



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**SPEECH BY MR. JEROME OCHIENG, PRINCIPAL SECRETARY MINISTRY OF
INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY DURING THE 2019
HUAWEI ICT COMPETITION AWARDS CEREMONY ON MONDAY 16TH
DECEMBER, 2019 AT RADISSON BLU HOTEL**

SALUTATION:

- 1. DR. JAYA RAMASAMY- Head of Natural Sciences UNESCO Kenya**
- 2. MR. STONE HE- Chief Executive Officer of Huawei Kenya**
- 3. MR. DARIUS MOGAKA OGUTU- Director University Education Ministry of Education**
- 4. MR. ZHAO XIYUAN- Minister Counsellor of the People's Republic of China to Kenya**
- 5. LADIES AND GENTLEMEN**

Good Afternoon!!

- 1.** I'm delighted to attend the **"2019 Huawei ICT Competition"** **Awards ceremony** following last year's inaugural event.

- 2. It has been established that** ICT can be used to promote efficient public service provision and as an enabler of development. The economic pillar of the country's long-term development plan, Vision 2030, considers ICT and related business process outsourcing (BPO) as important drivers of economic growth and key to job creation.

3. The ICT sector is Kenya's most promising source of quality youth employment. It is notable that the digital economy may contribute to inclusive development, because of its ability to create formal jobs that can be easily accessed by youth from marginalized communities.

4. Today's event is a major highlight of the efforts of the Government of Kenya to create a digital economy given the MoU signed in 2014 between Huawei and ICT Authority to equip the Kenyan youth and hence bridge the gap between academia and the job market.

5. Huawei has since embarked on various programs such as the Seeds for the future program and supporting the Digitalent program that's currently on its 4th cohort and Digital Literacy Program.

6. In addition to building capacity amongst the human capital at the ministry through trainings both locally and at the Huawei Headquarters in China. So far over 13 ICT ministry personnel have been trained at the Huawei Headquarters on the latest technologies in 2019 alone.

7. It is therefore prudent to continue investing in ICT skills training and development. In this regard, I would also like to applaud Huawei on the ICT Competition Initiative which plays an integral role in equipping the youth with the much needed skills on emerging technology. This enhances the student's employability and capacity to embark on various ventures within the ICT space.

8. Furthermore, it is advisable to create digital job opportunities and create awareness to the youth about such opportunities. Just

to name but a few is the Ajira Digital program which is one of the initiatives driven by the Ministry of ICT to empower over one million young people to access digital job opportunities.

9. It is important to note that, although the advent of ICT has led to the creation of many jobs, the number of jobs created remains low compared to the number of entrants to the labour market. With this regard, ICT remains necessary for job creation, but not sufficient to address the rise of youth unemployment in Kenya.

10.A challenge we seek to address as a ministry together with our partners is the inconsistency in ICT infrastructure and services between urban and rural areas.

11. With the high level of internet penetration at 89% and notable is the fact that, although Internet access is high, most people access it through mobile devices with a usage of 43%. How do we work closely with service providers to ensure affordable internet hence ensuring inclusivity and overall access?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

12.It is vital for our young people to have the skills, passion, determination and support to develop and use their ICT skills to drive this country forward.

13.The Ministry of ICT continues to work closely across many areas with the private sector, and we are thankful for the long-term strategic partnership. I believe that together we will be able to transform Kenya's economy and the lives of its citizens.

14.To the finalists, may you keep up the good work as you proceed to the next stage. I wish to remind you that you must constantly prove your worth and position yourself accordingly by demonstrating ability to provide innovative and creative solutions.

Once again, congratulations and may God bless you all.