STATEMENT BY HON. ERIC SIMIYU WAFUKHO, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY, STATE DEPARTMENT FOR PLANNING - DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE REPORT ON INEQUALITY TRENDS AND DIAGNOSTICS IN KENYA 2020, ON MONDAY 12TH JULY, 2021.

Mr. Saitoti Torome, the Principal Secretary, State Department for Planning;

Prof. Stephen Gitahi Kiama, the Vice Chancellor, The University of Nairobi;

KNBS Board Members present;

Mr. Macdonald Obudho, Director General, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics;

Dr. David Anda, Representatives from French Development Agency (Agence Française de Développement AFD);

Robert Backlund, Representative European Union in Kenya;

Prof. Murray Leibbrandt, University of Cape Town and Representatives from South Africa Research node of African Center for Inequality Research (ACEIR);

Representatives of Development Partners;

Senior Government officials present;

Distinguished Guests;

All protocols observed;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to be here this morning to officiate the launch of the *"Inequality Trends and Diagnostics in Kenya, 2020 Report".* This report is important to the Government as it provides requisite information for evidence-based

decision making. Using data to inform policy is a universally recognized paradigm for efficient management of countries. This is evidenced through monitoring and evaluation of activities, projects and programmes, which affect our daily lives. In this regard, provision of timely, accurate and consistent statistical facts, places us in a position to plan the future and hence manage our affairs more efficiently.

Today's citizenry is increasingly demanding high quality statistics that are comprehensive, reliable, accurate and timely to benchmark and track the implementation of various national development initiatives. Kenyans are not an exception to this. To this end, I wish to appreciate the role played by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics and The University of Nairobi in providing useful requisite inequality data for planning, monitoring and evaluation, policy and programme formulation.

As principal agency of Government on statistical matters, KNBS is expected to continuously provide the necessary information as input for monitoring and evaluation of the various developmental agenda such Vision 2030, Big four Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Such information is contained in various KNBS statistical releases such as the 2020 Inequality Trends and Diagnostics in Kenya report that we are launching this morning.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Statistical development has been high on the list of priorities of the Kenya Government as outlined in various Government policy documents. This is in appreciating the need for better statistics not only as a tool for evidence-

based policy design and planning but also to better support policy implementation, monitor progress and evaluate outcomes and impacts of development initiatives such SDGs. This report provides useful information for monitoring SDG goal 10 which aims to reduce inequality within and among countries.

The Government has over the years put in place policies and reforms to reduce inequality. Some of the main policies implemented include a quest for economic growth to reduce poverty and inequality, fiscal policy actions such as taxation and social expenditure, cash transfers to vulnerable groups, devolved government functions and services, special funds for youth and women, the one third gender rule for employment, among others. The government has also implemented many pro-poor and pro-equity reforms in sectors such as education (free primary education learning and financing of secondary education) and health that are geared to favorably impact on inequality and poverty reduction countrywide.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A high inequality is associated with low growth economic rates, that may trigger social and governance problems. It is for this reasons that the government is putting in effort to reduce inequality to improve welfare. The findings from this report are in tandem with the government effort of reducing inequalities. As outlined in the report, at the national level, the Gini coefficient increased slightly from 0.460 in 1994 to 0.470 in 2005/06 before declining to 0.404 in 2015/2016. At the county level, there is wide variation in inequality, for example in 2015/16 Gini coefficient ranged from 0.272 in

Nairobi City County to 0.559 in Turkana County. When Gini coefficient gets closer to 1, it implies that there is higher inequality in the population is while as it approaches zero the population becomes more equal.

For the Bureau and other research institutions to continue to provide better information for monitoring and evaluation, and for evidence-based decision making, there is need to provide financial support to them. Furthermore, there is need to provide support towards increasing periodicity of household budget surveys. It is for this reason that we request development partners to continue providing financial support for realization of this outcomes. In addition, we request for support on technical capacity in new areas of research especially in data science.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I conclude, I wish to appreciate the effort invested by the KNBS staff. I congratulate The University of Nairobi together with the African Centre of Excellence for Inequality Research (ACEIR) for offering technical support towards development of this report. I am grateful to the Development Partners, the French Development Agency (AFD) and the European Union for providing both technical and financial support towards realization of this report and as well as strengthening institutional capacity. I also acknowledge the steering committee members and all the enterprises and individuals who in one way or the other have assisted in making this report a reality.

It is now my duty and honour to officially launch the "Inequality Trends and

Diagnostics in Kenya 2020 Report".

Thank you and may God bless you all.