



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

OFFICE OF THE PRIME CABINET SECRETARY & MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AND DIASPORA AFFAIRS STATE DEPARTMENT FOR SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY

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**During The Inaugural Science, Technology, Research and Innovation for
Society (STRI4SOCIETY) Week 2026**

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Opening & Acknowledgements

Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
My Fellow Principal Secretaries;

Vice Chancellors and Leaders of Universities, TVETs and Research
Institutions;

Captains of Industry and Private Sector Leaders;

Development Partners;

Scientists, Innovators, Researchers, Students and Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning

It is a singular honour and privilege to welcome you to the inaugural Science, Technology, Research and Innovation for Society Week 2026.

This historic gathering comes at a defining moment for our country – a moment when Kenya is repositioning itself not only as the economic gateway to Africa, but also as a continental leader in knowledge, innovation, industrial transformation and scientific advancement.

This week is not simply about showcasing inventions or research outputs. It is about shaping the future of our nation.

The theme of this year's conference – “Igniting Innovation: Bridging Science and Society for Sustainable Development” – speaks directly to the aspirations of our people and the development vision of the Government under the leadership of His Excellency President William Samoei Ruto.

Your Excellency,

The Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda recognizes that sustainable prosperity will not come from dependence on raw commodities alone. It will come from building a modern economy driven by knowledge, industrial productivity, technology, creativity and innovation.

Science, research and innovation are therefore not peripheral sectors; they are the engines that will power Kenya's transformation into a globally competitive and industrialized nation.

Distinguished Guests,

Throughout history, nations that invested in science and innovation transformed their economies faster, strengthened their sovereignty and improved the quality of life of their citizens.

The 21st century global economy is increasingly being shaped by artificial intelligence, biotechnology, advanced manufacturing, robotics, clean energy, quantum computing, genomics and digital systems.

The nations leading these technologies today are the nations shaping global trade, healthcare, food systems, industrial production and geopolitical influence.

Kenya must not remain at the periphery of this transformation.

We must become creators of knowledge, owners of innovation and producers of globally competitive technologies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Kenya already possesses many of the foundations necessary for this transformation.

We have one of Africa's youngest and most dynamic populations.

We have internationally recognized universities and research institutions.
We have a thriving digital ecosystem and globally admired mobile financial innovations.

We have over 60,000 kilometres of fibre optic infrastructure supporting digital connectivity.

We have vibrant entrepreneurs, innovators and startups capable of competing globally.

What is now required is scale, coordination and sustained investment.

We must move from fragmented innovation to nationally coordinated innovation ecosystems. Create clusters for impact.

We must build stronger bridges between universities, industry, government and communities.

We must ensure that research addresses real societal and economic challenges.

And above all, we must build a culture where innovation becomes part of everyday national development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The future competitiveness of nations will increasingly depend on their ability to invest in research and development.

Countries that dominate the global economy today invest heavily in Science, Technology and Innovation. South Korea invests over 4% of GDP in research and development. Israel invests more than 5%. These investments have enabled them to build globally competitive industries and resilient economies.

Kenya currently invests approximately 0.8% of GDP in research and development.

To accelerate industrial transformation and competitiveness, we must progressively move towards the African Union aspiration of investing at least 2% of GDP in Science, Technology and Innovation.

This is not expenditure; it is strategic national investment.

Investment in science yields returns through industrial growth, better healthcare, food security, energy solutions, quality jobs and national resilience.

Every shilling invested in research has the potential to generate multiple socioeconomic returns for society.

Your Excellency,

The State Department for Science, Research and Innovation is therefore working closely with institutions such as NACOSTI, the National Research Fund and the Kenya National Innovation Agency to strengthen the national innovation ecosystem.

Our strategic focus is on:

- Strengthening research financing and infrastructure;
- Advancing commercialization of research outputs;
- Expanding innovation incubation and acceleration centres;
- Supporting frontier technologies including Artificial Intelligence and biotechnology;
- Promoting intellectual property generation and protection;
- Deepening science diplomacy and international scientific cooperation;
- And enhancing industry-academia-government collaboration.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The next frontier for Kenya is not merely economic growth – it is knowledge-driven economic transformation.

Artificial Intelligence alone is projected to contribute trillions of dollars to the global economy over the coming decade. Africa must position itself not only as a consumer of these technologies, but also as a developer of African solutions for African challenges.

Kenya has the potential to emerge as a continental hub for AI, digital innovation, biotechnology, climate technologies and advanced scientific research.

The launch of GPU computing infrastructure through KENET, the expansion of innovation hubs, and the implementation of the Kenya AI Strategy are important steps in this direction.

But technology alone is not enough.

Innovation must ultimately improve human lives.

Science must improve healthcare access in our counties.

Science must strengthen food production and climate resilience.

Science must support manufacturing and value addition.

Science must create jobs for young people.

Science must reduce poverty and inequality.

Science must strengthen environmental sustainability and resilience.

That is why STRI4SOCIETY is important.

It seeks to reconnect science with wananchi.

It seeks to ensure that innovation is not confined to laboratories, but reaches farms, factories, schools, hospitals, markets and communities across the country.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The private sector must now become a central pillar in Kenya's innovation ecosystem.

Globally, industry finances the majority of research and development activities because innovation drives competitiveness and profitability.

We therefore encourage stronger public-private partnerships, venture capital investment, startup financing, industrial incubation and technology transfer.

Our universities and research institutions must also become centres of enterprise creation, commercialization and industrial partnerships.

Research must move from publication to production.

From laboratories to industries.

From ideas to enterprises.

From innovation to impact.

Distinguished Guests,

Science diplomacy is equally becoming a powerful instrument for development and global cooperation.

Through strategic partnerships with international institutions, regional networks and global scientific agencies, Kenya continues to strengthen capacity building, technology transfer and research collaboration.

In a rapidly changing world facing climate change, pandemics, food insecurity and energy transition, scientific cooperation will remain essential for humanity's collective future.

Kenya therefore stands ready to continue championing science as a tool for peace, development and shared global prosperity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we gather here this week, we must think beyond today.

What kind of Kenya do we want to build over the next 30 years?

We must envision a Kenya where:

- Every county has innovation ecosystems supporting local industries;
- Kenyan universities become globally competitive research institutions;
- Kenyan startups scale into continental technology enterprises;
- Scientific discoveries lead to local manufacturing and exports;
- Youth become global innovators and job creators;
- And research becomes deeply embedded in national planning and policymaking.

This is achievable.

But it requires courage to invest in the future.

It requires visionary leadership.

It requires national unity of purpose.

And it requires sustained commitment to science, research and innovation.

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen,

History will remember nations that prepared for the future before the future arrived.

This generation has a responsibility to build a Kenya that future generations will inherit with pride — a Kenya powered not merely by natural resources, but by the power of ideas, innovation and human ingenuity.

The countries that will define the future are not necessarily the largest in size, but those bold enough to invest in knowledge, science and innovation.

Kenya must be one of those nations.

Let this inaugural STRI4SOCIETY Week therefore ignite a new national consciousness.

A consciousness that recognizes that research is not an academic luxury, but a national necessity.

Innovation is not optional, but essential for competitiveness.

And that science is not distant from society, but the foundation upon which prosperous, healthy, secure and resilient nations are built.

If we invest boldly in science today, we will build industries tomorrow.

If we empower innovators today, we will create jobs tomorrow.

If we strengthen research today, we will secure Kenya's future tomorrow.

The destiny of modern nations will be determined by the strength of their laboratories, the creativity of their youth, the courage of their innovators and the wisdom of their investments in knowledge.

Let Kenya rise through science.

Let Africa rise through innovation.

And let this generation be remembered as the generation that transformed research into prosperity and innovation into dignity for society.

I thank you.

God Bless You.

God Bless Kenya.