

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATION  
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY HON. DR. SHUKURU KAWAMBWA (MP)  
AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE EUROAFRICA – ICT (START)  
WORKSHOP, 16<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2008, PEACOCK HOTEL DAR ES SALAAM.**

- Chairperson of the Workshop,
- Dr. Naomi Katunzi – Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Communication, Science and Technology,
- Representative of the European Union Delegation in Tanzania
- Prof. John Kondoro – Principal, Dar es Salaam Institute of Technology,
- Representative Meraka Institute of CSIR
- Workshop Facilitators,
- Distinguished Workshop Delegates,
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is indeed my great pleasure to be given this opportunity to officiate the opening of the Euro Africa – ICT (START) Workshop, being held here at the Peacock Hotel, Dar es Salaam – Tanzania. I should admit, at the onset, that this is an important workshop in view of the significance of Europe Africa partnership in ICT.

I am grateful to the organizers for Availing the opportunity to Tanzania to host this workshop for the first time. It is, therefore, an honor to us, in this country, to have paying host to this important workshop considering the fact that this is the second time a gathering on Euro Africa – ICT Workshop is being held in East Africa after Kenya in year. But further, what is also delighting to note is the good and diverse attendance at this workshop by participants from various countries. I wish to say that this is a clear testimony of the importance attached to the issues to be addressed by this Workshop.

I believe the distinguished delegates have been warmly received when you arrived here. I would like to, on behalf of the people of the United Republic

of Tanzania, and on my own behalf, to extend to every one of you a very warm welcome to Tanzania. It is my hope that you will not only have a comfortable and memorable stay here but also fruitful and conclusive deliberations during the workshop.

### **Distinguished Delegates**

I wish to commend the organizers for creating this important forum which is an opportunity for African participants to interact and network with the most advanced local organizations in sub-Saharan Africa involved in S & T in ICT, learn about FP7 and the ICT theme and further discuss thematic issues depending on local needs. I hope, delegates will find these workshops to be useful and relevant for Africa.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

As you all know, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a critical pillar of a modern economy because it provides useful ways for narrowing the knowledge gap among the people. In fact, the problem of accessing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) including mobile telephones has tended to make it dominantly an urban phenomenon. In general, application of Information and communication Technologies (ICT) as a critical “soft” infrastructure in our country is still inadequate and, for this reason, there is urgent need to promote it further.

It is in this direction that the government has been working hard to create a conducive environment for investment, introduction and use of information and communication Technology (ICT) in our national development efforts and government operations.

In this fast globalizing world, the way of carrying out business is changing at a very high speed with new technologies taking a center stage. Governments as well as the Private sector, are realizing the importance of

Information and Communications Technology (ICT), hence, have no alternative other than to move in that direction and adopt them.

The advent of ICT is fundamentally changing the way we work, learn and interact. It is further realized around the world, that Information and Communication Technologies are viable conveyer belts that assist in both the creation and expansion of economic opportunities, and, simultaneously, add tremendous value and impetus to overall human resource development.

To ensure, as developing nations, that the objections to economic growth and human resource development are adequately achieved, we must not only search for creative and innovative ways to achieve access to ICT to a broader audience in our nation-states, but we must, in line with sustainable development in mind, choose the most effective strategies for ICT to help to expedite, expand and deliver development goals that are geared towards poverty eradication.

Today, an important development imperative is the creation of knowledge-based economies, taking direct cue from the creation of knowledge-based society. Here again, ICT is fundamental to ensure the attainment of both the knowledge-based society and economy.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The issue of research, development, and partnerships based on science and technology and the critical developmental agenda is very topical and important. Adoption of technology should be backed by sound research and development detail for us to be able to fully benefit from ICT. Research and Development in the area of ICT will indeed augment the current ICT initiatives that the Government and other institutions in the country and indeed the region.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Science and technology are accepted and acknowledged as important contributors to socio-economic development

1. It contributes through tackling a variety of problems affecting both the developed and developing world such as provision of appropriate health care and educational services, food security, sensible governance and physical infrastructure development through the application of new technologies and scientific know - how.
2. Furthermore, it contributes to economic growth on both institutional and country/regional levels through embedding scientific knowledge and technologies in services, products and processes supporting increased productivity and competitiveness
3. In addition, it contributes to issues such as expanding the supply of trained graduates, further enabling business and nations to innovate.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It can be argued that the difference between the developed and developing countries is their ability to absorb and utilise technology. In fact the differences in country's and regions ability to engage appropriately with the science and technology agenda creates an ever-growing divide between these countries and regions that struggles with the S&T engagement and those who fully integrates science and technology as core to socio-economic advancement.

What we require though, is a clear link that will bring in the research element into the development of ICT, something that has been a preserve of the developed countries. This link will ensure that we stop being Technology Consumers to Technology Suppliers, something that I believe is possible given the quality and abundance of skills that this country and the region has.

Given our abundance human resource, what we now need to do, is create some partnership with the developed nations and try to learn from their successes and also their challenges based on our own priorities in the use and adoption of technology. We therefore, believe that scientific collaboration and globalisation of science and technology are important issues to consider. It is however, important to note that the absorptive capacity of countries to absorb, use, diffuse, adapt and improve imported know-how and technologies depends heavily on the country's S&T capacities and the associated policies and infrastructure.

Without capacity to generate new knowledge, this technology transfer activity is also not sustainable. We must always remember that home grown solutions are the key to the envisaged information society. While significant effort is evident on issues at the national level in many countries in the region, the regional activity, especially from a policy and strategy perspective provides the framework in which regional programmes such as the FP7 operates. Participation of African countries in the FP7 should be considered within the context of the EU-Africa perspectives and other international relationships to draw out issues of specific relevance to S&T cooperation and development.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is my confidence that deliberations and conclusion of this workshop will make an important contribution in Euro Africa – ICT awareness to participants.

I would like to thank the delegates for coming and I wish all of you a rich and engaging workshop as well as a most pleasant stay in Tanzania. I believe, this is a beginning of our interaction, and future cooperation.

Finally with these few remarks, it is my pleasure to declare that the workshop on Euro Africa – ICT (START) awareness is now officially open.

**I thank you all for your kind attention.**