

OPENING REMARKS BY AMB. (DR.) AMINA C. MOHAMED, EGH, CAV, CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA DURING 2017 PARTNERSHIP FOR ECONOMIC POLICY [PEP] HIGH LEVEL POLICY FORUM, SANKARA HOTEL, NAIROBI, 14 JUNE, 2017

**Hon. Cabinet Secretary for Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs - Mrs. Sicily Kariuki,
Prof. Jane Mariara, Executive Director, Partnership for Economic Policy,
Dr. Mustapha Nabli, Chair, Board of Directors, PEP
Dr. Simon Carter, Regional Director, Canada's IDRC
Prof. Michael Chege, Public Policy Consultant, Kenya
Participants/Delegates,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.**

1. It is my great pleasure to join you today and to participate in this important occasion. Let me take this early opportunity to thank Partnership for Economic Policy (PEP), the organizers of this Conference which aims at promoting and empowering youth and women in different business undertakings. I acknowledge the great effort and dedication in organizing this high level forum. Kenya is honoured to host this auspicious event.

The choice of Nairobi as the venue for this 14th PEP meeting is also a testament of the confidence you have in our city's role as a conferencing and diplomatic hub.

2. I understand that more than 90 participants have already spent 1 week while undergoing training in research and proposal writing here in Nairobi. Other participants have had the opportunity to visit the neighbouring pristine Murang'a county. We warmly welcome you and hope you are enjoying your stay here with us. For the more than 150 delegates coming from the 37 different countries present here today – kindly accept warm greetings from the people and the government of Kenya. Kenya is a beautiful country with warm hearted people and with immense opportunities for tourism, trade and investments. I invite and urge you to extend your stay to enjoy this hospitality and beauty.

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

3. The Government of Kenya is pleased to host the Partnership for Economic Policy institution (PEP) under a Country Host Agreement signed between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and PEP in September 2014. Kenya is

grateful for the decision to host PEP's global secretariat here in Nairobi.

We recognize the contribution of PEP in various development research activities and capacity building in Africa and other developing countries. The Ministry is especially pleased to have facilitated delegates to attend this year's PEP's Policy Forum on **Promoting Youth and Female Entrepreneurship**. We are looking forward to receiving a report on your deliberations.

4. I congratulate the institutions here present for supporting capacity building for researchers, especially from the developing countries. We consider this capacity building being undertaken by PEP as critical to closing the South – North research gap in terms of linking evidence research to policy; establishing a pool of experts, as well as long-term networking amongst participants. Activities such as this PEP meeting also promote better understanding and exchanges of experiences – for a more responsive global system.

Such concerted efforts by PEP and its partners demonstrate the spirit ingrained in one of my favourite African proverb:

“ If you want to go fast, go alone.

If you want to for **far, go together.**”

5. To address the link between research and policy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has established the Foreign Service Academy, in which Research and Development is a core element for purposes of informing foreign policy – which as we know is dynamic. The Academy continues to build capacity internally and also through exchanges and partnerships. Enhancing expertise at the local, national, regional and international levels which meets international standards remains critical in addressing socio-economic issues and challenges faced globally. I note with appreciation the synergy, support and partnerships that PEP has benefited from since its establishment in 2002. This support [AusAID, CIDA, DFID (or UK Aid), IADB, IDRC, IFPRI, ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, etc.] facilitates North – South as well as South – South knowledge transfer befitting the highest international standards of research and development.

6. Recognition of the role of research and development by Africa in general, and individual African nation-states in particular is evidenced by the decision of African Union

Heads of State Summit in 2006. This AU Summit called on individual African governments to commit 1% of GDP to immediately invest in research and development. To date, African governments who have not met the 1% target pledged at the African Union have been encouraged to increase their spending on research. It is noteworthy that Kenya has gone beyond this requirement by doubling Research and Development Spending to 2% of GDP through passing the 2012 Science, Information and Technology Act. The Government of Kenya is progressively implementing the legal requirement to reach this target as soon as possible.

Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen

7. Experience has shown that responsive policies are based on evidence research. The latter should continuously inform the goal by African leaders, governments and private sector to build entrepreneurship capacity amongst women and the youth. For example, the African Development Bank's **Jobs for Youth in Africa Strategy** which aims at Creating 25 million Jobs and equipping 50 Million Youth between 2016-2025 certainly requires evidence-based research. This will inform policies and

interventions that African governments embark on, in order to gain comparative advantage from Africa's youthful population (the Demographic dividend).

Globally, inadequate livelihoods for the youth has become a source of breeding ground for terrorism and violent extremism with subsequent negative effects on peace, security and development. Kenya remains at the forefront of promoting sustainable livelihoods as a critical factor to peace and security – the latter being one of the five pillars of Kenya's foreign policy.

8. The world today has over 7.5 billion people that require to be taken care of by our planet. All over the world, people are looking for better quality of life; from male to female and young to old. The question is, what is your role in improving the quality of life? Promoting youth and female entrepreneurship among the more than 70% of Africa's population will ensure inclusivity and sustainable development in line with the Africa Agenda 2063.

It also requires research, and all of us to work in partnership for social-economic transformation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs plays this role by pursuing economic diplomacy in order to increase access by Kenyan

business, products and services to traditional and new *niche* markets. Critical to this is the establishment of linkages between the Small Medium Enterprises sectors to the global value chain, agriculture, food security, sound macroeconomic policy, inclusive growth and private sector development. Our economic diplomacy engagement takes place at bilateral and multilateral levels as Kenya strives to support shared prosperity, economic transformation and sustainable development.

9. Regional integration is playing an important role in enhancing economic cooperation and trade among member states in the African continent. These range from the EAC, COMESA, SADC, ECOWAS, and Tripartite agreements amongst others - that integrate development strategies to improve citizens' welfare. Youth and women should take the opportunities that arise from integration like trade, investment and other forms of business operation to improve their standard of living. This is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals' aim of eradicating poverty and improving quality of life by the year 2030. Inclusiveness of Women and Youth will contribute towards achieving Africa's vision of an "An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its

own citizens and representing a dynamic force in international arena’.

Ladies and gentlemen

10. With those [few] remarks, I wish PEP all the best as you continue with your mission to build capacity in providing contextualized policy solutions for sustainable development. I am sure you will have fruitful discussions that will give Governments insights on how to enhance youth and women economic empowerment for inclusive growth and development.

11. I once again invite you to extend your stay so that you can sample Kenya’s beautiful tourism sites and the warmth of the Kenyan people.

ASANTE! MERCI ! THANK YOU.