



PEP Policy Forum, June 14, 2017

Sankara, Nairobi

Prof. Jane Mariara: Welcome remarks

Your Excellency, Mrs. Sicily Kariuki, Cabinet Secretary for Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs

Her Excellency Amb. (Dr.) Amina C. Mohamed, Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Represented by: Ms. Njambi Kinyungu, Chef de Cabinet, Office of the Cabinet Secretary;

Our donors represented by Drs. **Yolanda Chakava (DFID)** and **Arjan de Haan, Simon Carter** and the entire IDRC team;

Our collaborators and stakeholders; invited guests, ladies and gentlemen, all protocols observed.

On behalf of PEP, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this policy forum, to discuss key development issues related to promoting youth and women's entrepreneurship. We are very honoured by your presence today.

We greatly appreciate the hosting of PEP in Kenya under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through a Country Host Agreement signed in 2014. We do not take for granted the Privileges and Diplomatic Immunity granted to PEP by the Kenyan Government.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has provided PEP with unwavering support over the last 3 years. The Ministry facilitated the expedited issuance of visas for guests to PEP's Annual Conference and General Meetings, which culminate in today's policy and research forum.

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We are delighted to contribute, not only to building capacity among researchers, but also to the policy debate on youth and female entrepreneurship, both in Kenya, and in 58 other countries world-wide.

Your **Excellency, Madam Cabinet Secretary**, we at PEP thank you very much for taking time out of your very busy schedule to engage with us and officially open our conference.

I am cognizant of the relevance of PEP research to your Ministry. We have a team that recently completed relevant work in Muranga County. And they have just presented another research proposal to build on the same work.

We look forward to engaging further with your Ministry in policy dialogues, as well as working closely with other key Ministries of the Republic of Kenya over the coming years, to address economic policy issues related to growth and employment.

Our donors, we thank you for your continued support, both financial, and technical. Your considerable presence here today is a testimony to the great value that you place on PEP. We are exceedingly grateful. We will continue to work tirelessly to not only delivery on our mandate, but also to develop and diversify the PEP research and capacity building model as we implement our new strategic plan.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, I invite you all to challenge researchers in your networks to consider engaging with PEP and to look out for our next call for proposals launching in July 2017.

I thank you!