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**OFFICE OF THE PRIME CABINET SECRETARY AND**

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AND DIASPORA AFFAIRS**

**GOVERNMENT OF KENYA**

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**ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY MR. JAMES MUHATI, PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, STATE DEPARTMENT FOR ECONOMIC PLANNING, THE NATIONAL TREASURY AND ECONOMIC PLANNING ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT OF KENYA**

**Distinguished Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Esteemed Guests and Partners:**

I wish to begin by extending my heartfelt congratulations to the Government of Uruguay for the outstanding success in hosting the **"Festival de Datos"** in 2023. The success of **"Festival de Datos"** in 2023 has set a very high standard and expectation for such future data-related events. Kindly join me in giving them a well-deserved round of applause.

The DataFestival, as many of you are aware, holds a special and vital place in the global data community. It unites partners from around the world to celebrate the boundless potential of data and the indispensable role of data in shaping a sustainable future. Over the past few days, we have witnessed the festival's remarkable power as a forum for knowledge sharing, collaboration, and the establishment of lasting partnerships crucial for accelerating progress toward the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

It is with profound honor, privilege, and utmost humility, that I stand before you on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Kenya to accept the responsibility of hosting the Data for Development Festival (DataFestival) in 2025 , in the capital city of Kenya, Nairobi.

The Government of Kenya recognizes that undertaking this responsibility is not only significant but also presents the country with a tremendous opportunity to increase investments in application of technology in production and marketing processes in order to reap from the benefits of global digital connectivity especially for the developing economies.

As you are aware, Kenya has been a dedicated founding member of the Global Partnership, and our journey with this partnership has been remarkable. From hosting the inaugural national Data Roadmap workshop in August 2016 to actively participating in flagship initiatives such as the Data for Africa Event, the launch of the first Regional Data Cube, the Data for Now initiative during the height of the Covid-19 Pandemic, and most recently, the Data Dividends initiative as part of the United Nations High Impact initiatives at the just-concluded United Nations General Assembly.

Kenya views the DataFestival in 2025 as the culmination of this incredible journey and will serve as a showcase of Kenya’s National Data Ecosystem, emphasizing its maturity, inclusivity, and the paramount importance of multistakeholder collaboration in delivering public goods and services through data-driven decision-making and action.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Kenya, renowned as the home of the Silicon Savannah, deeply understands the pivotal role of data-driven decision-making in advancing both our national and international development goals. High quality development data is the foundation for meaningful policy-making, efficient resource allocation, and effective public service delivery.

Kenya has made strides in promoting application of technology in Public Service Delivery with over 10,000 services digitised and availed on a digital platform. Most financial services in the country have also been digitized. Kenya takes pride in the M-Pesa platform that has revolutionized commerce regionally and globally.

M-Pesa complements the banking-subsector and has witnessed rising volume of transactions from KSh 3.6 trillion in 2017 to KSh 7.9 trillion in 2022, making Kenya one of the world’s leading users of mobile money transfers. In order to accelerate technological growth, the government proritized creation of digital superhighway through internet connectivity, digital learning, and digital applications.

**Ladies and gentlemen**

In this regard, I would like to provide a sneak peek of three key aspects of what to expect when you travel to Nairobi for DataFestival 2025:

1. The Government of Kenya, through our multistakeholder Steering Group, is committed to streamlining immigration services for all festival participants.
2. Nairobi, our chosen venue, boasts a unique distinction—it is the only city in the world with a National Park. We are thrilled to offer all delegates the opportunity to explore Kenya's breathtaking National Park and its diverse wildlife through an unforgettable Safari experience. We will provide environmentally friendly electronic buses for transportation, ensuring a seamless and memorable adventure.
3. Additionally, we are honored that Nairobi City County will host a reception to celebrate each one of you and the incredible power of data.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

In conclusion, I would like to express our deepest gratitude to the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (GPSDD) and the selection committee for entrusting the Government of Kenya with this significant event, marking a historic milestone as the first-ever data festival to be held on the African Continent.

While Kenya will serve as the host country, the country commits to collaborate closely with other nations in the Partnership to ensure that the event becomes a global platform and forum, representing the unique realities of African countries within the context of the data revolution.

On behalf of the Government of Kenya, I reiterate our sincere appreciation to Uruguay for their dedication in setting this remarkable precedent on how to host a data festival. We look forward to consulting with our Uruguayan counterparts, gaining valuable insights, and building upon their success going forward.

Thank you all, and we look forward to receiving you in Nairobi Kenya in 2025 for the DataFestival 2025.

**Asante sana and Karibuni Kenya!**