



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

**SPEECH BY MR. JEROME OCHIENG, PRINCIPAL SECRETARY FOR THE
STATE DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND
TECHNOLOGY DURING THE LAUNCH OF RONGO CONTISTUENCY
INNOVATION HUBS ON 27TH SEPTEMBER 2019 IN MIGORI COUNTY**

SALUTATION

- 1. Mama Ida Odinga**
- 2. Hon. Paul Abuor, area MP**
- 3. Dr Ezekiel Mutua, KFCB CEO**
- 4. Dr. Naim Bilal, KBC Managing Director**
- 5. Government Representatives Present**
- 6. Our Partners Present**
- 7. Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen**

Good Afternoon.

- 1. First, I take this opportunity** to thank you all for attending this important event-the launch of four Constituency Innovation Hubs (CIH) here in Rongo. I also wish thank the organizers of this function particularly the area MP, Hon. Paul Abuor for having prioritized to invest in this program.
- 2. The launch of this project is** important because it will help resolve the unemployment problem among the youth and members of the community who wish to utilize the center to work on-line or seek information on diverse fields such as faming, markets, training and many others that will improve their livelihoods.

- 3. As you may be aware,** these Innovation Hubs are Technology Centers to be located in every constituency across the country. These centers will be equipped by the government with free wi-Fi and supporting devices to enable the public to connect to the internet to access and transact various online activities and opportunities such as online work and a global exposure for their innovations and creativity.
- 4. The creation of these hubs** is part of government efforts to give equal opportunities for young people in both urban and rural areas to access the information superhighway to enable them pursue their dreams in innovative digital career.

Ladies and gentlemen

5. As Government, we planned to start with the establishment of one innovation hub in every constituency and eventually increased to four per constituency which will bring the total to 1,160 innovation hubs countrywide.

6. I am glad that, here in Rongo, you are the first Constituency in the Country to set up and launch four CHI centers at ago. This is a commendable effort and I hope that other Members of Parliament will follow suit.

7. So far, since the launch of the first CIH in Mathioya Constituency in 2017, we have established 186 CIHs across the country and trained 50,400 youths on Ajira Digital Program.

8. I am happy to note that we have connected 638,000 youths to digital and digitally enabled jobs. The youth work as freelancers who commit to work part-time or full-time at a time of their convenience from any location. Unlike traditional jobs, where individuals have to work in an office setting, freelancing requires no office space and stipulated working time.

9. A freelance worker has the benefit of freedom to choose the time to work and the location. As government, we target to have over 1 (one) million people working on-line in the next one year. With the explosion of technology and innovation, global studies show that the future of work will move on-line.

10. Already, in the developed economies, more and more companies are placing their task on-line to be completed by freelancers. In Kenya, the government is working on modalities to shift some of the work in some departments such as the Judiciary on-line.

11. The online job market requires two categories of labor force, the high skilled for people with skills such as software development and low skilled for work such as transcribing, translation data entry among other tasks.

12. Working with the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA), we are also talking to the private sector players to have some of the companies shift some of their work online to give opportunity to the youth to bid for the jobs.

- 13. We are also working with other partners** including Universities, TVETs BPOs, online Job Platforms and MasterCard to implement the different aspects of the Ajira Digital Program, that will ride on the existence of the Innovation hubs in rural centers.
- 14. We are encouraging firms** to release work to the youths in all forms to enable them earn decent wage and participate in national development.
- 15. In an attempt to expand** digital employment, we have intensified our efforts to identify all categories of sector jobs such as those in the creative and entertainment industry to ensure our youth turn their creativity into innovations and further scale to

entrepreneurship ventures. We also seek to identify some blue-collar jobs in the agricultural, health and construction industry that can be moved online to provide opportunities for freelance workers.

16. I urge parents to encourage and support the youth to embrace on-line work. With the changing nature of work environment, there is need for parents and the youth to change their attitude and perception on on-line and understand that, in digital economy, working online equally, generate decent income even sometimes more than the traditional jobs.

Distinguished Guests;

- 17. As I conclude, I want to emphasize that,** that the government is committed to promoting the use and application of ICT. However, as strategies put technology at the center of development, we acknowledge the emergence of Cybercrime.
- 18. Just like other countries of the world,** Kenya is at risk of cyber threats. For instance, cyber security reports show gradual rising incidents of cyber-crime affecting individuals and public and private institutions. Cybercrimes such as financial fraud or

deliberate damage of critical information infrastructure among others can have a devastating effect on the economy.

19. As Government, we are making efforts to ensure that we have sufficient policy and legal frameworks to deal with the challenges associated with cyber and other computer related crime.

20. The policy also aims to achieve uptake of ICTs and increase in ICT investments in the public and private the sectors. We want to assure you that the government will do everything in its power to provide the citizens with a secure cyber space.

21. With those remarks, It is my honor and privilege to declare the Rongo Constituency Innovation Hubs official launched.