



**Ministry of labour and social protection
Office of the cabinet secretary**

**Speech by mr. Simon k. Chelugui, e.g.h., cabinet
secretary for labour and social protection during the
launch of trade test may 2021 at nita headquarters on 21st
may 2021**

The chief administrative secretary, hon. Jackson musyoka kalla;

The principal secretary, state department of labour eng. Peter tum;

The chairman, the national industrial training board; dr. Kamau gachigi;

Members of the national industrial training authority board;

Members of the sector training committees present;

National industrial training authority director general, mr. Stephen ogenga;

Nita management;

Trade test supervisors and assessors;

All distinguished guests present;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Good morning!

It gives me great pleasure to be here today as we launch the ---cycle of trade test assessment that is normally conducted by NITA

Let me mention that availability of skilled workforce in a country is something all governments in the world put a lot of focus on since with skilled work force, industries grow, and hence create more opportunities for the unemployed in the country. It is therefore very important that NITA

understand the high responsibility that our country has placed on your shoulders,

Remember that the ultimate goal of industrial training is to improve the employability of individuals, increasing productivity and competitiveness of enterprises, reducing unemployment, poverty and exclusion, strengthening innovation and attracting investment.

This makes skills development important in sustainable development, and is also essential in addressing the opportunities and challenges of meeting new demands of changing economies and new technologies in the context of globalization.

The critical challenge facing training providers today is to prepare 'market ready' graduates to meet industry demand. This situation is further exacerbated by weak linkages between training providers and the skills users ,it is my believe that NITA has put in place mechanism to ensure that all you industrial training programs are industry driven.

Ladies and gentlemen;

International labour organization calls on all countries in formulating skills development policies to engage all stakeholders in: setting a common vision of the skills system that a country aims to build; and facilitating an alignment with national development framework and coherence with other policies.

The covid -19 pandemic dealt a big blow to NITAs programmes for assessment and today we are here to launch this assessment cycle for some trainees, more than one year later. We would have loved for these assessment to have been carried earlier, however we had

to observe the guidelines given on closure of all training institutions last year. I am aware that the kind of training that NITA offers is very practical oriented and therefore required the trainee to be physically present, it was for this reason that these assessment could not be carried out earlier. I however want to challenge NITA, now that the future of wok has come, you also need to quickly relook at you training methodologies and also quickly adopt to the current realities.

Industrial training is currently facing a particular challenge in ensuring the continuity of practical skills and training measures during the covid-19 crisis. In addition to the practical training modules provided in workshops and laboratories, industrial training programmes often include a work-based learning component wherein trainees participate in practical training at the workplace in the form of apprenticeships and internships.

The delivery of work-based learning, including apprenticeships, has faced serious disruption from the lockdowns imposed on enterprises. In many countries the covid-19 crisis led to the closure of enterprises. While this led many countries to enter an economic slowdown, it also resulted in the suspension of practical training activities. In most countries where essential enterprises in the construction, manufacturing, and personal services sectors remained open, on-the-job training activities either stopped or continued in restricted numbers with the addition of strict health and safety measures. Practical modules were suspended, while in some countries work placements were cancelled, rescheduled or postponed.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is therefore imperative 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.

As a country desirous of developing a rich human resource base even in the midst of this pandemic, we must 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. The Kenyan government remains 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.

Ladies and gentlemen;

Unemployment and underemployment remain major developmental challenge in the country mainly due to rapid population growth, low economic growth as well as the structural rigidities within the labour market. Because of these and many other challenges, Kenyans are increasingly seeking employment opportunities beyond the borders. Kenyans are present in most regions of the world, including Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Oceania. Lately, there is an increasing number of Kenyan professionals migrating to Canada and Australia.

As of January 2020, there were 29,448 Kenyan migrant workers who have been cleared to work in Saudi Arabia as homecare managers. Kenyan migrant workers contribute significantly to the socio-economic development of the country in terms of skills, expertise and transfer of knowledge upon return. For instance, monthly remittances inflows in 2019 averaged KShs. 23 billion shillings. Toward this end, I am pleased with the encouraging uptake of the homecare management curriculum. I recently saw off two hundred and thirty-two migrant workers to Qatar at Central Primary School grounds, Uasin Gishu County.

Ladies and gentlemen;

We cannot talk about the government trade test without mention of recognition of prior learning. In recognition of the ever-increasing informal sector and the opportunities therein, the recognition and qualification of prior learning is aimed at sealing decent work deficits. The Kenyan government sees the KNQF as a tool to aid in accreditation, teaching and assessment in accordance with established national curriculum development practice and standards. Kenya's endeavour to develop the KNQF highlights the importance of building on existing institutions and structures, rather than importing models from outside the country or trying to re-invent the wheel.

In 2020, the government through the KNQA developed the recognition of prior learning policy framework in Kenya. In addition, the authority, (KNQA), developed guidelines for implementation of RPL in Kenya. The RPL players in

the country including qualification awarding institutions (qai's) such as the national industrial training authority {nita} are required to roll-out rpl for their sub-sectors guided by the national policy and the implementation guidelines. To fast track the process of the rollout of rpl in kenya, the knqa constituted an inter-agency national technical steering committee (nsc) to guide the rpl implementation in kenya. In addition, a national advisory committee (nac) was constituted to oversee the implementation of rpl in the country. Nita, as a qai has representation in both committees. Recently, the nsc with support from the international labour organization (ilo) developed the tools and guides for implementation of rpl. The tools and guides underwent validation during a national stakeholders forum this month. The tools and guides are the key reference/guiding documents during the on-going rpl piloting.

Ladies and gentlemen;

The labour sector is increasingly becoming critical in the development process especially as the world in general and kenya in particular grapples with the challenges of unemployment, vulnerability, poverty and inequalities beyond the covid-19 crisis. Labour ministries the world over are therefore looked upon to provide innovative solutions to unemployment and address emerging issues facing workers, employers and governments.

Government initiatives towards skills development especially in the face of the current pandemic must therefore be geared towards ensuring that the education and training sector is a responsive, dynamic and trusted sector; a sector that delivers an excellent standard of education and training to

enhance skills and competencies for improved productivity, competitiveness and employability. This will ultimately contribute to the realization of the country's goal, which is uplifting the livelihoods of the Kenyan citizenry.

Ladies and gentlemen;

As I conclude I would like to applaud the board of directors, the management and indeed the staff of NITA for the strides being made through the national trade test, to actualize the transformation of industrial training in Kenya.

Thank you. As government and other stakeholders, we are now realizing the importance of implementing measures to improve the resilience of skills training systems and preparedness, so they can continue delivering training during future crises.

Ladies and gentlemen;

In this breath I wish to highlight the importance of recognition of prior learning that has recently received the much-needed attention as it focuses on the certification of training of persons in various sectors. RPL systems address competencies acquired through non-formal and informal means.

Over the years on-the-job training, informal apprenticeships and homecare learning outcomes often do not come with a certificate of competency recognizing the knowledge, skills and experience acquired by such persons. Now, through RPL it is expected that persons in industry will acquire certification in these areas of trade.

Ladies and gentlemen;

Recognition of these types of learning will result in broad benefits to the labour market, formal education and training, greater opportunities for broader development, access to jobs, career progression, fostered remuneration and generally promoted employment equity.

Rpl also poses greater benefits to employers as the employer is able to identify skills gaps in their organizations, identify appropriate training programmes and reduce employee training time by minimizing duplication of learning.

I am confident that nita is well aware of its critical contribution of driving the skills development agenda in industry pursuant to the global, regional and national requirements and benchmarks.

Occupational competence assessment and certification could be one of the critical avenues of enhancing our skills eco-system which will in turn raise employment levels in the country while at the same time contributing to poverty reduction and economic development. It therefore goes without saying that industrial training contributes heavily to each and every one of these agendas.

It is my hope and belief therefore in the face of all these developments that nita will continue to provide strategic leadership in the development and advancement of the industrial skills ecosystem even in the midst of the pandemic to ensure systemic, deliberate and innovative policy formulation and mobilization of resources to drive the skills development agenda in kenya.

