

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

TALKING POINTS

EVENT: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION *WEEK FOR SOCIETY (STRI4SOCIETY) 2026 FROM 18TH TO 22ND MAY 2026

PS Breakout Session 5: Science Communication and Public Trust in the Age of Misinformation

Date: Wednesday, 20th May 2026 | 15:30 – 17:00 hrs

Venue: Kenyatta International Convention Center

SALUTATION

- Distinguished panelists,
- Colleagues
- Ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon

I. It is an honour to participate in this breakout session at the Science, Technology, Research and Innovation for Society Week 2026, a forum that brings together precisely the voices our time demands: scientists, communicators, policymakers, and citizens united by a shared commitment to ensuring that knowledge genuinely and transparently serves society.

II. We meet today at a particularly significant global juncture. Communication systems across the world are being fundamentally transformed by digital technologies, social media platforms, artificial intelligence, and the extraordinary speed at which information now moves.

Information ecosystems now operate within digital architectures where platform algorithms reward engagement over accuracy, causing emotionally charged narratives to routinely outperform verified scientific truth in speed and velocity.

III. Scientific communication faces a unique global structural challenge. Science is inherently evidence-dependent, complex, and subject to peer-reviewed revision - qualities that are poorly served by the immediacy, brevity, and simplicity demanded by modern social media platforms.

IV. Globally, Artificial Intelligence deepens both opportunity and risk. While it improves multilingual access and reaches historically underserved communities, it simultaneously enables highly sophisticated deepfakes, synthetic content, and automated disinformation at an unprecedented scale.

V. Domestically, Kenya mirrors the global paradox. The nation boasts a historic 149.5 percent mobile penetration (representing 78.4 million SIM subscriptions), yet institutional trust remains fragile at just 38 percent, with over 80 percent of Kenyans expressing deep concern about intentional misinformation.

VI. Kenya navigates this landscape from a position of deep structural strength, utilizing over 220 licensed FM radio stations and more than 90 television stations reaching all 47 counties. Radio remains a primary anchor, consistently reaching more than half of the population weekly.

VII. This traditional media footprint is reinforced by a massive digital foundation of over 66 million mobile subscriptions, more than 25 million active mobile broadband users, and a 4G population coverage exceeding 97 percent, with local newsrooms actively adopting automated AI translation tools.

VIII. To reach Kenya's 48.7 million active smartphone users, scientific communication must be mobile-first and visually driven. Abstract metrics, such as SDG indicator 9.5.1, must be humanized by demonstrating how research investments directly drove Kenya's 4.6 percent economic growth in 2025.

IX. To ensure verified science communication reaches the last mile, the government is prioritizing the urgent modernization of the KNA, transforming it into a digital wire service to distribute real-time, localized research updates across all 47 counties.

X. State is deploying advanced, whole-of-government, AI-powered tracking software across X, Facebook, and TikTok to rapidly counter trending falsehoods. This works alongside the National Communication Centre which will serve as the operational anchor for coordinated messaging during public crises.

XI. Information integrity is legally protected through the Artificial Intelligence Bill, 2026, which mandates the clear labeling of

synthetic content. This works in tandem with February 2026 data security protocols and the "Trusted Voices" initiative to block "disinformation-for-hire" networks.

XII. The Ministry is establishing specialized local creation hubs through the Studio Mashinani project, empowering community journalists to produce ethical multimedia content. This is backed by the transparency of the 100,000-kilometer fiber-optic Digital Superhighway.

XIII. The Government uses the national R&D Indicators Survey to prove it is actively meeting its 1 percent GDP investment goal for research. To bridge the remaining trust gap, the state looks outside laboratories to partner with organic messengers, noting that 70 percent of Kenyans trust religious leaders and 77 percent trust their employers.

XIV. In the 21st century, true national sovereignty and power are built on intellectual capital, verified information, and technological resilience. As Kenya advances its digital transformation agenda, we must ensure that our technological progress is matched with equally serious investment in information integrity, responsible communication, and credible public institutions - not as peripheral concerns, but as the very infrastructure of a well-functioning democracy.

XV. The future of science communication will be shaped not only by the pace of technological advancement, but by the depth of public confidence in the integrity of information. It demands a whole-of-society commitment - from government, researchers, media organizations, educators, technology platforms, and citizens alike.

XVI. Our truth is our anchor. Kenya’s competitiveness on the continent and across the global landscape depends heavily on the structural integrity of its digital systems and the confidence of its citizens. Let

this session be the catalyst for a more transparent, credible, and trusted scientific future for our nation

I thank you