REPUBLIC OF KENYA
MINISTRY OF ICT,INNOVATION AND YOUTH AFFAIRS

KEYNOTE SPEECH BY JOE MUCHERU, EGH, CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF ICT, DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE UNUSUAL SOLUTIONS FINAL PITCH EVENT AT NAIROBI GARAGE, NAIROBI, KENYA (SPEECH DELIVERED BY MAUREEN MBAKA, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY, ICT, BROADCASTING & TELECOMMUNICATIONS)

- **Dr. Patrick Meier and Sonja Betschart, Directors and Founders of WeRobotics**
- **Esteemed Judges and finalists of this event,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**,

1) Mechanization characterized the first industrial revolution. In the second, we had the electric power while electronics and ICT dominated the third.

2) Today, we are witnessing a digital revolution where robotics, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), big data, autonomous vehicles, 3-D printing, nanotechnology, biotechnology and quantum computing all converge to enable us realize the fourth industrial revolution.

3) I recognize the critical and deliberate effort that WeRobotics through the Flying Labs network is playing to promote *'The Power of Local',* where Kenyan local communities are empowered by local experts to effectively address their local needs through these technologies. Your work on the Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) is timely in this era of leveraging big data to find solutions for a wide range of social challenges ranging from humanitarian aid, land rights, conservation, precision agriculture, resilient urban planning and many more.

4) You will be pleased to note that the Government through the Kenya Civil Aviation Authority (KCAA), has developed a draft of regulations on the UAS popularly referred to as "drones", which will go a long way in opening up possibilities for Kenyans to safely and securely operate UAS for various ventures.

5) As mentioned above, the use and application of drones have radically transformed the operations and response of humanitarian work. It has enhanced quick and easy response to human suffering during humanitarian crisis.

6) The use of drones during search and rescue missions has also increased and the technology is also critical in mapping out and surveying of disaster prone and affected areas. The UAS can also facilitate the delivery of relief materials in inaccessible locations.

7) Similarly, the technology could help in the assessment of damage on infrastructure caused by natural catastrophes and help in strategizing of post-emergency and reconstruction projects.

8) However, the three (3) most pressing issues we encounter in our work today are (i) how to generate analysis that will have immediate impact on human life; (ii) how to bring back results to beneficiaries to turn data into action; and (iii) consideration for the ethical concern in each step of the process.

9) As you know, drones are fitted with cameras and citizens should not be made to feel that their right to privacy and safety is at risk.

10)   I am therefore glad to not that, the WeRobotics through the ''Unusual Solutions '' competition have set out to address the highlighted areas of concern in the UAS technology by placing a call for 3 challenges, which are:-

i) **Drone data & AI tools** - *How can data and AI tools become more relevant to solving local social challenges?*
ii) **Last data mile** - *How can we bring back drone data and insights to all beneficiaries and turn data into action?*
iii) **Drone & data ethics** - *How can drones and data be used ethically to solve meaningful problems?*

11) As government, I want to assure you that we are committed to building technology infrastructure and putting in place **vibrant legislative and policy frameworks** that will encourage investments in the ICT sector.

12) Already we have laid down over **6000 Kms of optic fibre cables** across the country to support the application and uptake of ICTs.

13) Additionally, the government has enacted the **Data Protection Act 2019** as well as the **Computer Misuse and Cyber Crimes Act 2018.** With these bold efforts, we expect citizens to reap the dividends of our digital promise.

14) As I conclude, I must say that I am delighted to have joined you here today for this momentous event as we witness these 9 finalists pitch their ideas to the panel of judges addressing the three (3) pressing challenges.

15) With those remarks I congratulate all those who emerged top out of a total of 245 applications from across the world that proposed solutions.

16) You are all winners despite the fact that only one overall winner will be chosen today. I wish you all good luck!

THANK YOU!