SPEECH BY MR. JOE MUCHERU, CABINET SECRETARY, INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY DURING THE MURANG'ACOUNTY EDUCATION DAY TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY MARCH 18, 2017 AT THE MURANG'A TEACHERS' TRAINING COLLEGE

Today marks an important milestone in Murang'a County as we assemble here to celebrate the academic achievement of our children, the productive labour of our dedicated teachers, the education officials and the sacrifice of our loving parents.

I wish to take this opportunity, on behalf the Government of Kenya and on my own behalf, to congratulate you for this exemplary performance. As government, we appreciate the good work achieved through the concerted efforts of this great team of teachers, educationists and the parents in adequately preparing our children as our country's future quality workforce. It is this effort that has created a big pool of skilled human resources in various fields thus makingour country a regional leader in the supply of skilled labour.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As all of you put in your efforts as individuals for the success of our children, the government is also demonstrating its commitment in preparing our children for a smart society by designing programs and developing projects aimed at strategically positioning the young generation to compete fairly and equally with their peers

globally. It is for this reason that the government initiated the Digital Literacy Program (DLP)which is focused on tapping IT innovative potential of children in their formative age.The DLPprogramme aims at integrating advanced forms of Digital Learning and teaching Solutions in all our Public Primary schools. The objectives of the project is:

1. To entrench ICT in the teaching and learning process and management of education in primary schools;
2. To equip public primary schools with appropriate ICT infrastructure to support teaching and learning process;
3. To develop capacity of education managers, primary school teachers and other stakeholders to enable them apply a wide range of ICT tools in teaching-learning process and management of schools;
4. To facilitate the development and accreditation of appropriate digital content that will enhance acquisition of 21st century skills; and
5. To promote universal access and equitable distribution to ICT infrastructure in primary schools.

Ladies and gentlemen

Another key government program that puts our youth at the center of development is the Ajira Digital. The program aims at introducing young people to on-line workand providing them with necessary tools, training and mentorship to enable them work and earn a decent income. The goal of the government is to enable over 1 million youth to earn above minimum wage from digital platform every year. We will make deliberate efforts to raise the profile of on-line work and promote Kenya as a capital of global freelance hub. To achieve this, we plan to provide skills and training on on-line work to over 10,000 people in the next three months, conduct on-line work campaigns and provision of infrastructure. We are proud that currently, over 40,000 Kenyans work on-line and earn good income.

Additionally, the government plans to set up technology centers called Constituency Innovation Hubs in all the 290 Constituencies across the country. Every constituency will have one center and eventually increased to four bringing to a total of 1,160 innovation hubs countrywide by the end of the project. We thank

Members of Parliament for agreeing to partner with us to implement this worthy course.

The MPs will identify and select the four sites in their constituencies while the national government will provide financing for installations. These centers will enable young people in rural areas to take advantage of free Wifi and internet access to have equal opportunity to find on-line work.

In an effort to take advantage of the creative economy, we are setting up digital recording studios under the project "Studio Mashinani" across the country. The project aims at tapping into creative economy by fully utilizing the talents of our youth. Under the project, the government will build the initial 5 studios; 2 in Nairobi, 1 in Mombasa, 1 Kisumu and 1 in MachakosCounties. The studios will offer opportunity to the Youth to record and distribute their creative music, poetry, comedy, commercials, among others in order to generate income and employment.

In acknowledgment of the power of ICT, the government has taken a deliberate decision to stimulate the development and uptake of the Internet with a view to leapfrogging their economies and thus generate wealth.

Today Kenya is connected to four undersea fiber optic cables with a total connectivity bandwidth of over 850,000 Mbps. To leverage on this high-speed international connectivity, the Government of Kenya has invested in the deployment of terrestrial fiber connectivity to all the 47 counties' headquarters through the National Optic Fibre Backbone Infrastructure (NOFBI).

It is on this account that Government is now able to offer a host of services online, making provision of these services more efficient and cost-effective as well as making the government more accessible to its citizenry.

As I conclude, I would like to urge the youth to maintain integrity and discipline for successful academic pursuit. For candidates, I would advise that you desist from seeking short cuts to pass your examination. My Ministry in collaboration with the Ministry of education has integrated technology to monitor the

administration and marking of national examination. This is aimed at promoting the credibility of the tests and fairness among all candidates.

With these few remarks ladies and gentlemen, I once again thank you your attendance and for inviting me to give this talk.

Thank You