



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

**SPEECH BY DR. FRED MATIANGI, CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF ICT
DURING THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE COMMUNICATIONS
AUTHORITY ICT WEEK. 11th MAY 2015 AT THE SAROVA PANAFRIC HOTEL**

**Mr. Joseph Tiampati, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Information,
Communications and Technology**

Mr. Francis Wangusi, Director General, Communications Authority of Kenya

Distinguished players in the ICT sector

Members of the media

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning

I am happy to be with you this morning as we open the second edition of the ICT Week organized by the Communications Authority of Kenya.

This annual event provides an opportunity for the industry and the regulator to engage on issues affecting the ICT sector and chart pathways for moving the sector forward.

This event, I am informed is expected to provide an opportunity for deliberations and consultations on sector policy and regulations. Broadcasters have a forum to address issues surrounding content, telecommunications service providers, contractors and vendors have an opportunity to tackle issues of licensing, compliance and enforcement while postal and courier stakeholders will look at ongoing projects that will improve efficiency and service delivery in their sub-sector. Various issues of consumers shall be addressed in the various discussion forums to be held around this event.

I would like at the onset to thank the Board and management of the Communications Authority of Kenya for organizing this event and encourage them to deepen direct, consultative and participatory engagement with all the stakeholders in the sector as a way of enhancing their regulatory work and facilitating growth of the sector.

This year's event will also mark the 150th anniversary of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). The ITU is the United Nations specialized agency for ICTs. It coordinates global radio spectrum and satellite orbits and also ensures networks and technologies seamlessly interconnect.

Kenya has benefited from the activities of the ITU including capacity building and continued standardization of the ICT sector in line with global best practice. We thank Secretary General Zhao, congratulate him, once again, upon his election and pledge out continued active participation in ITU programmes and effective partnership with fellow members in supporting the secretariat and the entire ITU fraternity as we all strive to have a better regulated and equitable ICT world.

As the International community turns its development focus to the post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS) Agenda, ICT will be a critical center piece of all aspects of sustainable development. We will work with ITU to ensure we contribute effectively both towards the realization of connect 2020 and development of the ICT sector so as to underpin sustainable development as expected.

The fast paced nature of the ICT sector demands that all key stakeholders engage in continuous dialogue on emerging issues. I see the CA's ICT week as one such opportunity for engagement and consultation on issues.

Ladies and gentlemen, we operate in a most exciting and dynamic sector that touches the daily lives of Kenyans from all walks of life. We therefore have a duty to always give our best in terms of innovative and cost effective products while at the same time offering the best quality of service.

ICT is a critical sector to our economy. The government recognizes this and its pledge to the sector is best underlined by the commitment demonstrated by none other than H. E. the President himself to this sector. From his personal attention to innovation hubs, participation in the national ICT innovation conference to the directive that led to the establishment of Enterprise Kenya, President Kenyatta is keen, focused and determined that ICT will characterize his public service revolution to enable efficient, transparent and faster delivery of services to the people of Kenya.

The government's commitment to incorporating ICTs in its service delivery continues to manifest through several initiatives being undertaken by various government bodies. These initiatives include the iTax portal, Huduma Canters, the Integrated Financial Management Information System popularly referred to as IFMIS, the e-Citizen Portal, telemedicine among others.

Kenyans can today access government services such as registering businesses, renew drivers licenses, apply for marriage certificates, apply for passports, submit tax returns, pay land rates and many more services through these platforms all from their communication gadgets.

The government is determined that most of its services be migrated to the digital platform to enhance efficiency, transparency and accountability. It is therefore expected that by the end of the next financial year, over 60% of public sector services will be delivered electronically. To achieve this, the government is investing massively in about six key ICT projects, developing ICT infrastructure across the nation to ensure connectivity throughout the country and enhancing favorable policy frameworks to facilitate private sector partnership and investment to develop the ICT sector.

The Ministry of ICT, through the National ICT Master Plan has provided a clear roadmap for ICT infrastructure development, policy and institutional reforms. Ongoing projects under this Plan include Universal person's registration system, setting up companies' registry database, Assets Data Hub, development of a National Spatial Data Infrastructure and establishment of five centers of excellence in education and a training of high tech professionals. These projects will be backed by the ongoing connection of all the 47 counties to the National Optical Fiber Backbone Infrastructure.

The jubilee government is committed to the development of the ICT sector. The impressive 13.4% growth in the sector last year is just but the beginning. We project that the sector should grow beyond 15% this year and approach the 20% mark by the year 2017. This growth is evidence that the government's policies for the sector are working. Investors in the sector have experienced phenomenal growth as witnessed last week by the equally phenomenal results announced by the country's largest mobile network operator, Safaricom.

Mobile phones are at the heart of the new digital ecosystem. CA statistics indicated that by the end of 2014 total mobile subscriptions in the country stood at 33.6 million up from 31.3 million registered at the end of December 2013. If the growth predictions hold it is estimated that by the end of this year the subscriptions will have increased to 35 million. Mobile phones are delivering a new and vibrant ecosystem, based on mobile broadband networks, driving innovation and the development of new services in areas such as digital content, social networking and online commerce.

Migration from analogue to digital television broadcasting is complete and we have begun to witness the positive deployment of the digital dividend in the deployment

of 4G LTE in some parts of the country and the ambitious roll out plans announced by some investors in the last 2 weeks. Kenyans can now look forward to faster and better internet connectivity and I look forward to Nairobi not only retaining its status as the smartest city on the continent but buttressing it further with the increased space for creativity, innovation and more products riding on the mobile platform. Kenya's M-revolution has picked pace and our country retains its ICT hub status in the region.

I however take this opportunity to urge all the players in the ICT sector, especially the telecommunications subsector, to take full advantage of the digital dividend, embrace healthy competition, invest more resources and diversify their product base so as to afford the people of Kenya world class quality of service.

I equally urge the CA to intensify its restructuring efforts, strengthen itself institutionally, and ensure that quality of service is offered by all licensees. The sector, ultimately is about the people of Kenya and every effort should be made to ensure that the consumers get value for every penny they spend on ICT services.

Even as we celebrate the growth of the ICT sector, I am aware that there are issues of access, inclusion and cost of devices, among others to address. My Ministry in close collaboration with the CA has completed the institutionalization of the Universal Service Fund, as required by the law. It is expected that from the next Financial Year, USF will fund development of ICT infrastructure in various communication marginalized parts of our country, including provision of free WIFI services to support the slum upgrading programme currently being implemented by the Office of the President.

We are in consultation with other arms of government to address other issues related to the cost of devices and access. I hope that this forum will provide an opportunity to enhance these discussions with more ideas on how best we can ensure affordability of smart devices, lower the cost of internet and enhance greater access across Kenya.

We have witnessed significant developments in the sector at the regional level. The one network area is fully operational in the 4 countries of the Northern Corridor infrastructure integration projects and the citizens of the partner states are reaping the abundant benefits including low calling rates, increased capacity for cross border trade and enhanced communication.

Working jointly with colleague governments under the auspices of the Northern Corridor integration projects, we are moving now to develop a smart Northern Corridor master plan to institutionalize standards for ICT goods and services while at

the same time ensure that ICT is effectively mainstreamed in all infrastructure development within the Northern Corridor. We will also jointly work on enhancing mobile money transfer across the Eastern Africa region and harmonize our cybersecurity plans. We will soon finalize a framework for a joint institutional support to innovation in the region which is intended to enhance the market opportunities for ICT innovators in our respective countries and increase scaling up opportunities for them.

Efforts are ongoing to complete the National Addressing System Policy that will guide in the implementation of the project. The NAS, which is a public-private partnership, will use a Geo- referencing system in giving physical identity and location to properties. Once implemented, Kenyans will realize benefits including improved access to places, easier delivery of services such as mail, ambulance, fire engines and police services. Other benefits include better management of networks by utility companies such as power, and water and a boost to the growing e-commerce sector.

Ladies and gentlemen, the power of partnerships and collaboration cannot be gainsaid. This is especially true in the ICT sector where we have witnessed public-public partnerships, public-private partnerships and even regional and international partnerships. I hope that this forum will provide an opportunity for reflection on how we can improve institutional partnerships to enhance the development of the ICT sector, ensure greater inclusion of our population and strengthen public service delivery.

As I conclude, I would like to point out that for a growing and critical sector such as ICT, there is always room for innovative approaches to development of policy and regulation. I have had various discussions with many of you present here and other colleagues in this sector. The issues to be discussed are many; they include, a national and comprehensive policy on innovation, a review of the intellectual property regime, especially with regard to broadcast content, broadcast content management-including the local content policy, public sector procurement of ICT goods and services, representation of the private sector and investors in various public sector regulatory and policy making bodies, review of policy and legislation including broadcast regulations, the sector's contribution to ICT content in our training institutions and of course the elephant in the room- cybersecurity.

Some of these issues may be challenging or may even seem daunting. I would like to assure you that my Ministry and all relevant departments of government are mobilized to support the ICT sector. Better and brighter days lie ahead. We will consult with, listen to and work with you closely to ensure we realize all our objectives in developing the sector.

Lastly, I would like to very sincerely thank all private sector partners in this sector. A lot has been achieved in this sector because of private sector resources invested in innovation hubs, research and many other initiatives that have supported the provision of quality goods and services to the people of Kenya. Some of the greatest projects and initiatives of the government have recently benefitted greatly from the committed support of private sector partners and I thank you earnestly on behalf of our Ministry and the government in general. I promise you my Ministry's fervent support and effective collaboration as we forge a head. The Ministry of ICT is your venue for engaging with government. Let us continue to work together to grow the sector.

I wish, once again to appreciate the sector regulator for driving the industry forth and pledge my ministry's continued collaboration to ensure better and facilitative regulation of the sector. Kenya's innovation and early adaptation of ICTs is highly regarded the world over. We have a duty and responsibility to enhance this position.

I thank you all for kindly listening to me and it is my humble pleasure to declare the CA ICT week officially open.