relations and Communication profession with the approval of the Cabinet Secretary responsible for Communication and Information;
- b) The Institute shall be financed from fees and other monies in respect of licences and accreditation, donations, gifts, endowments, grants, proceeds of any investments, a training levy and levy on revenue of the PRAC Institutions.
- c) Where the Institute is unable to resolve the issues presented before it and its organs through its laid down procedures, the aggrieved party shall have the right to take legal action according to the existing laws.

7.3 Role of PRAC Professionals and Practitioners

The role of PRAC professionals and practitioners shall be to comply with the PRAC Policy and IPRAC Act

8. LEGAL INSTRUMENT FOR OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE POLICY

The Institute of Public Relations and Communication Bill, 2018 has been developed to implement the policy objectives and strategies contained in this PR&C Policy.

9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION MECHANISM FOR THE POLICY

This policy shall be reviewed from time to time to incorporate emerging issues and identified needs in PRAC practice. Monitoring and evaluation shall be based on measurable, observable and verifiable indicators in line with the emerging development within the public relations and communication practice. The Cabinet Secretary for Information, Communications and Technology shall undertake its advisory, co-ordination and facilitation role for the successful implementation of the policy.