REMARKS BY THE CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF DEVOLUTION AND ASAL, HON. EUGENE WAMALWA, EGH, DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP/AFRICAN PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE ON WEDNESDAY 25TH SEPTEMBER, 2019 AT THE UN COMPLEX GIGIRI, NAIROBI COUNTY

The Principal Secretary, State Department for Devolution, Mr. Charles Sunkuli, CBS

The Conveners of this conference, Knowledge Management for Development

The UN Fraternity attending the Workshop

All Government Officers Present

Representatives from the Academia and Researchers Institutions

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It’s a pleasure to be here today as we take stock of our achievements in the area of knowledge management and forge the way forward in addressing the challenges that have hindered our progress in this critical area.

From the onset, I wish to register my sincere gratitude to all of you for finding time out of your busy schedules to attend this important event.

I am informed that this is the first African Knowledge for Development Partnership Conference (K4DP) to be held in Nairobi and it brings together knowledge specialists and policy makers from the Government, Academia, Research Institutions, Private sector and Non-State Actors committed to advancing knowledge management in Africa. The Forum aims at creating
awareness on how knowledge impacts all development activities and thus the need to sustainably harness and manage it.

This Conference also provides a platform for multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder dialogue geared towards generating ideas and viable solutions to African and global development challenges.

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

Knowledge is a major asset to any organization and the success or fall of an organization depends on how well it taps and uses both the explicit and tacit knowledge under its wings.

Accordingly, the move from an Industrial-based economy to a knowledge or information-based economy in the 21st Century demands a top-notch knowledge management system to secure a comparative advantage over competitors. However, Africa is still lagging behind in this area despite its huge repository of indigenous knowledge.

This is one of the reasons why the African Union seeks to advance application of African solutions in Africa’s development through its New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). It is hoped that institutionalizing knowledge management will significantly contribute to the adoption and use of the Continent’s knowledge assets as a key factor of production.

This concern informed the establishment of Knowledge Management, Africa (KMA) and its Sub-Regional Chapters, with the objective of harnessing knowledge to improve development outcomes in Africa.

The 2007 “Nairobi Declaration” made during the second Knowledge Management, Africa Biennial Conference titled ‘Knowledge to remobilize Africa’, and spearheaded by the Government of Kenya, mandated the Kenya Chapter to institutionalize knowledge management in the Eastern
Africa region. This was affirmed by the 2009 “Dakar Declaration” made in Senegal, during the third KMA Biennial Conference titled “Knowledge to reposition Africa”.

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

Kenya’s Development blueprint, *the Kenya Vision 2030* envisaged a knowledge based economy that seeks to create a globally competitive and prosperous Country. The Vision therefore recognizes knowledge as a critical driver of Kenya Socio-economic development.

Kenya also has a robust Constitution that established a devolved system of government with one of its objectives being to promote socio and economic development and the provision of proximate, easily accessible services throughout Kenya.

The Kenya’s County Governments therefore have a constitutional responsibility of searching for sustainable ways of delivering quality and effective services to the citizens. It is therefore, imperative that the County Governments continue to institutionalize knowledge management in a bid to promote efficient use of resources to enhance their performance in delivering quality and effective services to Kenyans.

The Counties should therefore leverage on the *four pillars* of a knowledge economy, that is, Economic and Institutional Regime; Human Capital; Information Infrastructure; and Innovation to fast-track the implementation of the government’s Big Four Agenda. This can only happen if the Counties have put in place adequate and appropriate structures for identification, acquisition, assimilation, transformation and exploitation of relevant knowledge in order to enhance service delivery.
Ladies and Gentlemen:

As the institution responsible for devolution matters, my Ministry, through the State Department for Devolution, has therefore partnered with Knowledge for Development Partnership (K4DP) and other global and local stakeholders in seeking to explore the best ways of harnessing and sharing Africa’s rich knowledge to support Kenya’s Devolved system of Government and spur better service delivery and improved quality of life of the citizens.

I urge this forum to take advantage of the diverse efforts made in Kenya to institutionalize knowledge management practices in both the public and private sector institutions and advice how they can be put to better use for the nation. Some of the institutions that have successfully incorporated knowledge management in Kenya are;

Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) whose knowledge management initiatives have been used to link Health Research evidence to policy and decision makers at National and County levels to enhance informed responses to contemporary public health challenges.

KEMRI is also building capacity in knowledge transfer and evidence based decision making in fourteen (14) Counties in Kenya on pilot basis. These are Busia, Bungoma, Isiolo, Kirinyaga, Kilifi, Kitui, Kwale, Makueni, Machakos, Nyahururu, Mombasa, Nyeri, Nakuru and Taita Taveta.

Kenya Forest Research Institute (KEFRI), which has institutionalized Knowledge Management to build capacity of its stakeholders in establishing Knowledge Management linkages to support informed decision making.

The Council of County Governors, which has established Maarifa Centre, a knowledge management unit, which is the focal point in the coordination of county learning initiatives and peer to peer learning to
facilitate identification of best practices, innovations, and solutions for improving service delivery.

Other notable cases that require adequate attention include Safaricom, KENGEN, Kenya Agricultural, Livestock Research Organization(KALRO) and AMREF, among many others.

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

I am informed that the KMA International Conference, titled "Knowledge to address Africa's challenges" was held in Johannesburg in 2005 and that one of the significant resolutions was to build on indigenous knowledge systems in Africa’s development programs to provide local solutions to the Socio-economic Challenges. This was a very apt resolution as Africa is rich in indigenous knowledge, which if well tapped can change the fortunes of the continent. We therefore need to evaluate our progress as a continent in relation to this resolution.

It is therefore my expectation that this conference will achieve the following objectives by the end of the two days:

1. Share diverse local, regional and global experiences and lessons learnt of knowledge management practices;
2. Provide a platform for common understanding on appropriate knowledge management strategies and policy actions for Africa’s development;
3. Identify challenges and gaps and make practical suggestions of appropriate interventions in strengthening knowledge management practices in Africa and beyond
4. Establish the way forward in institutionalizing and further strengthening the knowledge management initiatives to address Africa’s development challenges.
It is thus prudent for all the stakeholders to institutionalize knowledge management principles and practices to drive national development and enhance service delivery.

These organizations should address the challenges of tapping not only explicit Knowledge that is defined but tacit knowledge that sits passively in the minds of individuals. The trapped knowledge must be leveraged to the organizational level where it can be accessed, synthesized, augmented and deployed to improve our development outcomes.

In this regard, the conference deliberations should address key milestones in institutionalizing and strengthening knowledge management practices in Africa, among them the:

1. Development of a legal and policy framework to promote knowledge management culture in Africa and how to hold the various stakeholders accountable;
2. Setting aside dedicated resources to drive knowledge management initiatives. These includes technology, human resources, and processes;
3. Providing leadership through provision of shared vision motivation, structures modelling and promotion of good practices for knowledge management agenda in Africa;
4. Implementing knowledge management platforms, practices and linkages that integrates technologies, mechanisms and activities to support optimum utilization;
5. Establishing Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms to continuously determine progress made and the impact of the initiatives in addressing African development challenges.
It is therefore my hope that by the end of the end of the two days, you would have reached a consensus on what needs to be done and you have developed an action plan on the way forward.

With these remarks, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to conclude by wishing you successful deliberations.

Thank you and God bless you all.

HON. EUGENE WAMALWA, EGH

CABINET SECRETARY

25TH SEPTEMBER, 2019