

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY DR. BONFACE MAKOKHA, THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, STATE DEPARTMENT FOR ECONOMIC PLANNING, DURING THE 2025 NATIONAL STATISTICS CONFERENCE HELD ON 18<sup>TH</sup> – 19<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2025, AT THE EDGE CONVENTION CENTRE, NAIROBI**

**Principal Secretaries Present;**

**Chairman, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics Board of Directors;**

**Director General, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics;**

**CEOs/ DGs of State Corporations and Government Agencies**

**Government officials Present**

**Development Partners present;**

**Private Sector representatives;**

**Academia and Research Institutions;**

**Civil Society Organizations; and**

**Members of the Fourth Estate;**

**Distinguished Guests;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good morning!

**Commending KNBS and Conference Partners**

1. I am greatly honored to join you at the opening of this inaugural National Statistics Conference, convened to coincide with the start of the 2025 African Statistics Day. The African Statistics Day (ASD) is an annual event aimed at raising awareness amongst stakeholders on the critical role of statistics not only to planning but to execution of programmes.
2. This year's ASD theme **"Leveraging innovations in data and statistics to promote a just, peaceful, inclusive and prosperous society for Africans"** is aligned to the 2025 AU summit theme *"Justice for Africans and People of African Descent Through*

*Reparations*”, the aspirations of the African Charter on Statistics; and the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics all of which call for quality, accessible, inclusive and ethical statistics for development planning.

3. The theme of the conference captures the spirit of transformation we are witnessing in our national data ecosystem, one that is rapidly evolving to respond to the demands of modern governance, digital transformation, and the aspirations of Kenya.

### **Importance of Statistics for National Transformation**

4. Statistics remain a fundamental public good that drives national development. They inform resource allocation, guide evidence-based planning, strengthen accountability, and enable Government to monitor progress under **SDGs, AU Agenda 2063, EAC Vision 2050** and **the Kenya Vision 2030** currently being implemented through the **fourth Medium Term Plan (MTP IV)** with a key focus on the current Government’s plan on the **Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda for Inclusive Growth**.
5. As it has been stated **globally** that “**data is the new oil**”, I reiterate that statistics has become the currency of economic competitiveness. They do not diminish when used; rather, their value increases with responsible sharing, integration, and application.
6. Emerging technologies - including **Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Big Data Analytics, Earth Observations, and Geographic Information System (GIS)** - present unprecedented opportunities to modernize Kenya’s data systems, improve accuracy, and guide transformative public policy processes across sectors. As our country navigates rapid changes in the economy, demographics, climate, and technology, quality statistics are indispensable for anticipating future trends and designing responsive policies.

## **Legal, Policy Commitments Under National, Continental and Global Frameworks**

7. **Under the MTP IV**, the Government is committed to strengthening data systems to support BETA priority pillars, that is, agricultural transformation, Micro Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) economy, Housing and Settlement, Healthcare, Digital superhighway and Creative Economy.
8. Kenya continues to align national statistical efforts with global and continental frameworks such as the **SDGs, AU Agenda 2063 and EAC Vision 2050**. Kenya also participates in the implementation of the continental initiatives such as the **African Charter on Statistics, second Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA-II)** and **Road map for the transformation and modernization of official statistics in Africa** which emphasize quality, comparability, and harmonization of statistics.
9. Further, Kenya is signatory to the Inclusive Data Charter (IDC). IDC is a global initiative that encourages countries to collaboratively enhance the collection, accessibility, and use of inclusive data, ensuring that no one is left behind in development planning. To achieve this, inclusivity and disaggregation are considered at all stages of the statistical process—design, data collection, analysis, and dissemination. Data users are encouraged to leverage this information to make decisions that benefit everyone.
10. At the legal and regulatory level, the Statistics Act, Cap 112 provides the statutory basis for the KNBS and the national statistical system. Other national legislations have introduced far-reaching obligations around personal data processing that shape how statistical information are collected, shared and anonymized. Together these instruments are creating a modern legal architecture that balances openness and innovation with privacy and rights-based protections.

11. This conference will provide inputs to the ongoing efforts on establishment of data governance frameworks led by State Department for Information Communication & Digital Economy. The frameworks are expected to lay foundations for whole-of-government approach on ensuring quality and interoperability of data along its value chain that is set to benefit production of statistical information in the country.
12. The conference also comes at a time when the government, is in the process of developing a national policy on official statistics. This ensure that statistics are produced and disseminated in a timely manner to serve the needs of the country. The policy is expected to lay further policy and legislative actions that include **revision of Statistics Act, development of statistics regulations** and **ratification of African Charter on Statistics**.

### **Persistent Gaps in the Data Ecosystem**

13. Despite the notable progress, challenges persist in financing statistical operations, resulting in delayed surveys and limited coverage. There remain significant gaps in data disaggregation, particularly for gender, youth, PWDs, and marginalized communities, limiting inclusive planning. Slow adoption of emerging technologies, weak data governance structures and ethical frameworks are other challenges that hinder full adoption of AI, big data, and citizen-generated data.

### **Strategic Focus Areas for the 2025 National Statistics Conference**

14. Over the next two days, this conference will provide a platform to discuss innovations, best practices, and practical solutions for strengthening Kenya's National Statistical System. Key focus areas include **data ethics and governance, public-private partnerships for financing statistics, disaggregation and**

**inclusivity, predictive analytics, and leveraging AI and emerging technologies.**

15. Delegates will explore the role of Citizen-Generated Data, administrative data systems, and interoperability across government platforms such as eCitizen. The conference's technical sessions, and exhibitions will showcase innovations in Kenya's data ecosystem.
16. I take pride in the fact that the conference is a precursor to the **Global Data Festival 2026** that will for the first time ever be held in Kenya in June 2026, and is expected to host **over three thousand** leaders and practitioners from government, multilaterals, the private sector, civil society, academia, and youth communities. The hosting of this international event is an important milestone for our country, as we continue to take our rightful place as global leaders in data, innovation, and human-centered technology.

### **Commitments from the State Department for Economic Planning**

17. The State Department will collaborate with KNBS, development partners and the National Treasury to mobilize sustainable resources for surveys, modern data systems, and innovation. Together with other actors, we will strengthen Kenya's legal and institutional frameworks to safeguard privacy, build trust, and promote responsible use of data in an evolving digital environment.
18. We will promote the use of AI, predictive analytics, geospatial tools, and real-time data systems to transform the entire statistical value chain. We will support county governments to enhance data production, integration, and use for evidence-based planning and implementation of County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs).

19. In addition, the State Department is committed to champion disaggregated statistics to inform equality programmes and ensure all segments of society benefit from development. We will scale up capacity-building initiatives across the NSS through partnerships with academia, development partners, the private sector, civil society and other international institutions. Through such partnerships, we are fostering a culture of data-driven governance where evidence informs policy, and innovation drives sustainable growth

### **Conclusion and Official Opening**

20. Distinguished Guests, as I conclude, the 2025 Statistics Conference marks a defining moment in strengthening Kenya's statistical system and advancing the country's leadership in data innovation. Let us collectively commit to building a data ecosystem that is innovative, inclusive, ethical, well-resourced, and capable of supporting Kenya's development aspirations.

It is now my singular honour and privilege declare the **2025 National Statistics Conference** officially open.

**Thank you.**  
**God bless you all.**  
**God bless Kenya.**