



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY HON. WILLIAM
SAMOEI RUTO PhD, CGH, THE PRESIDENT OF
REPUBLIC OF KENYA AND COMMANDER –IN-
CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCES DURING THE
LAUNCH OF THE E-CITIZEN PLATFORM**

JUNE 30TH, 2023

KICC, NAIROBI

Good Morning,

1. Our present institutional dispensation, mandated by the Constitution is the expression of our collective hopes and aspirations, as well as the lessons learnt as a country from the wilderness that the paths of history took us through.
2. For far too long, the delivery of public services to citizens has been hampered by inefficiency, delay, corruption, wastage, discrimination and outright exclusion, especially of the poor and vulnerable. Colossal backlogs of cases not attended to, missing files which resurface upon the offer of a bribe, favouring some groups and disenfranchising others on the basis of nepotism and tribalism, have been the order of the day. For the citizen, inordinate delays and lack of information on the progress of their matters was a normal part of the ordeal of obtaining government services.
3. For a long time, therefore seeking government services was a painful experience that Kenyans only endured, if they could not avoid it, and the relationship between citizens and the state was characterized by extremely low trust.
4. This history of estrangement between government and citizens created the conditions for widespread disaffection, and the agitation for a new constitutional dispensation, which placed effective, efficient and responsive government at the heart of national aspiration. Consequently, the Constitution not only makes good governance, integrity, transparency and accountability national values and principles of governance under Article



- 10, it also sets out efficient, effective and economic use of resources, as well as responsive, prompt, effective, impartial and equitable provision of services to be values and principles of public service, under Article 232.
5. The Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda recognizes transparency, accountability and efficient use of resources as imperative to ensure that scarce public resources deliver maximum value for the highest number of citizens. The government considers good governance to be indispensable for national socioeconomic transformation.
 6. At the same time, we are fully alive to the magnitude of the corruption challenge, the extent to which it has undermined our prospects and opportunities to achieve greater development, and its potential to overwhelm national institutions, including oversight as well as law enforcement and accountability mechanisms.
 7. This particular reality has caused us to consider radical innovations to overcome the transactional inefficiency barrier to public service delivery. In our Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda, we pledged to undertake two key interventions intended to attack this problem simultaneously.
 8. First, we pledged to provide universal broadband connectivity throughout the country by constructing 100,000 kilometres of new fibre-optic lines, establish 25,000 free wi-fi hotspots in market centres in every part of Kenya, and also build 1450 digital hubs in every ward of this country. The intention here is to ensure that ICT



- connectivity becomes accessible to all citizens, wherever they live or work.
9. Secondly, we made a commitment to enhance government service delivery through digitization and automation of all government critical processes, and to also make at least 80% of all government services accessible online.
 10. These undertakings are critical for the realization of our most fundamental mandates as government. On Madaraka Day, I emphasized our duty to deploy the best innovations and technologies to make Kenya efficient, competitive and prosperous. Today, I reiterate that technology holds the key to improving efficiency, enhancing inclusion, promoting transparency and integrity, deepening trust and enhancing public confidence in government service provision.
 11. We have taken measures to empower Kenyans everywhere, especially the majority at the bottom of our socioeconomic structure, to access government services at their convenience, through their mobile devices.
 12. As promised on Madaraka Day, we are launching the e-Citizen platform's Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD) code *2222# by which citizens can now access 5,084 government services online. By the end of this year, a total of 10,000 services will be available on the platform.
 13. Today, as the world marks World Social Media Day, we are underlining the importance of our digital transformation agenda. Towards that end, we encourage all other government departments to move their services online within the next 90 days.



14. This new era of e-Governance makes life and work significantly easier for millions of Kenyans for a number of reasons. First, government services are no longer the privilege of the wealthy, powerful or the well-connected, or those who can afford to travel to county headquarters and the capital city. Kenyans can obtain government services from the comfort of their home, or from their shambas, kiosks, on the road, and everywhere else. This is the power and promise of Gava Mkononi: you have your government in the palm of your hand.
15. Secondly, previously unserved or underserved regions and communities, are no longer excluded from government service provision. Thirdly, Kenyans are interacting directly with a digital platform, without the need for brokers and intermediaries. Additionally, people can track the progress of their interactions in real time, thus eliminating uncertainty, corruption and frustration.
16. Further, citizens need only pay the gazette fees for government services, and not a shilling more. These fees are accurately accounted for in real time through ICTs and remain visible at all times to the National Treasury and the Kenya Revenue Authority for efficient revenue administration.
17. We are well on our way to paperless governance, where there will be no physical registries and files to be mislaid by mischievous persons in search of a bribe or movement of people from office to office.
18. I encourage Kenyans to take advantage of ICT digital skills training opportunities provided by the ICT Authority in



conjunction with private sector collaborators and development partners, in order to enhance their capacity to consume digital government services. I am glad to note that the ICT Authority has embarked on digital skills programmes for citizens and public sector workforce targeting 20 million people.

19. Through the private sector partnership, Gava Express will be available in more than 250,000 M-Pesa shops, 28,000 KCB shops, 40,000 Equity shops and 22,000 Cooperative Bank shops, to serve those without smart phones.
20. By the same token, I urge the ICT Authority to accelerate actualisation of our Digital economy agenda, even as the Ministry of ICT moves with speed to establish the Digital Superhighway's fibre-optic, as well as ICT hubs and wi-fi hotspots infrastructure.
21. Automation of government services is a great achievement, but it is just the first step. The Ministry of ICT and Digital Economy, through the ICT Authority is going to drive the digitization agenda. It will work on consolidating key systems and ensuring that the government establishes one core system for operations, as witnessed today through the use of Digital Signature. The Ministry of Interior through the State Department of Citizen Services will continue to identify and coordinate services to be onboarded on the E-citizen platform.
22. The imperatives of governing in the digital age come with many opportunities, as we have seen, and challenges as well. A major challenge that should concern all of us relates to the domain of cyber security. We must promote necessary skills and competencies to keep our e-



governance agenda ahead of threats online, such as data privacy violations, identity theft, malware and denial-of-service attacks.

23. I am confident that this country, the home of world-beating innovators, can develop and maintain robust and world-class cybersecurity systems to keep government, the private sector and citizens secure online on a sustainable basis.

It is now time to enjoy your services online.

