

SPEECH BY THE CABINET SECRETARY, THE NATIONAL TREASURY AND PLANNING, MR. HENRY K. ROTICH, EGH, DURING THE OPENING OF THE 2019 AFRICAN THINK TANKS SUMMIT HELD AT THE KENYATTA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER, NAIROBI ON WEDNESDAY, 24TH APRIL 2019

Prof Emmanuel Nnadozie, Executive Secretary, The African Capacity Building Foundation

Dr. Vera Songwe, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

Dr. Julius Muia, Principal Secretary, State Department for Planning

Senior Government Officials

Representatives from African Think Tanks

Representatives from Partner Organizations

Representatives from other organizations

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am honoured by ACBF and KIPPRA invitation, who are co-organising this Summit, to be with you today and make opening remarks. The theme of this Summit is very timely as the region is at the initial stages in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and the Agenda 2063. By addressing the policy implementation challenges, this will go a long way in supporting the attainment of a sustainable development for Africa.
2. Indeed, it is an honour for Kenya to host the 6th African Think Tanks Summit. I say to all KARIBUNI SANA!
3. The Agenda 2063 for Africa envisages a modern, prosperous continent that is poverty-free, food secure and with educated citizens. It also envisages a thriving economic activity supported by modern transport, ICT and energy infrastructure that creates decent jobs and provides economic opportunities for all.
4. Further, the development blueprint envisions climate-resilient and peaceful economies, enjoying good governance, booming intra-African trade, and an expanded democratic space.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. While Africa has the capability to realize its full potential, it requires adequate capacity to successfully implement the development agenda.
6. Various solutions have been proffered to tackle the policy implementation challenges in attaining sustainable development. This including having timely and reliable data, putting in place a strong monitoring and evaluation framework, and enhancing coordination.
7. In addition, transformative leadership is key to successful implementation of development projects and programs. African countries require the right leadership at both state and non-state levels to help tackle implementation challenges such as continuity in Government policies, human capacity and public expenditure and financial accountability.
8. I wish to commend the role played by the ACBF over the last three decades in addressing Africa's capacity challenges. This including, by enhancing the quality and relevance of policy research, and strengthening policy engagement among government and non-state actors, as well as the use of policy products and services.

9. ACBF has also supported institutional and human competencies of policy centers and think tanks to effectively support public policy processes. I believe many of the think tanks present here today have benefited from ACBF support at some point.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

10. As you are aware, the development of think tanks in Africa has been a fairly recent phenomenon. In Sub-Saharan Africa the contribution of think tanks to the Government policy process was especially felt with significant pressure to improve governance during the structural adjustment era. Since then, the region has seen notable increase in the number of Think Tanks, which today stand at over 660, accounting for 8.5 percent of the global think tanks.

11. The mushrooming of think tanks in Africa is precipitated by the presence of dynamic political, economic and social reforms creating an opportunity for think tanks to leverage. Furthermore, with expansion of the democratic space, African countries are providing a level playing field for diverse Think Tanks to thrive including those that are government affiliated like KIPPRA. These developments call for Think Tanks, policy centres, networks and policy makers

to work together to strengthen the research-to-policy linkage, which is critical for Africa's development.

12. I have been informed that the stakeholders invited today represent some of the most formidable think tanks in the continent. I would urge that as you deliberate on the focal areas of the summit, to tangibly identify common areas of interest that we can engage in accomplishing the Africa Agenda 2063, the African Continental Free Trade Area and SDGs among other development blue prints.

As, I conclude

13. It is my hope that this Summit will highlight practical approaches to successful implementation of policies in Africa considering specific country experiences and good practices. This including the renewal and enhanced commitment of Africa's think tanks to proactively support the implementation of national, regional and continental development plans.

14. In addition, it is important that the Summit deliberates on how to strengthen platform for networking through fruitful exchange of ideas, knowledge and relevant experiences, and good practices on what needs to be done to effectively tackle implementation challenges in Africa.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

With these remarks, I wish you fruitful deliberations.

Thank You and once again Karibuni Kenya.