

**SPEECH BY CABINET SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION, SCIENCE  
AND TECHNOLOGY, DR. FRED MATIANG'I DURING THE  
OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK, 17<sup>TH</sup>  
MAY 2016, KICC, NAIROBI**

**Distinguished Guests**

**Eminent Scientists**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I wish to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all you for making this forum a success through various contributions. I am delighted to be part of this forum to share scientific experiences with this high level calibre of participants from within and outside Kenya.

In particular, I wish to take this opportunity to welcome all the invited guests in various capacities who have taken time from their busy schedules to come and participate in these pertinent discussions. I want to believe that this event has been organised due to our firm belief that science and technology plays and will continue to play a key role in developing Kenya.

The fact that science and technology is critical to the future of Kenya and the achievement of the sustainable development goals cannot be ignored at this point in time. As such, the Government recognises the key role that science and technology plays in providing an enabling environment for innovation and research and in building the human capital required for the future knowledge economy.

However, there are new sets of challenges facing us, to which we must respond. The most urgent one is how to convert our research into innovations. This is very important because innovation is not the same as research but is a product from research and development by which businesses generate jobs and wealth. Effective innovation has a direct impact on the reduction of poverty and the improvement of the quality of life of our people. It is critical, therefore, to increase the rate and quality of innovation in Kenya.

I, therefore, challenge the institutions that are mandated to run the various facets of the innovation system including middle level colleges, universities and research organisations to consider developing quality outputs by placing emphasis on their mandates in relation to the following:

**1. People:** It has been proved from experience that well-trained, effective scientists, engineers and technologists are necessary ingredients for development. There is increasing evidence that our progress in producing scientists, engineers and technologists is not yet satisfactory. We, therefore, need a number of interventions to strengthen the transformation of our science and technology capacity to achieve increased numbers of people working in key fields that are of importance to the future.

We have to exert maximum effort to train the necessary numbers of our people in all the fields required for the development, running and management of modern economies. This, again, must be a national effort in which we should consider the necessary expenditures not as a cost but as an investment in our future.

**2. Strengthening the National System of Innovation:** The strength of the National Systems of Innovation is determined by its weakest link points. It is,

therefore, critical that the Government develops a strategic view of all actors, stakeholders and participants of the National System of Innovation. This will allow better governance, more effective resource allocation and better outcomes in the short, medium and long term.

It is also important for us to remember that a more effective innovation system is a partnership developed between all institutions involved in creating new knowledge, producing innovations and diffusing them to the benefit of the people of Kenya and our region. Therefore, I encourage positive and proactive engagement among all stakeholders in order to rapidly and effectively implement key programmes in our sectoral Medium Term Plan for 2017 and beyond.

**3. Wealth creation in the context of globalisation:** This is a subset of human resource development that cannot be ignored if we are to achieve higher levels of global competitiveness. We have to ensure that as many of our people as possible master modern technologies and integrate them in their social activities, including education, delivery of services and economic activity. This relates in particular to communication and information technology.

**4. Resources:** We can only succeed if we are able to devote the necessary resources to scientific and technological research and development, including biotechnology. We must further encourage innovation among our people and ensure that we introduce new developments into our productive activities.

**5. Priority Areas:** While ensuring that we continue to develop a balanced economy, we must also identify and develop the lead sectors that will help us

further to expand the base for creation of wealth and give us the possibility to compete successfully within the dynamic world economy.

At least we have a lot of hope for these requirements especially with the enactment of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act of 2013 which recommended that 2% of our GDP be dedicated to Research and Development. The Act also established three institutions: the National Commission for Science and Technology (NACOSTI); the Kenya National Innovation Agency (KENA); the National Research Fund (NRF) which are expected to work in collaboration with the Ministry and other stakeholders to ensure that the National Innovation System is strong enough to produce research outputs that are relevant to our development agenda as spelt out in Kenya Vision 2030.

I am also happy to emphasise that the process of implementing the “Sessional Paper No. 14, 2012” on Reforming Education and Training Sectors in Kenya is geared towards achieving the critical role of providing globally competitive quality education, training, and research for sustainable development. The Sessional Paper places a lot of emphasis on expanding access to education at all levels as well as ensuring quality and relevance of the courses being taught to promote socio-economic development in line with the country’s development agenda.

Programmes such as National Open University of Kenya (NOUK); Provision of student loans and bursaries to university students in both Public and Private Universities including those studying in East African Community countries through the Higher Education Loans Board; Establishment of the Commission for University Education; the award of charters to 31 public

universities; The Enhancement of Quality and Relevance in Higher Education, Science and Technology (HEST) Project through a collaboration between GOK and ADB and the provision of equipment and training for Universities and TVET institutions are all part of the effort to build the much needed critical mass of human resource capacity in the post-secondary institutions of learning.

The Ministry's Directorate of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (DTVET) has also made substantial progress towards fulfilling its mandate of promoting Technical, Vocational Education and Training in the country through operationalisation of the TVET ACT 2013. This has been done by placing a lot of emphasis on revitalisation of TVET and curriculum reform. So far we have expanded TVET infrastructure and aim to construct a TVET institution in every constituency.

The first phase of the project aims to construct a total of 60 institutions by the end of June, 2016. In addition, an additional 70 institutions are at various stages of completion across the country. This is over and above other forms of infrastructure such as workshop equipment and ICT inter-connectivity networks. This has been made possible in collaboration with our development partners such as Government of Netherlands, African Development Bank and the People's Republic of China.

As I mentioned earlier, curriculum reforms have also been given a lot of emphasis as part of the TVET re-branding. We have also established organisations such as TVETA whose role is to facilitate and regulate quality assurance, TVET Curriculum Development Assessment and Certification Council (TCDAAC) Board whose role is to develop and assess curriculum and the Kenya National Qualifications Authority Board whose role is to

ensure that all Kenyan qualifications are nationally and internationally recognised.

This year's National Science Week has a theme that is relevant as we end the Millennium Development Goals' moderate achievements. We now have impetus to move on to the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals. Science, Technology and Innovation have a major role to play in this shift if more success is to be realised. It is my hope that the outcome of the science week will place a lot of emphasis on knowledge sharing for national development and showcase what science has already done to drive the country's development towards the achievement of Vision 2030.

Furthermore, it is very encouraging that students from secondary and middle level colleges are taking part in various competitions and exhibitions. This is in line with the proposals in the ongoing curriculum review process that intends to make learning more practical-oriented and user-friendly from early stages of teaching and learning.

Finally, I would like to commend the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, NACOSTI, exhibitors and presenters for their effort towards making this event a success.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is now my pleasure to declare the fifth National Science Week officially open and wish you fruitful deliberations.

THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU ALL