REPUBLIC OF KENYA

STATEMENT DELIVERED BY MR. JOE MUCHERU, EGH, CABINET SECRETARY FOR THE MINISTRY OF ICT, INNOVATION AND YOUTH AFFAIRS

During the Ministerial Session of the 2021 STI Forum under the theme: "STI policies and initiatives for sustainable development - best practices and lessons learned"

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1) Kenya is committed to the realization of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and along with Ghana, Ethiopia, India and Serbia was selected to participate in the Global Pilot Programme on Science Technology and Innovation for SDGs Roadmap.

The Kenyan Pilot Science Technology and Innovations Roadmap for the SDGs was completed in August 2019 with three clear objectives:

   a) To gain a deeper understanding on the use of the guidelines to develop the Kenyan ST&I roadmap

b) To understand better how the Kenyan ST&I roadmap should be effectively undertaken

c) To help prepare a clear work plan for the implementation of the project.

2) Kenya's Pilot programme on the ST&I Roadmap for the SDGs is being undertaken in line with Kenya's long-term development blueprint, Kenya's Vision 2030. The Vision is anchored on three key pillars namely: (i) Economic; (ii) Social; and (iii) Political, which aim to transform Kenya into a newly industrialized, middle-income country providing a high quality of life to all its citizens by the year 2030 in a clean and secure environment. The vision is aligned with the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to achieve decent lives for all on a healthy planet by 2030.

3) The Covid-19 pandemic has presented a new set of disruptions for the global economy while at the same time presenting opportunities for Science, Technology and Innovation to develop solutions in the areas of health, food production, manufacturing, global logistics and ICTs.

The Government of Kenya has successfully deployed various strategies to mitigate the spread of the Corona Virus partly due to the aggressive development within the ICT sector over the past decade. This has also been boosted by the creation of an enabling policy, legal and regulatory environment.

In collaboration with the private sector and development partners, Kenya will continue to support the Science, Technology and Innovation ecosystem in the country in order to promote the country's development, ease of doing business, drive inclusion and foster equality.

Some of the areas where ICT has been adopted to contain the spread of COVID-19 include:

(i)   The adoption of cashless transactions including as mobile money and credit cards to minimize the risk of transmission. To support the Government efforts further, mobile operators have reduced the cost of mobile money transactions.

(ii) The designation of ICTs, including postal/courier, telecoms and media services as essential services. Guidelines on virtual working have been enacted, and public servants (as well as private sector employees) allowed and enabled to work from home.

(iii) The Government also unveiled a number of regulatory measures to complement Government efforts toward combating the Covid-19 pandemic.

(a)   Broadcasters are now required to air Ministry of Health Public Service Announcements (PSA) at no cost. As at May 10, more than 43,000 PSAs had been aired.

(b)   The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development's (KICD) EDU TV channel was designated as a mandatory MUST CARRY channel alongside the national public broadcaster's (KBC) channel 1 on ALL licensed Broadcasting Signal Distributors (BSDs) and Pay TV platforms to enable continued learning by students following the Government directive to close all educational institutions.

(c)   To enable industry players meet increased demand for data and Internet services during this period, the Communication Authority has offered additional spectrum resources to mobile operators and other service providers.

(d)   To manage the raging infodemic, the Government has continuously issued updates and regular advisories to the public to combat fake news and misinformation.

(e)   Kenya has also ensured that first responders in Government and health agencies have access to communication services at times of possible network congestion to ensure continued provision of emergency services.

4) Kenya continues to seek partnership with our global partners in the implementation of the Global Pilot Programme on ST&I for SDGs roadmaps in research, development and implementation of emerging technologies as well as investments towards realisation of our common objectives.

Thank you!