REPUBLIC OF KENYA

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY MR STEPHEN ISABOKE, EBS PRINCIPAL SECRETARY FOR BROADCASTING AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS, MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY DURING THE META TRANSFORM WITH AI PROGRAMME LAUNCH.

FRIDAY, 15 MAY 2026.

iHUB JAHAZI, LAVINGTON, NAIROBI.

SALUTATION

- Distinguished Guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon,

I. Today's gathering reflects an important reality: technology partnerships are no longer optional to national development; they are foundational to it. As digital transformation accelerates globally, countries that succeed will be those that combine policy certainty, infrastructure investment, innovation and strong collaboration. This occasion, marking the launch of the META Economic Impact in Sub-Saharan Africa Report, is therefore both timely and strategic as it allows us to reflect on the growing role of digital platforms in supporting job creation, enterprise growth and innovation within Kenya and across the region.

II. The conversation we are having today is particularly relevant as Kenya continues to advance key regulatory and policy reforms to support a trusted, inclusive and innovation-driven digital economy. As a country, we are actively shaping frameworks around Artificial Intelligence, data governance and platform accountability to ensure that technological progress remains aligned with our national development priorities.

III. Our Government's digital transformation agenda is firmly anchored in the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), the Digital Master Plan 2022–2032 and our broader development blueprint under Vision 2030. These frameworks prioritise universal connectivity, digital public infrastructure, innovation ecosystems, digital skills development and an enabling environment for investment in emerging technologies, including Artificial Intelligence. Kenya is also actively advancing AI governance through the National AI Strategy to ensure innovation is responsible, inclusive and aligned to national priorities.

IV. We have made significant progress in building the foundations of a modern digital economy. Today, our digital economy is valued at approximately USD 4.2 billion and is projected to grow to nearly USD 13 billion by 2035. This growth is being driven by investments in connectivity, digital services, innovation ecosystems and an increasingly dynamic entrepreneurial landscape.

V. Connectivity remains the backbone of this transformation. Through the Government's Digital Superhighway agenda, we are expanding fibre infrastructure, rolling out public Wi-Fi hotspots and increasing access to digital services across the country.

VI. Strategic investments in international connectivity, including submarine cable systems such as 2Africa, are expected to further strengthen Kenya's digital competitiveness, with projections indicating an annual GDP contribution of approximately USD 1.2 billion and onboarding an estimated 4.4 million additional people online by 2035. Presently, 86% of Kenyans report that internet reliability has improved significantly over the last decade.

VII. But infrastructure alone is not enough. Digital platforms are what translate connectivity into real economic opportunity. Today, approximately 2.7 million Kenyan small and medium-sized businesses use digital platforms, including META's ecosystem, to reach customers, reduce operational barriers and expand beyond physical markets. These businesses are estimated to have contributed over USD 550 million to Kenya's GDP in 2025, while achieving productivity gains through faster coordination, lower transaction costs and improved access to markets.

VIII. The report we are launching today is therefore important because it provides evidence-based insights into the economic value of digital platforms within our economy. These insights are critical in informing

policy by helping Government better understand how technology platforms are contributing to enterprise growth, job creation, the creator economy and broader economic participation.

IX. As Government, our role is to provide an enabling environment that both protects citizens and supports innovation. Kenya has established strong legal and policy foundations through the Data Protection Act 2019, the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act 2018 and ongoing work on AI governance, platform accountability and digital economy regulation. Our approach remains clear: regulation must build trust, safeguard users and create confidence for innovation and investment to thrive.

X. Just this week, I accompanied my Cabinet Secretary, the Hon. William Kabogo, to a Senate hearing where the Ministry was called upon to update the country on what Government is doing to strengthen child safety and protection online. This reflects the growing urgency of ensuring that as digital platforms expand, they remain safe spaces for all users, particularly children, the youth and vulnerable segments of our population. I look forward to furthering this conversation with META.

XI. Artificial Intelligence now represents the next frontier of digital transformation. Kenya's National AI Strategy positions the country to harness AI responsibly for productivity, innovation and improved service delivery. Increased AI adoption is projected to contribute approximately USD 6.4 billion to Kenya's GDP by 2035. Open-source AI models are also lowering barriers for local developers, startups and researchers, enabling them to build solutions that are relevant to African markets, contexts and languages.

XII. This is why partnerships matter. Government cannot build the digital economy alone. Industry, academia, innovators and development partners all have a critical role to play. Initiatives such as the META Transform with AI programme being launched today are important case studies of how public-private collaboration can democratise access to AI tools, strengthen SME competitiveness and accelerate Kenya's innovation agenda.

XIII. As I conclude, let me restate that as Government we are determined to deliver a digitally empowered Kenya where connectivity drives inclusion, innovation fuels enterprise and technology creates opportunity for all. We welcome partnerships that align with our

national priorities and strengthen Kenya's ambition to be Africa's leading digital economy.

Thank you.