



Republic of Kenya

Statement by Prof Jacob T. Kaimenyi, Cabinet Secretary of Education, Science and Technology of Kenya, at the 16th Session of the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development, 3-7 June 2013, Geneva

The Chairman,

Honourable Ministers,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is of great pleasure for me to have this privilege of addressing this session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development.

I take note that the priority themes for the 16th Session are

(a) Science, technology and innovation for sustainable cities and peri-urban communities and

(b) Internet broadband for an inclusive digital society, and also the presentation of reports on science, technology and innovation policy reviews

I intend to briefly address these pertinent issues in the Kenyan context.

During the last fifty years, the economic and demographic structure of Kenya has become increasingly urban with about 50% of the 40 million leaving in

cities and towns scattered all over the country. The urban areas contribute about 88 percent of economic growth of industry and services and 70% of the GDP, hence the need to ensure sustainability.

Science and Technology has provided solution by addressing sustainability at the integration level. The applications are geared towards ensuring that the environment meets the diverse needs of existing and future residents while encouraging the inhabitants to be sensitive to their environment.

Efforts are geared towards encouragement of innovations in green growth and smart growth technologies to promote deployment of cleaner technologies along value chains with incentives to facilitate the participation of SMEs. The main areas of focus include integrated waste management in urban areas, sustainable energy use including renewable energy as well as building and construction that ensures resource efficiency in the utilization of natural resources such as using natural ventilation for cooling and resource efficient heating systems.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is a powerful tool to accelerate both social cohesion and economic development, while increasing productivity across all sectors, including finance, agriculture, manufacturing and tourism.

The Kenya Government has initiated some major steps to bridge the digital divide, lower the cost of telecommunications, and promote the use of ICT throughout the country. Under Kenya Vision 2030, ICT is considered a major contributor to attaining the target of a 10 percent growth rate by 2020.

Access to broadband in Kenya for all citizens has the potential to generate enormous social economic benefits. Some of the benefits that accrue from national access to broadband include economic growth, job creation, and growth of investment opportunities. Similarly, access to online government services, improved education and training services, improved safety and security services are other benefits.

Kenya and the other East African countries have recently been connected via the first of four submarine fiber optic broadband cables, which has allowed much greater speeds at much lower prices. This has allowed the number of internet users in Kenya to increase to 16.2 million within one year representing a growth of 11.6 %.

According to the Communication Commission of Kenya, the number of Internet subscribers in the country rose from 8.5 million in the first quarter of 2012 to 9.4 million, an increase of 11.5%. The increase in number of internet subscribers was 75.1% compared to same period the previous year. This has been attributed to the introduction of mobile telephony contributing 99% of the total internet/data subscriptions.

With the introduction of the broad band, actual internet penetration has gone up by 4.3% to reach 41.1% up from 36.8% during the previous period. This growth in the Internet/data market segment can partly be attributed to international internet connectivity bandwidth that has continued to spiral upwards.

For example, during the 1st quarter of 2012, the international internet bandwidth use rose to 328,641 Mbps from 278,329 Mbps, representing an increase of 18.1 percent.

The Government has developed the Draft National Broad Band Strategy that will provide an enabling environment to allow optimum market growth of broadband services. It is expected that public and private sector investment and competition will expand the broadband market especially with the current expansion of the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) market.

The Strategy provides for the promotion of Public and Private Partnerships such that industry stakeholders, and the national and county Governments work together to deploy infrastructure, invest and build awareness and capacity for use of broadband.

Science, Technology and Innovation (ST&I) play a pivotal role in the industrialization, sustainable development and growth of nations. The Government recognizes the key role played by ST&I in wealth creation and the transition to a knowledge economy.

Intensified application of ST&I is essential in raising productivity and efficiency levels across the economic, social and political pillars. All these are key attributes to achieving the overarching Kenya Vision 2030.

The Kenya Constitution 2010 provided devolution to 47 counties, which provides opportunities for better accountability and local service delivery hence encourage the redistribution of the population to upcoming urban areas at the county level. The Kenya Constitution, 2010 also recognizes the role of

culture, indigenous knowledge, science, and protection and utilization of biodiversity in national development.

The ST&I policy and Strategy has been reviewed to put more emphasis on the following objectives:

1. Integrate the policy into the broader framework of major economic strategies and policies, social objectives and political goals;
2. Reform ST&I institutions and the environment in which they operate;
3. Develop sound creative and innovative human capital with entrepreneurial skills;
4. Translate ST&I policy into improved production capacity, increased productivity and competitiveness;
5. Maximize the reach and impact of scientific and technological knowledge and information as tools for participatory development;
6. Promote the ethical dimension of scientific and technological development;
7. Promote international scientific and technological co-operation.

Mr Chairman,

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I conclude, I would like to finally put a request forward that a similar review of Science, Technology and Innovation Policy be undertaken for Kenya.

Thank You All