

STATEMENT BY ICT CABINET SECRETARY MR JOE MUCHERU AT A PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE ROLL-OUT OF THE DIGITAL LITERACY PROGRAMME TO SCHOOLS HELD AT TELEPOSTA TOWERS ON 29.9.2016

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen.

Thank you for making time today to attend this press briefing.

Let me start by acknowledging my colleagues, CS Energy and Petroleum, Charles Keter, CS Education, Science & Technology Fred Matiangi and CS Devolution and Planning, Mwangi Kiunjuri.

For the next 30 days, beginning tomorrow (Friday 30th September), cabinet secretaries and principal secretaries will head out to 60 public primary schools across the counties to oversee the inspection and installation of digital devices under the Digital Literacy Program (DLP). The deployment of Cabinet Secretaries and Principal Secretaries to oversee this exercise goes to highlight the importance that government has placed on the program.

The project is set to deliver over 1.2 million devices by December 2016 and will cover all public primary schools across the country thereby setting Kenya on course towards a tech-savvy generation.

In the beginning of August, the Government received the first batch of the digital literacy devices with the cargo from China. To date over 160,000 devices have been received with more expected weekly.

The devices include laptops for the teachers, tablets for the pupils, laptops and Braille embossers for Special Learners, Projectors, Digital Content servers and wireless routers.

The Digital Literacy Project is founded on five major pillars: Teacher capacity, local assembly, digital content, school installations and power connectivity.

The devices are fitted with Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) approved content. Content for class 1, 2 and 3 is already available through the Kenya Education online cloud platform; digital content for class 5 through class 8 can also be accessed and downloaded for free. The cloud solution allows educational publishers to upload their content which will be available to all students in the Digital Literacy Program through multiple platforms.

Over 70,000 primary school teachers have been trained on incorporating ICT in the classroom learning process. Beginning in October, 1,000 teachers will be trained per week in counties, sub-counties and zonal levels. Every public primary school will have at least 2 teachers trained on ICT integration.

Plans are underway to commence assembly of devices locally, with the two consortia (JKUAT/Positivo BGH and Moi University/JP Courto) already setting up assembly plants. JKUAT is set to begin its assembly operation in October. The plant has a capacity of assembling 750,000 devices per year and creating 3,000 local jobs.

The program has led to the connection of all public primary schools to the electricity grid or solar systems, indirectly sparking economic activity in the school environs. Citizens in remote areas can now get electricity or benefit from solar power by virtue of

their proximity to the targeted primary schools. The government is working tirelessly to ensure the remaining schools access power.

The program is employing a multi-sectoral approach bringing together several government agencies to implement the program successfully. The Ministry of Education is providing leadership in content development, Ministry of Energy and Petroleum in power connectivity, Ministry of Industrialization & Enterprise Development in ensuring local assembly of digital devices, Ministry of Planning and Devolution with coordination of DLP at county and sub county level, while the Ministry of ICT provides overall coordination of the program.

Other agencies include The National Treasury, the Office of the Attorney General, Teachers Service Commission, Kenya Institute of Special Education, Kenya National Union of Teachers and Kenya Primary Schools Heads Association.

The full rollout of the DLP program is adding impetus to the process that commenced in May this year with the pilot phase whereby 12,000 devices were delivered to 150 schools across all 47 counties.

To guarantee quality delivery of the program and support the teachers, an army of young, passionate well trained and skilled ICT officers has been deployed to the counties and sub counties as quality inspectors to oversee installation of devices and offer quality technical support to the program. They include recent ICT graduates, a majority of whom are alumni or current participants of the Presidential Digital Talent Program [PDTP]. Expect to see them in your areas in clearly branded reflector jackets (like the one I'm wearing) undertaking tasks to support the program.

It is worth noting that the Digital Literacy Program is not operating in a vacuum. The program is in line with the Smart Africa Initiative

that was launched during the Transform Africa Summit held in Kigali, Rwanda in October 2013. The summit set a renewed pace for the realization of Africa's development aspirations through an ICT propelled transformation and is being replicated in different African countries.

Education transformation through ICT is one of the Jubilee government's key flagship projects that is also in line with the global recognition that ICT has enormous potential to transform not only a country's education but its entire economy.

DLP will see the development of skills for a knowledge economy, promote research and development, enhance local manufactured goods and services and create jobs. The talent pool that is being created by the program which targets young pupils will grow to form the much needed ICT skilled human capacity, The Bearers of the Digital Promise, that will propel Kenya into a global ICT hub.

It is interesting how what started as a simple idea of providing laptops to class one pupils has grown into a truly transformative program, not just in the education sector, but with spinoff benefits way beyond the initially targeted population for the entire country.

Asanteni.