



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**MINISTRY OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATIONS AND
TECHNOLOGY**

**SPEECH BY MR. JOSEPH TIAMPATI, PRINCIPAL
SECRETARY MINISTRY OF INFORMATION,
COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY DURING THE
LAUNCH OF THE SCHOOL OF OPEN AFRICA, AT THE
SERENA HOTEL, WEDNESDAY 22ND OCTOBER, 2014**

**-Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology,
Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi;**

**-Adviser for Communication & Information, UNESCO Regional
Office for Easter Africa – Mr. Jaco DU TOIT,**

**-Senior Lecturer, School of Business, University of Nairobi Dr.
Bitange Ndemo**

**-Manager, Policy & Government Relations, Google Kenya – Mr.
Michael Murungi**

**-Creative Commons Regional Coordinator for Africa – Mr. Alex
Gakuru;**

**-Professors, Senior Academic and Learned Representatives of
various Universities;**

- Members of University Management Board;**
- CopyrightX Law Course graduands;**
- Creative Commons Members of staff;**
- Invited Guests;**
- Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Good morning.

It gives me great pleasure to be here today as the Chief Guest during the launch of School of Open - Africa. I would like to begin by sincerely thanking Creative Commons Africa community and under the able coordination of Alex Gakuru and Tobias Schonwetter, and the global Creative Commons Community for inviting me to preside over this launch.

I am happy to note the enthusiasm demonstrated by School of Open Africa in transforming education along Sustainable Development Goals proposed for post-2015 (**Goal No. 4: “*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all*”**) and in line with the Kenya Vision 2030 which seeks to transform Kenya into a middle-income country that offers high quality of life to all citizens by the year 2030. I am happy to note how much School of Open Africa has grown in Kenya and embraced in countries like Senegal, Nigeria, and South Africa among other African countries in the last few years. I am informed that School of Open by Creative Commons is

highly reputed around the world for addressing universal access to education.

Kenya is a signatory to the UNESCO's 2012 Paris Declaration on Open Education Resources licensed under Creative Commons open licenses. The use of open education resources improves the quality of teaching and learning, including by accelerating student comprehension and by providing more opportunities for the realisation of universal access to education. Open Educational Resources (OER) are teaching, learning, and research materials in any medium that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits their free use and re-purposing by others.

Fully aware of the role of education in a country's development agenda, I am sure that the new initiatives being undertaken by School of Open Africa, the Creative Commons and UNESCO are making their contribution towards the social, economic, and political pillars which are the three fundamental cornerstones of our country, and indeed for our great continent.

Ladies and gentlemen, as you may be aware, the Country's development blue print is being implemented through successive five-year Medium Term Plans (MTPs) that will finally enable the country to

achieve the long-term goals. We are now in the second medium term plan cycle (2013-2017) whose theme is ***“Transforming Kenya: Pathways to Devolution, Socio-economic Development, Equity and National Unity”***. As you may be aware, the ICT Authority rolled out the National ICT Master plan that will set the pace for progression of the country in ICT for the next five years. The Master plan – once fully rolled out – will completely transform government processes, services and management, and make information access and service delivery more efficient. Again, the Master plan, with the flagship projects to pilot its implementation, will steer the march towards the digital future that will transform the country to a regional technical hub, raise the country’s competitiveness and align the country in line with vision 2030’s ICT goals.

By launching the Kenya ICT Master Plan, the government revealed its commitment towards the enhancement of access to quality education and training through ICT in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We are reviewing the National ICT Policy Guidelines to ensure alignment with proposed Sustainable Development Goals.

As a country, we are also privileged to have a National ICT Policy whose goal is to create a prosperous ICT-driven Kenyan society. With a well mainstreamed ICT society, we are assured of better livelihoods of Kenyans attainable through the availability of accessible, efficient, reliable and affordable ICT services.

ICT provides a platform that enables the realization of these goals. I must emphasize that Creative Commons through the School of Open Africa has provided a good example of innovative use of ICT in education that resonates well with the Kenya National ICT Master Plan. The integration of ICT into educational programmes places both the teaching staff and students at the forefront in the utilization of ICT for the enhancement of lives.

I note with great pleasure the freedom to re-purpose offered by openly licensed educational resources, the convenience online access to learners as alternative courses delivery and certification methods. At this juncture, **ladies and gentlemen**, I thank William Fisher III, Professor of Intellectual Property and his staff at the Berkman Centre for Internet and Society at Harvard Law School for providing a free copyright law course taught to graduands present today to receive their certificates. I also thank Michael Murungi (then CEO, National Council for Law Reporting or “Kenya Law”) and Alex Gakuru for successfully conducting the course in Nairobi. I must congratulate the former students and ask to make the very best use of the copyright law knowledge they acquired while also challenging all universities represented here to consider emulating the highly successfully CopyrightX initiative.

As the government continues to work on modalities of ensuring universal access to education and increasing the internet penetration in all parts of the country, we are pleased to witness this mode of study that will definitely translate to affordable education. Open Education Resources coupled with innovative use of ICT in education will accelerate realization of a modern *Kenya* that will be a knowledge-based economy.

By using Open Educational Resources, OER, School of Open is opening up to many students who would have otherwise missed the opportunity of accessing education, especially in the marginalized areas which could not adequately access quality education. Ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons is one of the characteristics of the 21st Century. One of the major ways of promoting life-long learning is the continuous use of ICT innovations in education.

I congratulate School of Open teams across Africa for the innovative and transformative mode of teaching and learning that we are launching today. This African initiative is a worthy model for other regions of the world to emulate.

As I conclude I take this opportunity to applaud UNESCO's efforts and contribution in the development and growth of the country through this noble initiative that enables the primary, secondary and universities to

optimize the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in learning. I acknowledge the generous financial support from the Hewlett Foundation and SOO Africa teams support by Google.

With those remarks, it is now my pleasure to declare the School of Open Africa officially opened.

Thank you.