



**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**  
**MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND**  
**TECHNOLOGY**

**ADDRESS BY MR JOE MUCHERU, EGH, CABINET SECRETARY,  
MINISTRY OF ICT, DURING THE LAUNCH OF STUDIO MASHINANI  
AND Y254 TV CHANNEL AT KOMAROCK, MACHAKOS COUNTY ON  
FRIDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2017**

Cabinet Colleagues,  
Principal Secretaries,  
Governor Alfred Mutua,  
Area MP,  
Women Representative,  
MCAs Present,  
Guest Artists from Jamaica,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very warm welcome to you all, to this youthful and energetic event that launches **Studio Mashinani** and unveils the **Y254 TV** channel right here in Machakos County - which I am also reminded is *The Place to Be!*

I particularly extend a special welcome to our guests – **Etana, Richie Spice** and **Luciano** who have graciously joined us all the way from Jamaica to support this launch.

Today's event comes at a time when the global economy is experiencing high unemployment rates and shrinking job opportunities. Youth

unemployment in Kenya, for those between ages 15-34 years, constitutes 70% of the unemployed workforce. According to World Bank statistics, close to 800,000 young people enter the Kenyan job market annually, but only about 70,000 succeed in securing professional employment in the formal sector. The rest join the '*Kibarua*' workforce and hustle for their day-to-day needs.

None of us here today, can confidently claim not to know an unemployed relative, friend and/or neighbor. Radical interventions need to be put in place to reverse the unemployment trend - various studies have shown that Kenya needs to create about four million jobs for the youth by 2020.

The Government is concerned about the unemployment trend and has made far-reaching interventions under various ministries and agencies that could see a drastic drop in the unemployment statistics.

In the Ministry of ICT, we launched the **Ajira Digital Programme** in November last year to help address youth unemployment by empowering and enabling over 1 million youth every year to earn a decent income. This program aims to significantly solve the unemployment puzzle that has dogged our country for many years.

Ajira Digital Program creates awareness and introduces our unemployed youth to online work, providing training, resources and infrastructure that they require in order to get started and be successful in the digital workspace. I encourage the youth to visit our portal [www.ajiradigital.go.ke](http://www.ajiradigital.go.ke), and register for the program as we journey through and witness Kenya driving quality and numbers, and securing global recognition as an online freelancing hub.

We have invested heavily in awareness creation, sensitization and training about online work in order to grow a critical mass of online workers who can also mentor thousands more to exploit this opportunity and in the process contribute to the attainment of the one million jobs every year.

The online work sector has huge promise for solving the unemployment challenge. Already some 40,000 Kenyans earn a living through online work and the government is determined to leverage on this opportunity to scale up the numbers for our youth. However, we must first change the mindset of our youth, most of who still cling to the illusion that work has to be formal, structured and at a specific physical office. The training and sensitization seeks to empower the youth with appropriate skills geared towards shifting their mindsets from job seekers to job creators.

The infrastructure pillar of the Ajira Digital Programme comprises initiatives such as the Constituency Innovation Hubs, Y254 television channel and Studio Mashinani. The **Constituency Innovation Hubs** project is collaboration between my Ministry, Members of Parliament and the National Government Constituency Development Fund Board.

We have committed to provide free Wi-Fi, high-speed Internet connectivity and digital devices in all the 290 constituencies. Each constituency will have up to four innovation hubs to enable young people at the grassroots level to have equal access to online work and other digital opportunities through which they can develop their innovations and earn decent incomes.

Already, Limuru and Mathioya constituencies have operationalized their Innovation Hubs and we are encouraging more MPs to join the bandwagon by signing up for this project. They will have enabled their constituents to access free Wi-Fi and Internet and also venture into online work and other opportunities. I urge all of you to test the free Wi-Fi provided here today and visualize its impacts when implemented in 1,160 hubs across the country.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Studio Mashinani**, as the name suggests, is a project aimed at taking recording studios within the reach of communities at the grassroots level where majority of talented youth reside. We are piloting with five studios

fitted with modern equipment, beginning with this one here in Machakos County, two in Nairobi and one each in Mombasa and Kisumu.

The studios will be scaled up to 15 more across the country and eventually spread out to all the counties as we move along. The inspiration behind the Studio Mashinani concept is Kenya's enormous creativity and unexploited talent. Many of our talented youth hail from poor backgrounds and cannot afford the high cost of producing and recording their music and other creative content in commercial studios and earn from it.

The creative economy has huge career prospects that Kenya can exploit to sustain the livelihoods of our talented youth. The sector has generated business empires around the world through entertainment ecosystems such as America's Hollywood, India's Bollywood, Nigeria's Nollywood and now our very own Riverwood and our objective as Government is to transform this sector.

Using our hook "***Talent ni Kazi***", we are determined to ensure that talented youth benefit through equal access to the right tools, mentorship and technologies that can progress them to the next level of their creative careers.

Studio Mashinani will make it affordable to produce and record and eventually popularize and commercialize talents from all over the country through Y254 and other digital platforms - because *Talent ni Kazi!*

**Y254** is actually an offshoot of our very own Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), which has also recognized the need to have a dedicated station to promote local talent - because *Talent ni Kazi!*

When fully operational, the creative productions by local artists will increase supply to the demand for local content by local broadcast stations - because *Talent ni Kazi!*

The content produced will boost the efforts by broadcast stations to comply with the statutory 45 to 60 percent requirement for local content which will in turn increase their revenue - because *Talent ni Kazi!*

As I wind up, **Ladies and Gentlemen**, I am confident that the Ajira Digital Program provides a remarkable digital solution to youth unemployment in Kenya.

Coupled with other initiatives such as the **Digital Literacy Program**, which seeks to inculcate digital proficiency at an early age, Kenya is on course to affirming its place as a digital powerhouse and propelling its way to a knowledge-based economy.

I therefore urge the youth to take full advantage of the opportunities that we are creating through the Ajira Digital Programme, either for online work or producing their creative talents at the Studio Mashinani.

It is now my honour and privilege to declare the **Studio Mashinani** project and **Y254 television** channel officially launched.

Thank you and May God bless you all.