



**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

**SPEECH BY THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, STATE DEPARTMENT FOR YOUTH AFFAIRS DURING THE SIGNING OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE STATE DEPARTMENT FOR SHIPPING & MARITIME AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT FOR YOUTH AFFAIRS ON MONDAY, 17TH FEBRUARY, 2020 AT KICC, NAIROBI**

**The Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of ICT, Innovation and Youth Affairs, Ms. Nadia Ahmed**

**The Principal Secretary, State Department for Shipping & Maritime, Mrs. Nancy Karigithu**

**Deputy Regional Secretary, International Transport Workers Federation, Ms. Anne Karume**

**Secretary General, Seafarers Union of Kenya, Mr. Steven Owaki**

**The Head of Legal, Kenya Maritime Authority, Mrs. Jane Florence Otieno**

**The Chairman and members of the YEDF Board**

**The Chief Executive Officer, YEDF**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my great pleasure to be here with you today, as we put pen to paper on this very important Memorandum of Understanding borne out of a collaboration between the State

Department for Shipping & Maritime and the State Department for Youth.

On 7<sup>th</sup> January this year, we held our first meeting with the Principal Secretary State Department for Shipping and Maritime where we discussed on a financing arrangement to aid the pre-embarkation formalities for Youth recruited into international ships.

A partnership between the State Department for Shipping and Maritime, the Youth Enterprise Development Fund Board and the Union of Seafarers was proposed. They were to come up with a workable schedule on how to actualise disbursement of interest-free loans to the above mentioned Youth, regardless of social background. Approximately 400 Kenya Youth have been recruited and employed by International Shipping lines, notably, the Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC).

I note with much pleasure that several other meetings have been held to discuss how the Kenyan Youth can successfully venture and benefit from employment opportunities available for them as Seafarers on international ships. The ***MOU on Skills Development and Employment Creation for the Youth in the Maritime and Blue Economy Sector*** which we are signing today, is the result of these deliberations.

The Youth population in Kenya is very significant. Around the world, there is a growing recognition of the need to strengthen policies involving young people. The Government is making great strides in creating opportunities for the Youth as we implement our agenda of the Big Four priorities. It is also guided, by the Constitution of Kenya 2010, in its Bill of Rights, how best to successfully accomplish Youth engagement and development.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The consequence of high levels of youth unemployment is idleness, radicalization, dependency, increasing crime rate, alcohol, drug and substance abuse among other vices. These young people are likely to be caught up in a poverty trap or potentially become a destabilizing force that can be used to cause civil disturbance or become a recruitment pool for terrorism, negative political mobilization and other criminal activities.

The State Department for Youth has a direct role to play by ensuring that sustainable policies and strategies are developed and implemented to address these challenges.

In January when Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender, Prof. Margaret Kobia, inaugurated Youth Enterprise Development Fund Board, she encouraged them to serve the Youth better and in a timely manner, to re-engineer processes and to redesign loan products so as to reflect the changing business environment and address needs of the Youth.

Today, I state with much pride that the Board has designed a new product that will be **specific** to Youth and Seafarers who are successfully recruited to shipping jobs. The product, which will be interest free, has been designed to facilitate the costs related to certification and training of Youths to access employment in the cruise ships as seafarers. The loan will be advanced to individual Youths. This reflects an organization keen to align its programmes to public aspirations.

As I conclude, I want to reiterate that we are focused as a Department on the measures to unlock access to employment, skills, entrepreneurship and inclusivity for the Youth.

We pledge to support this partnership and commit to play our part as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding, in order to achieve all underlying and common objectives and visions of improving the welfare of the Kenyan Youth.

**Thank You**