

SPEECH BY JAMES MACHARIA, E.G.H, CABINET SECRETARY FOR THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

DURING

THE MINISTERS FORUM OF THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT CONFERENCE, HELD ON 15TH OCTOBER 2021

- **Mr. Li Xiaopeng**, the Minister of Transport of the Peoples Republic of China;
- Honorable Ministers;
- Distinguished Guests;
- Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is my great pleasure to join you today in the Second United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Conference.

The Kenyan Government continues to invest in quality and reliable infrastructure that is key to boosting productivity, enhancing connectivity, and sustaining long-term and inclusive economic growth and prosperity.

One of the flagship projects aimed at putting Kenya on the path to becoming an upper middle-income country by 2030 is the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) that will run between Mombasa at the Indian Ocean coast and Malaba at the border with Uganda. The first 592km-long section of the SGR is complete and has already had a significant effect on the Kenyan economy. The SGR has

reduced transportation time by half and is much cheaper and more reliable than road transport. It has also catalysed the growth of new trading centres and reinvigorated economic activity in already existing towns, thus transforming the lives of many Kenyans. We are also revamping a century-old meter gauge railway network to provide last-mile rail connectivity and improve the coverage of the rail network across Kenya.

During the eight years of the presidency of H.E. Hon. Uhuru Kenyatta, C.G.H., the Government has constructed more than 10,300km of new tarmac roads across Kenya, which have increased the total paved roads network by 80%. These roads have been an important weapon in the fight against poverty and unemployment. By boosting the economic fortunes of the areas that they traverse, modern roads have availed employment and other opportunities to youth that would otherwise be idle. Upgrading rural roads has also improved security by reducing response times of security agencies. Many of these roads have also opened up areas that were previously remote and inaccessible.

The quality and reliability of Kenya's infrastructure is particularly important as Kenya neighbors five landlocked countries whose principal routes for exports and imports are through the port of Mombasa. The Kenyan Government continues to invest in improving port handling capacity at Mombasa port. We have recently undertaken several projects that have effectively doubled the capacity of Mombasa port, and plan to invest an additional US\$ 3.6 billion to further expand and modernize this port. We have also built a new port on the Indian Ocean coast, Lamu port, which is of strategic importance as it provides an alternative gateway to Kenya and the East African Region.

As I conclude my remarks, I would like to emphasize that rapid economic recovery in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic depends on successful cooperation at the global level. I encourage all participants to use this forum to nurture partnerships and ideas aimed at fast-tracking economic recovery, and facilitating the realization of the first-rate infrastructure developments that our citizens demand!

Thank you for your attention!