



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

REMARKS BY

HON. FLORENCE BORE,

**CABINET SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND SOCIAL
PROTECTION DURING THE TRADE TEST BRIEFING OF
ASSESSORS AND LAUNCH OF THE 2022 DECEMBER
SERIES ON 5TH DECEMBER 2022**

HELD AT NITA MOMBASA

The Chairman, National Industrial Training Board, Dr. Kamau Gachigi

The Director General Eng. Stephen Ogenga

NITA Members Present

Management Staff of Nita Present

Staff from the Ministry Of Labour and Social Protection

Trade Test Supervisors and Assessors Present;

All Distinguished Guests Present;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good Morning;

I am honoured to be here today to launch the National Government Trade Test that is a testament to NITA's commitment to transforming Kenya's occupational testing and assessment landscape as we currently know it.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The fourth industrial revolution has the potential of transitioning employees with the right skills to assume beneficial roles in the future labour market.

According to the industrial development on industrializing in the digital age report (IDR) 2020 the future of industrialization in the context of a technological paradigm shift is viable.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

As such, industrialization continues to be the main avenue for successful development and provide analyses on how developing countries such as Kenya can leverage the salient features of the emerging technologies to their advantage.

Through industrialization, Kenya can build and strengthen the skills and capabilities needed to compete and succeed within the new technological paradigm. New technologies unlock product and process innovations, leading to expansion of industries, creation of jobs and income opportunities and the greening of the economy.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Globally, quality skills development has been directly linked to youth employment and sustainable economic development. If anything, relevant skills, competencies and access to jobs can help accelerate the progress on the sustainable development goals, resulting in economic empowerment for all.

Industry remains a big contributor for job creation, which is a major driver for economic development and the realization of the Kenya vision 2030 and the government's skills transformation agenda. For this to be a reality, there is increasing and significant demand for skilled workers in industries in Kenya and also a demand for improved quality of goods and services that meet both local and international standards.

This entails having the right skills set needed by industry in the job market. Central to this is access to education, vocational and lifelong learning for skills development and enhancement.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Successful industrialization therefore can increase productivity and unleash more dynamic sectors in Africa that can create and sustain jobs (absorption of labour).

Some industrialization policies that show good promise in Africa are skills transformation, agriculture-driven transformation, local content and local participation, modernization of the services sector, export-oriented manufacturing, and enhancement of infrastructure.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Industrialization along with industrial policy has experienced a revival as a central component of development strategies in Africa and beyond.

For many years, productive sector interventions were undervalued and proactive government involvement in the structural and industrial development of economies was largely discouraged. However, governments in both industrialized and developing countries have witnessed the strategic necessity of industrial policy to sustain growth through structural change.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Whilst Kenya is keen on realizing the government's skills transformation agenda aspirations, the lack of adequate skills is still a challenge to labour productivity.

According to a 2018 world economic forum report, 3 out of 10 Kenyans lack the required skills thereby reducing productivity and increasing the cost of doing business in the country. This is a clear indication that it is time that we developed industry-led skills policies such as the presidential directive that has given priority to skills development through the executive order no. 3 that will ensure that human skills development connects effectively to labour market needs.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Skills development is paramount because it not only stimulates the creation of a sustainable development system, but it also contributes towards enabling the informal sector to become competitive not only on a regional level but on a global scale as well. The effects of the covid-19 pandemic augmented the unemployment rate, and the government has committed to ensuring that the Jua Kali sector receives the required attention and financial inclusion like other sectors heavily contributing to development in the country's industrialization process.

For Kenya, the Jua Kali traders are a sure way of laying a strong foundation for industrialization from within as opposed to imported industrialization, which could very easily create more jobs and wealth abroad than at home.

Furthermore, continuous skills development is essential to addressing the opportunities and challenges to meet the new demands of changing economies and new technologies under the 4th industrial revolution, which is critical in ensuring industries remain competitive in the global market.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The need to be connected to broader growth, employment and development strategies is crucial. However, there is an urgent need for all stakeholders to come together in setting standards, participating in designing training curricula and contributing to a more practical and less theoretical approach to training.

This means that the government must work hand in hand with social partners, build policies that link skills development to today's labour market and technology, and promote trade and investment to generate more jobs for our youth.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Through earnest curricula development aimed at certifying and regulating Kenya's rising dynamic fields I strongly believe that diversity in skills training will reduce the number of people relying on one industry to the point of oversaturation through the provision of an adaptive skilled workforce, thereby creating an environment for competitive industrialization and giving the economy a balance where failure in one sector does not automatically take down the whole economy.

It must not be lost on us to consider how an adaptation of productive activities can enhance competitiveness whilst respecting global and national ecological limits. The key question for us as a country today is therefore, how to best develop industrial strategies and policies which can promote a process of inclusive and sustainable industrial development.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Providing requisite skills required by both current and future labour markets is one of the main drivers of national economic sustenance.

Every year, between 500,000 and 800,000 youth enter the labour market in Kenya after leaving primary and secondary schools and post-secondary school institutions.

As those charged with skills development in the country the onus is on us to mitigate any mismatch between youth skills and labour market expectations so that our youth can succeed in the world of work. A youth development approach therefore is vital for skill acquisition.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is critical that the relevance of skills formation is enhanced by having in place robust systems and tools such as the government trade test that is aimed at assessing and anticipating skills needs combined with effective mechanisms and procedures which will ensure that such information feeds into policy-making as well as into lifelong guidance.

We must therefore pool together to ensure that we impart the appropriate skills through programmes such as the national trade test so as to harness the immense demographic dividend from our youth bubble.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

As a Ministry we remain cognizant of the need to foster a globally competitive, responsive and adaptive work force through skills development programs that adequately respond to the current and future skills demands of the industry.

In this regard, I am happy to note that this December series had a total of 31,491 candidates up from August series which had 21,696 candidates marking a rise of 45.15%. I am informed that grade III had a total of 28,041 candidates, grade II with 2,900 candidates and grade I with 550 candidates. We cannot forget about the

proficiency tests that have 593 trainees, up from 285 in august. I am also encouraged by the recognition of prior learning programme which will have a total of 403 candidates being tested. I foresee a future possibility where we will be assessing and certifying up to 1,000 trainees per trade.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I am encouraged by NITA's efforts towards inculcating a positive culture to foster effective industrial training and skills development in Kenya and beyond. I am aware that NITA has embraced valuable partnerships for enhanced skills development, gender equity and social inclusivity and that you are currently partnering with cisco in giving opportunities for persons with disabilities to be effectively integrated into the workforce through advancements in cyber security. I am further aware that

Safaricom is also on board through this partnership as an employment transition partner for the beneficiaries of the programme.

I am happy that NITA is seeing it critical to provide gender-inclusive skills enhancement opportunities as well as mechanisms that equip people with disabilities (PWDS) with skills to match the market demand in order to boost their employability.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I am confident that the recognition and registration of NITA qualifications on the KNQF will lead to an uptake of the qualifications with a projected over 100,000 candidates per annum through trade test, close to 100,000 trainees through skills up-

grading and apprenticeship and close to 100,000 workers to be assessed per annum through Recognition of Prior Learning.

I believe that NITA will strive to ensure that the industrial training schemes and trade testing rules are reviewed periodically to make industrial training respond to the needs of industry and other emerging issues.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Kenyans are increasingly seeking employment opportunities outside the country due to various push and pull factors locally and abroad. There are slightly over 200,000 Kenyan migrant workers in the gulf cooperation council countries.

These workers make significant contribution to the trading strength of the country through skills and technology transfer and remittances. The 2021 economic survey reports indicates that despite economic hardships abroad, diaspora remittances remained robust increasing to Ksh 330.8 billion in 2020 from Ksh 289.5 billion in 2019.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I am therefore encouraged that NITA's homecare management programme is has significantly contributed and continues to contribute significantly to the amounts of remittances to the country, thereby making its contribution towards spurring industrialization.

The signing of a bilateral labour agreement between the government of the republic of Kenya and the kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the recruitment of domestic workers will go a long way in solidifying our diplomatic relations and ensure our workers going there get the opportunities they deserve.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Government-led initiatives such as the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) that are part of Kenya's national budget and ideally can be replicated across African continents and teach and encourage entrepreneurship to reduce levels of unemployment, offering resources to trainees to make the most of their skills will greatly improve the business environment for trade, foreign investment and growth of the industrial sector.

I am therefore encouraged by NITA's current effort in collaboration with ILO and KNQA in the extended countrywide pilot roll-out of RPL which will result in direct benefits to the labour market, formal education and training, greater opportunity for broader development, access to jobs, career progression, fostered remuneration and generally promoted employment equity.

RPL will greatly contribute to our economic development as the sector improves its performance with a dynamic labour market that offers strategically focused employment skills and portable qualifications. Across the world, several countries are increasingly recognizing the value of informal and non-formal learning and are establishing systems to acknowledge-edge competencies gained through these modalities.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

We need to constantly be at the forefront of addressing the challenge of employability as well as the lack of skills needed in a certain industry to spur investment.

We believe that mitigating these two issues simultaneously is the way to achieve the best results, and for that, policymaking in training and in the creation of a conducive business environment that encourages direct foreign investment. There is need to focus on manufacturing and robotics to drive job creation.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Further, to attract investment, we need to be awake to the fact that industrial training should not solely rely on external employment opportunities in order to give positive results, but must be combined with skills that empower learners to become self-employed and create their own businesses/enterprises that will, in the long run, give jobs to others.

We must also look at exploring new financing mechanism through government blue prints such as the vision2030 to boost industrialization in the African intermediary cities and increase regional trade in services to bolster manufacturing.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I am confident therefore that NITA will continue to promote the development and implementation of industry-led skills policies, to be drawn proactively in conjunction with relevant industry stakeholders since the future prosperity of industrial training in Kenya will depend ultimately on innovative and strategic policies that will enhance partnerships among key stakeholders for technological and skills transfer.

NITA can continue to count on my Ministry's support in ensuring industrial training efforts through programmes such as the government trade tests meets and surpasses the needs of industry.

Thank you and God bless you!