



**MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS, CREATIVE ECONOMY  
AND SPORTS**

**OFFICE OF THE CABINET SECRETARY**

**SPEECH BY THE CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF YOUTH  
AFFAIRS, CREATIVE ECONOMY AND SPORTS, HON. SALIM  
MVURYA, EGH, DURING THE JOBS FOR THE YOUTH IN AFRICA  
COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (CoP) KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE  
EVENT ON 3<sup>RD</sup> MARCH 2026 AT GLEE HOTEL, NAIROBI**

- **Fikirini Jacobs, Principal Secretary, State Department for Youth Affairs and Creative Economy;**
- **Ndiame Diop, Regional Vice President for Eastern and Southern Africa, World Bank**
- **Henrik Elschner Pedersen, *IFC Regional Industry Director for Manufacturing, Agribusiness, and Services in Africa***
- **Diana Dalton, *FCDO Deputy High Commissioner and Development Director***
- **Sabelo Lyndon Mbokazi, *Head, Labour, Employment and Migration, Africa Union Commission***
- **Augustine Mayabi, National Project Manager NYOTA Project;**
- **Development Partners & Private sector leaders;**
- **Senior Officials from Government and Private Sector;**
- **The Young People of our country;**

## **Ladies and Gentlemen, Good Morning!**

It is a great honour to welcome you to Nairobi for **the Youth for Jobs Community of Practice**. We are especially privileged to host distinguished representatives from the African Union. Your presence affirms that youth employment is not just a national priority but a continental imperative.

Africa is the youngest continent in the world. Over 60 percent of our population is under the age of 25. This demographic reality presents us with a choice.

We can either harness this youth bulge as a demographic dividend, or we risk turning it into a demographic pressure. The difference lies in jobs that are decent, dignified, and sustainable jobs.

Kenya firmly aligns its youth employment agenda with the continental frameworks of the African Union, including Agenda 2063 and the Africa Youth Charter. We share a common vision: an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa driven by its own citizens, especially its youth.

Today's Community of Practice is therefore more than a technical meeting. It is a platform for continental learning. It is a space where we move from isolated national projects to shared African solutions.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me to outline **three pillars** that we believe are essential not only for Kenya, but for Africa's broader Youth for Jobs agenda. **First, market-responsive skills for the future of work.**

Across our continent, we must bridge the gap between education systems and labour markets.

Technical and vocational training, digital skills, green economy competencies, and creative industry expertise must be prioritized. The global economy is changing rapidly. This includes artificial intelligence, digital platforms, climate adaptation, and innovation ecosystems, which are reshaping how work is defined.

In Kenya, we have taken deliberate, large-scale steps to align skills development with real economic opportunity. Through the Digital Jobs Agenda, popularly known as Kazi Mtandaoni, thousands of young people are being trained and onboarded

into online work, business process outsourcing, digital freelancing, and technology-enabled entrepreneurship.

This programme forms part of the broader national jobs initiative that has contributed to approximately **1,807,000 jobs** created through public sector employment and flagship interventions. By positioning Kenya as a regional digital talent hub, we are ensuring that our youth can compete in the global marketplace without leaving their communities.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The **NYOTA Program** has become one of our most transformative youth empowerment platforms. The program will ensure that more than **820,000** young people are benefiting from its integrated components, including structured skills training, enterprise grants, on-the-job experience placements, and Recognition of Prior Learning to formally certify existing competencies.

Under the program, a further **200,000** young people are set to benefit under the Kenya Jobs and Economic Transformation

(KJET) programme, which strengthens productivity, value chain integration, and sustainable job placement.

Under **Kazi Majuu**, we are facilitating safe, structured, and government-to-government labour mobility arrangements to enable Kenyan youth to access overseas employment opportunities, while ensuring protection, skills matching, and pre-departure training.

Complementing this is our investment in **Technical and Vocational Education and Training institutions** across the country, where curricula are being reformed to embed green

economy skills, climate-smart agriculture competencies, digital literacy, and industry-led certification aligned to employer demand.

Together, these interventions ensure that skills acquisition in Kenya is no longer theoretical or disconnected from economic realities. Through stronger collaboration under the African Union, we can harmonize standards, share curricula innovations, and promote cross-border skills mobility.

The second pillar is **enterprise growth as the backbone of job creation.**

In Africa, small and medium enterprises generate the majority of jobs. Young entrepreneurs are already innovating in agriculture, fintech, renewable energy, fashion, logistics, and digital services. However, they face persistent barriers such as limited access to finance, weak market linkages, and fragmented support ecosystems.

The Government of Kenya has placed enterprise development at the centre of its economic transformation strategy. Beyond the Youth Enterprise Development Fund, the NYOTA Business Support Component, value chain integration under the Kenya

Jobs and Economic Transformation (KJET) programme, the Government of Kenya has rolled out several additional enterprise-focused interventions to deepen youth-led economic participation and strengthen MSMEs.

First, **the Hustler Fund** has expanded access to affordable, collateral-free credit at scale, particularly for informal traders, start-ups, and micro-enterprises that traditionally lack access to formal banking. Secondly, the **Affordable Housing Program**, apart from creating employment and sharpening skills, the program has opened structured enterprise and supply-chain

opportunities for youth-led businesses in construction, manufacturing of building materials, transport, and service provision. This has expanded employment not only through direct labour but also through MSME subcontracting and value chain participation.

Under the **Climate Worx and green economy initiatives**, young entrepreneurs are being integrated into climate-resilient sectors such as waste management, renewable energy solutions, afforestation value chains, and climate-smart agriculture. This aligns enterprise development with

environmental sustainability and emerging global markets. Collectively, these interventions move us from isolated financing schemes to a coordinated enterprise ecosystem.

The third pillar is **accountability and data-driven implementation**. We must measure what truly matters. It is not enough to count enrolments in training programmes; we must track transitions into employment, business survival rates, income growth, and inclusion outcomes for young women and persons with disabilities. Evidence must guide scale, and data must guide policy.

In Kenya, we have institutionalized a whole-of-government approach under a five-pronged national jobs initiative. Cabinet Secretaries and Principal Secretaries regularly convene to review progress and accelerate implementation across sectors. With bold 2026 targets in place, we remain focused on delivery, coordination, and inclusion.

On the **creative economy**, the Government has taken bold steps to position it as a serious economic pillar rather than a peripheral cultural activity. The Creative Economy agenda is now embedded within the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Creative

Economy and Sports, signalling its elevation as a core driver of jobs, exports, and national branding.

We have prioritized the development of a Creative Economy Policy and are advancing structured reforms to strengthen intellectual property protection, monetization frameworks, and digital rights management so that artists and content creators earn fairly from their work.

Efforts are underway to modernize copyright administration and streamline collective management systems to ensure transparency and timely royalty payments.

Through partnerships with global digital streaming platforms and local distribution networks, Kenyan musicians, filmmakers, and digital creators are accessing wider markets and monetizing content globally.

The department has further created structured platforms for youth in music, film, fashion, gaming, sports, and digital content creation. Through partnerships, digital monetization platforms, and intellectual property protection reforms, we are formalizing and scaling what has traditionally been an informal sector into a significant job-creating industry.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Kenya has demonstrated commitment to deepening collaboration with the African Union and fellow member states. We believe that regional cooperation is key to unlocking youth employment at scale. Labour mobility, digital trade, climate-smart agriculture, sports economies, and the creative industries all present opportunities that transcend national borders.

By investing strategically in these sectors, we can transform cultural capital into economic capital. To our county governments, development partners, and the private sector,

your role is central. Implementation must be efficient, transparent, and inclusive. National and continental frameworks only become meaningful when translated into action at the local level.

To the youth of Africa represented here, you are not beneficiaries of policy; you are partners in transformation. Continue to innovate. Continue to demand accountability. Continue to lead. The continent's future is not something that will happen to you; it is something you are already shaping.

**In closing,** May this forum focus on practical outcomes as to how we align national youth employment programs with continental strategies, how to strengthen cross-border learning, how to ensure that rural, marginalized, and vulnerable youth are not left behind and how to move from pilot projects to scalable models.

**Welcome to Kenya, Asanteni sana.**