

Transforming Kenya Public Service through Innovation

Key Note Address

Kenya Public Service Innovation Celebrations

In Celebration of UN Public Service Day

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(KICC)**

By

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Hon. Dalmas Otieno, Minister for State for Public Service

Hon. Adan Sugow, Asst. Minister for Public Service

Mr. Francis Kimemia, PS, Secretary to Cabinet and Acting Head of Public Service

Mr. Titus Ndambuki, PS. Ministry of State for Public Service

Other distinguished Members of the Public Service

All protocol observed:

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I greet you warmly and to make sure that I am safe while I give my speech, I brought with me a large number of Faculty and staff from KCA University. With us also is a visiting distinguished Professor from the USA, Prof. Kazadi Wa Mukuna. This morning, I have been asked to provide a key note address and to be a motivational speaker as well. That is an awesome task.

It is my great honor and privilege as a citizen of this great country, having spent over 30 years in America to be invited to address you on this very timely and important topic "Transforming our Public Service Delivery through Innovation". I am proud to see our defense forces here with their innovative mobile kitchen. The KDF is the proud fighting force, one of the best in Africa which has made all of us proud. Please give them a hand

I am certain that today's occasion marks the genesis of bigger things to come and reaffirms our Kenyan ideal that "Together we can do more and better Public Service".

Let me use the time allotted to me to address you on the following subjects:

Definition of Innovation; Global Innovation Trends; Responding to the New Global Scenario; Addressing Innovation Challenges and the Way Forward for Kenya's Public Services.

According to our new Constitution and soon to be our National Value Policy which I recently had the honor to chair, access to decent public services is no longer a privilege to be enjoyed by a few; it is now the rightful expectation of all Kenya citizens especially those previously disadvantaged to receive these services on equal footing.

This is why our guiding principle to public service transformation and reforms should be guided by a simple phrase "people first". The transformation of our Public Service must therefore be rightly judged by the practical differences people see in their every day lives. This is what South Africans call "Batho Pele".

Before we move any further, let me lay out some current conceptual discourse surrounding the concept of innovation. Some people define innovation as: a new technological breakthrough, such as the discovery of the M-PESA, others see it as the new invention, such as one wheel scooter, while others see it as a new business model, such as the no-frills airline. Still others see it as "a new product process", such as lower-cost way to make computers or a new creative design, such as sleek, sexy automobile.

Ladies and Gentlemen, none of this is innovation. Innovation according to the ground breaking study by Carlson and Wilmont published in 2006 is simply "the process of creating and delivering new values to the customer in the market place".

In United Kingdom they call it "the successful exploitation of new ideas which can mean new to a company, industry or governmental sector. It applies to products, services, business processes and models, marketing and enabling technologies".

Steve Jobs – Founder of Apple Computers said this,

“One of the keys to Apple is that it is an incredibly collaborative company. Do you know how many committee we have at Apple? Zero. We are organized like a start up company. There is tremendous teamwork at the top of the company, which filter down to tremendous teamwork throughout the company. And teamwork means trusting the other folks to come up with their part without watching them all the time”.

Innovation in the public sector can be divided into the following six types:

1. New or improved service
2. Process innovation
3. Administrative innovation
4. Radical change of rationality
5. Conceptual innovation and
6. System innovation

What about the indicators of the Global Innovation trend? According to the 2008 study done by Jaruze Dehoff, among the top ten RandD generators, Research and Development indicators, United States, Japan and Germany lead in that order.

Others are all Western European Countries except South Korea which beats the Netherlands and Sweden. Among top ten RandD users again is the US, Japan and Germany rank at the top except this time India beat Canada, Italy and Sweden. Now, when you talk about RandD Importers, China, India and Israel rank at the top.

People, why are African countries missing among the global ranking? In the area of Global innovation index study in 2011, Switzerland, Sweden and Singapore rank at the top in that order and Kenya is ranked number 89 in world order among 127 countries. I am sure M-PESA had a lot to do with this. Let us give a rousing appreciation for Kenya.

In order to respond positively to the new global scenario from the Kenya context, our public systems need to put people first and coin the term performance now. This cannot happen without proper human skills.

We need to revamp or overhaul our educational system to respond to the need of people, instead of carrying children on our heads and celebrating the primary and high school public exams scores, we need to celebrate the achievement of young people who can successfully create the next generation of M-PESA. Our educational outcomes must be judged by the skill building blocks as opposed to the result of public exams.

Our higher education system must be overhauled to be relevant with the regional and world trends and to allow Kenyans to choose where their children want to go to school and what subjects they wish to study.

As Kenyans, we must declare Vision 2030 to be the time for Innovation Movement. In order to stay competitive in the Global Market place, our Government Services must therefore be judged by the following three criteria:

- Satisfying the need of the people
- Utilise resources efficiently and
- Adding value to Kenyans

What about innovation challenges:

Innovation challenges falls into three categories. First is creating innovation opportunities such as public procurement and regulations, secondly, putting innovation enablers in place in our institutions and intellectual property. Lastly, funding innovation such as strengthen risk capital industry and new funding modes for public venture companies.

Let us dissect a few of these challenges. First putting innovation enablers in place through our institutions. The only effective way to accomplish this task is by forming multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral

approach through collaboration and integration as we briefly learned at Apple computers.

This approach will allow the Government to provide the first vibrant and effective solutions. Secondly, focus application of knowledge and expertise where it is needed the most, thirdly, it will allow for higher level of commitment and lastly, effective use of our resources.

Charles Darwin, once said, "it is the long history of mankind, those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed". At Dell Corporation, innovation through collaboration optimizes resources and facilities, enhances value or money, sharing of information, synergizes ideas and intelligence and forging a sense of pride among employees.

Challenges for collaboration in public services includes: public skepticism, adverse role of the media, Turf wars, civic society, legal and procedural issues and silo mentality.

What is the way forward for our Public Services under the new Constitution? First, we need to eliminate individualistic or silo approach, eliminate duplication of functions and inward thinking. Secondly, we need to reduce bureaucracy, fear of unknown and maintenance culture. Thirdly, we need to create a value based culture as articulated in Article 6 and Article 10 of our Constitution. We need to create opportunities for every Kenyan and a culture of unity. Lastly, we need to increase data sharing, reduce cost of sharing data and capacity skill building for our people. In other words, no Kenyan should be left behind as far as creating skill building blocks is concerned.

As we march towards the year 2030, we need to seamlessly marry the needs of the people and governmental services together by creating a co-production system. What is a co-production system? A co-production system is defined by the Government of the Republic of Korea as "a way of planning, designing and delivering public services which draws directly inputs from citizens, service users and civil society organizations".

What does this mean for those of us in the top leadership of the Government? First, we need to eliminate the traditional bureaucratic concepts which believe that value is created by the government to a new innovative belief which states that value is co-created by the people and the government. In this scenario, the individual Kenyan is in control to the co-creation experience. Second, eliminate traditional belief which states that Government and Citizen interface is the locus of value extraction to the new paradigm which believe that Government and citizen interaction is the locus of value creation.

Lastly eliminate the classic paradigm which focuses on value chains and quality of internal process to a new thinking which focus on the quality of Government and Citizen interaction as the outcome of value based services.

To conclude this talk or to summarize what I have said so far: Collaboration continuum in the public service means: co-operation, co-ordination, collaboration, integration, equal opportunity, transparency, participative leads to collaborative Government and a better Public Service.

The Government must therefore think, behave and breathe like the Apple Computers Company and, not as a large bureaucracy.

Ladies and Gentlemen, together we can transform this great country of ours to higher level of services.

Thank you and May God Bless the People of the Republic of Kenya.