

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



**THE PRESIDENCY
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE, YOUTH AND GENDER AFFAIRS**

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DURING THE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY CELEBRATIONS AT
AFRAHA ANNEX GROUNDS NAKURU ON 12TH AUGUST, 2016
THEME: "THE ROAD TO 2030: ERADICATING POVERTY AND
ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION"**

**Honourable Kinuthia Mbugua, the Governor, Nakuru County
Principal Secretaries
Development Partners,
County Executives,
Young people
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Today we join the rest of the world in marking the International Youth Day (IYD), 2016 whose theme is "The Road To 2030: Eradicating Poverty and Achieving Sustainable Consumption and Production". It is a day that we celebrate and reflect on the contribution of our young people towards development of their communities.

It is also a day when we all seek to promote youth as powerful agents of positive change. Engagement with the youth of the world remains a central as nations work towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

I am pleased to see the large number of youth who have turned up for these colorful celebrations including the beautiful procession I flagged off earlier this morning.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is a day that offers us a great opportunity as Government, as community of stakeholders, to reflect on whether through our programmes, interventions and approaches we are doing right by the youth of this country.

This is particularly important at a time when the world in agreement that investing in young people is not just right, it the smart thing to do; because young people are really the true drivers of growth and if the world is to achieve sustainable and equitable development as outlined in agenda 2030 then countries like ours must invest in its youth.

Ladies and gentlemen

In Kenya, His Excellency the President has set the vision which a promise for the youth. It is a vision of social, political and economic transformation. It is a vision that has at its core opportunities for employment, participation in governance, enterprise development, education and skills enhancement, health, well being and peaceful coexistence for Kenya's youth.

Today we celebrate the strides made by the Government towards actualizing this vision.

The government is taking various measures to address specific social and economic needs of our young people.

To boost income generating opportunities for the youth, the government has set aside 30% minimum of all it' procurement to enterprises owned by the youth, women and persons with disabilities (AGPO). This is part of the broader affirmative action policy to create opportunities for vulnerable groups. The total sum value of tenders awarded under the scheme so far is **Kshs. 26 Billion**. This has now been entrenched in the Public Procurement and Disposal Act.

Participation of young people in public procurement is key to create employment, wealth and enhance economic growth. Young people are also encouraged to compete with other stakeholders for the rest of the remaining 70 per cent procurement opportunities. Additionally, Government is currently engaging the private sector to extend the same in their own procurements.

Ladies and Gentlemen

On Employment and Skills Development, Government has rolled out Youth Training and Internship Programmes aimed at enhancing the employability of Kenyan youth and increase opportunities for income. The Government is rolling out the Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Programme. This is a programme aimed at availing training and work experience to youth aged 16-29 years who are unemployed with up to Form 4 level education. **70,000** youth will be given an opportunity to get at least four-month workplace experience or internships over the next five years.

This programme is an upscale of the recently concluded Kenya Youth Empowerment Project which was implemented in partnership with KEPISA where **12,000** youth were availed opportunity for workplace experience and at least **71%** of them were either employed or went back for further studies.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Over and above those measures, the government has put in place Capacity Building and Enterprise Financing programmes such as the UWEZO Fund, Women Enterprise Fund and Youth Enterprise Development Funds targeting young men and women keen on establishing businesses. These funds seek to, among other things, enhance the capacity of young men and women as well as Persons with Disability to start and manage micro and small enterprises. The funds provide avenues through which young people can generate gainful self-employment. These funds have cumulatively availed over **Kshs. 25 Billion** to nearly **3 million** individual to date.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the past two years, Government has re-engineered the National Youth Service with an aim to alleviate youth unemployment in both formal and informal sectors by providing skills necessary for employment catalyzing transformative youth empowerment in Kenya. We have increase the annual intake from 4,000 youth to of **21,870** youths per year who in turn 'disciple' community youth as they serve in nation building activities together for about 6 months. These youth, such as the ones we have here in Nakuru Town East and West, are organized using the principles of social movements into guilds and receive continuous support towards improvement of their livelihoods through training. We are encouraging our community youth under the NYS Youth Empowerment Programme to work in groups, build enterprises and maintain social cohesion in their communities. With over **60,000 youth** on the payroll in **74 constituencies** so far, **300 SACCOs** have been registered with cumulative savings of Kshs. **1.4 Billion.**

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are living in a fast paced world and are serving a generation of youth who are interconnected and want easy access to what they need without too many hurdles or bureaucracy. Government has installed countrywide points of integrated one stop shop service units known as Huduma Centres. These centers combine critical services from a cross-section of government departments and bring them all under one roof. This revolutionary measure has contributed to the cutting down of the bureaucratic procedures that characterized the issuance of critical licenses that enable business to take off. The youth are already enjoying the convenience afforded the conduct of business by these centers with the most demanded service being that of acquiring IDs. To date, the **40** Huduma Centers operationalized in **36 Counties** Government is **offering a total of 45** Government Services. **10 Million** Kenyans have been served in these centers so far.

Then Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Kenya Government has taken a deliberate action to facilitate young people to acquire employment in foreign countries. This stems from the fact that the country is endowed with a large segment of well educated and informed youth, who can adequately utilize the opportunities that globalized labour market has to offer. To realize this, the relevant government departments work with a number of foreign recruitment agencies to search and secure decent employment opportunities for the youth. Currently there are about 150 registered recruitment agencies in major cities of Nairobi and Mombasa. The youth who succeed in securing jobs abroad are assisted financially through the Youth Enterprise Development Fund to carter for their travel and settlement in their work destinations. About **8,000** youth get employment every year.

To seal any loopholes that could mar the prospects of the opportunity of youth employment abroad, the government through the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services ensures that the youth receive appropriate wages and fair conditions of work by examining and validating the employment contracts. The Ministry together with the involved recruitment agents ensures that these young people are provided with appropriate information before leaving the country.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All the above mentioned interventions are designed and implemented with the streamlined participation of the youth themselves. Among the key stakeholders in this constant engagement is the National Youth Council. The Government, in conjunction with the National Youth Council, organized a National Youth Convention for 6,000 youth leaders in 2014. The aim was to provide youth leaders with a platform to interact with Government, Youth Serving Organizations and diverse stakeholders working in the youth sector to take stock of achievements and challenges facing young people while exploring further areas of growth and development. This is done within the spirit of continuous consultation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I conclude, I wish to encourage our youth; That you have a listening and caring Government on your side. You are proudly recognized in the constitution. Article 55 of the constitution states the importance of investing in the youth. It notes The State shall take measures including affirmative action programs to ensure that the youth:

- Access relevant education and training;
- Are provided opportunities to participate freely in political, social and economic spheres of life;
- Access employment; and
- Are protected from harmful cultural practices and exploitation.

The constitution recognizes your importance as a critical demographic cohort of the population. After all the you are the most important stakeholders of this country because you represent a large bulk of the entire population.

As the Cabinet Secretary responsible for youth affairs, I want to assure you all, that the constitutional obligation as laid out in article 55 is one I take seriously. Long gone are the days when the concerns of young people went ignored. Indeed, failure to take the concerns of the youth seriously would only imperil our society and economy.

His Excellency the President recognizes you. My Ministry recognizes you. Recognition here does not simply mean cognizant of your presence, it means you have a seat at the table and you have been accorded opportunity to speak and to be heard. My Ministry will continue to include your views in important programmes and activities and commit time and resources to the areas that matter most to you.

Finally, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank all those who have spearheaded the planning of this celebration. I would also like to thank all of you gathered here today for your devotion towards realizing the youth agenda. Your contribution to the empowerment of young people in your respective institutions is commendable and I look forward to a continued fruitful engagement with

you so that together we can expand our program and interventions for greater impact.

To our youth, we celebrate you. I reaffirm you of the governments support. I thank you once again for being part of these celebrations. I wish you a memorable time here in Nakuru as you delight from the great hospitality of this town.

Asante!