



**MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION  
OFFICE OF THE CABINET SECRETARY**

**SPEECH BY MR. SIMON K. CHELUGUI, E.G.H., CABINET  
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DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE CISCO BRIDGE IT ACADEMY  
AT NITA HEADQUARTERS ON 30<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2021**

**All distinguished guests present;**

**Ladies and gentlemen;**

It gives me great pleasure to be among you today as we witness the launch of this programme that will greatly contribute to disability mainstreaming in Kenya.

On Monday this week My Ministry launched the disability awareness booklet developed in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - Article 8, that directs that ‘State Parties raise awareness throughout society, including at the family level, regarding Persons with Disabilities, to foster respect for their rights and dignity;’ and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that have an overarching principle of “leave no one behind”

That Booklet has been developed to guide in creating awareness on disability with an aim of demystifying disability, to reduce stigma and discrimination, and thus enhance social inclusion of Persons with Disabilities.

My expectation is that the booklet shall be disseminated for use as a tool to sensitize the public on disability issues, advocate for the rights of Persons with Disabilities and to increase acceptance for their involvement and participation in National Development.

I am glad to state that Kenya has continued to improve data on Persons with Disabilities as evidenced by the Kenya National Housing and Population Census of 2019 that used the Washington Group of Short Questions in the census. According to the census, **918,270** people aged 5

years and above had a disability with a total of **9,729** persons having albinism.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Many companies the world over realize that people with disabilities are productive and reliable employees who bring benefits to the workplace. This realization has therefore meant that companies make deliberate efforts towards employment of people with disabilities.

Some companies even engage in developing products and services for people with disabilities, their families and friends. And, as companies engage with communities in which they work, many are paying more and more specific attention to people with disability.

In both developed and developing countries many societies are also recognizing the need to dismantle disability barriers by making the physical environment more accessible, providing information in a variety of formats, and challenging attitudes and mistaken assumptions about people with disabilities.

The Government of Kenya recognizes disability inclusion as a prerequisite to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. To this end, the Government will continue to ensure that persons with disabilities are accounted for, and participate fully in every aspect of life. It is for this reason that we are gathered here today to launch the Bridge IT academy, which will contribute significantly in disability mainstreaming.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Effective industrial skills training is an essential prerequisite for the creation of a productive workforce, that contributes to the socioeconomic development of a country. Towards this, the Government of Kenya has put in place a number of programmes to enhance Kenya's human capital development, these include; **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy**, a Policy meant to appreciate skills that are not necessarily acquired in a formal environment.

The other policy is **Industrial Training and Attachment Policy** which aims at recognising the place of Skills acquired by workers through Skills Upgrading programmes such as, Apprenticeship and Indentured Learnership; and the establishment the **Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF)** which recognises four learning pathways in Kenya (the Basic Education; Technical and Vocational Skills; Higher Education and Skills training).

**The Skills Framework** is facilitated by **NITA** among other players in skills development sector. I note that The Government National Trade Test Certificate and National Skills Certificate offered by NITA is now placed at Level **2 to 8** of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework KNQF.

I wish to appreciate the work that NITA is doing in equipping entrants into the labour market to be agile and adaptive in a fast evolving labour market through apprenticeship Training, Industrial Attachment and Internship,

Recognition of Prior Learning, Indentured Learnership and Skills Upgrading training programmes.

In particular, the Skills Upgrading programme involves training youth through pre-skilling (in areas requiring skills development interventions), up-skilling (to enable youth acquire superior skills to remain in the job market), or re-skilling (to enable youth acquire new skills to enable them perform new roles). The bridge IT academy, will be expected to contribute towards skills upgrading for people with disability.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

The digital economy plays a significant role in accelerating global economic development, enhancing productivity of existing industries, cultivating new markets and industries, and achieving inclusive, sustainable growth.

Digital economy has also become a powerful catalyst and driver of inclusiveness, by linking communities to create a “global village”; removing barriers to trade; and encouraging information and knowledge sharing and hence the digital economy has the opportunity to create jobs especially through the online platforms.

In the last few years we have seen an increase in online jobs such as Online Taxi drivers, Delivery service, online trading and purchase, among others. It is now estimate that there are close to 677,961 online digital workers in Kenya. Importantly, the digital platforms, are able to covert online workers from informal to formal employment like it is happening in the Taxi business.

**Ladies and gentlemen;**

Digital skills and values are key to digital entrepreneurship, digital adoption and transformation. It is worth noting that the digital transformation process will progress speedily through the collective effort of all stakeholders both in the public and private sector.

The digital economy strategy seeks to transform marginalised groups into a digitally adaptive, skilled, and innovative workforce that will not only comprehend, adopt, and move with global trends but chart their own digital pathways towards inclusive growth and development.

This strategy complements key Government undertakings as spelt out in the national ICT policy, where the Government seeks to create job opportunities and provide assistance to the disadvantaged; people with special needs, women and the youth to acquire ICT skills through e-inclusion and e-accessibility activities and programmes.

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

The experience gained throughout the coronavirus pandemic has taught us that listening, and embedding the needs of people with disabilities in “non-pandemic times” might allow us to create systems that are better for everyone, and potentially more responsive in times of crisis, since people with disabilities, suffer more during times of crisis like the one COVID-19 has brought on all of us.

I am confident that this partnership between Sightsavers International through Inclusion Works, NITA, Cisco and three talents, will be successful in promoting more inclusive societies and employment opportunities for people with disabilities that will enable improved access to basic education, industrial training relevant to labour market needs, and jobs suited to their skills, interests and abilities. My Ministry will continue to champion programmes aimed at supporting the improvement of livelihoods in all sectors of people living with disabilities.

As I conclude, let me commend all the partners involved in this programme for your commitment to ensuring that disability inclusion is integrated into Government policies, plans and programmes to ensure that needs, aspirations and interests of people with disabilities are addressed.

You can be assured of My Ministry's support in this and similar programmes aimed at increasing the level of awareness in all Ministries, State Corporations, County Governments, learning Institutions and other Public Institutions.

**IT IS NOW MY HUMBLE DUTY TO OFFICIALLY LAUNCH THE  
CISCO BRIDGE IT ACADEMY**

**Thank you**