

REMARKS BY H.E. PRESIDENT UHURU KENYATTA AT THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION, SEPTEMBER 26TH, 2015

Mr. Houlin Zhao, the Secretary General of ITU

Heads of State and Government,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary General for graciously hosting us tonight to celebrate 150 years of the International Telecommunication Union. The ITU's contribution to the development of communication the world over, the growth and development of ICT and all its allied sectors cannot be gainsaid.

Mr. Secretary General, I sincerely congratulate you and the ITU fraternity for a great job you have done to contribute to the development of communications, especially innovations with and from ICT.

I thank you very much for your kind recognition of our humble efforts to contribute to the development of ICT and its impact in our development.

As we all recognize, innovation and effective use of ICT is and will no doubt remain the single most transformative aspect of our development the world over. As we focus on sustainable development goals, it is necessary to underscore the seminal role of ICT as a critical enabler to most of the efforts we will have to make to achieve sustainable human development.

My government remains committed to mainstreaming innovation and ICT to enable growth and development of our country and the region. Our National ICT Master Plan and National Broadband Strategy outline our desired path to a knowledge based economy where ICTs underpin service delivery, and provide the bedrock of our activities in critical sectors of the economy, especially agriculture, education and health. Already, deployment of ICT has begun to impact service delivery such as in the one stop service centers my government has set up, Huduma centers.

My government has consistently focused on innovation as an essential step in enhancing growth of the ICT sector. I recently established and will, in October, launch Enterprise Kenya, a fund to aid budding Kenyan innovators and start-ups to enable them get the necessary financial support to move from idea to start-up and from start-up possibly to market in good time. This and concerted efforts to strengthen the Intellectual property legislative regime, intense capacity building and mainstreaming of ICTs in government service provision will enhance the development of ICT in Kenya. I welcome the ITU and other development partners to join us in strengthening Enterprise Kenya so that the home of M-Pesa can continue to contribute to impactful ICT innovation.

I thank the ITU for effective collaboration with my country including communication management during times of security challenges and continued capacity building support to several of our agencies.

We are honored to be hosting the African Telecommunications Union (ATU) in our country for the last 17 years and are happy to continue doing so for the longest time possible. My government will continue to support the ATU.

Mr. Secretary General, thank you for nominating my ICT Minister to the Broadband Commission. I am certain that our country will bring, through him, additional energy and creativity to enhance the very necessary expansion of the broadband foot print across the developing world especially, as we move forward to secure sustainability of the developments we have so far achieved.

I thank you and pledge Kenya's steadfast and collaborative commitment to the growth and development of the ITU.

Good evening.