

**Key Note Address**

**By;**

**Her Excellency, Dr. Elham M.A. Ibrahim**

**Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy  
African Union Commission**

**African Leadership in ICT  
Certificate Awarding Ceremony**

**05 July 2013  
Nairobi, Kenya**

The Representative of the Honourable Cabinet Secretary for Education, Republic of Kenya

Your Excellency, The Ambassador of Finland to Kenya

The President of Dublin City University (DCU)

The Chief Executive Officer, Global e-Schools and Community Initiative

Distinguished Invited Guests

Graduands of the African Leadership in ICT course

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with great pleasure to be with you today and I am pleased to address you at this Certificate awarding ceremony of the second cohort of the African Leadership in ICT Course.

First, let me take this opportunity to thank the Government of Kenya and the Hon. Minister for hosting us with profound hospitality.

I am also grateful to the Government of Finland for the continued support to this program of the African Union.

I wish also to express my appreciation to the Global eSchools and Community Initiative for the professionalism they have continued to exhibit while conducting the course.

We look forward to continued collaboration to deliver it to the African Union citizens that are in need of the same.

The vision of the African Union is a peaceful, integrated, prosperous Africa, driven by its own citizens to take up its rightful place in the global community. The Knowledge society pillars are key enablers to the attainment of this vision.

While ICT has become a powerful catalyst for socio economic development, Education has been and continue to be an essential part of the fabric of all great nations by imparting the wisdom of past generations to the leaders of the future.

Until lately, there have been the three classical factors of production contributing to economic activity that is land, labour and capital. Policies led to the allocation of resources to these factors to induce further production. Nowadays, a new factor of production has been added to the development debate; Knowledge is now posed as the main driving force of innovation and development.

As the African Union continues to integrate into the global economy which is an increasingly information and knowledge based economy, the African Leadership in ICT is one of the AU initiatives aimed at contributing to the development of sustainable Knowledge Societies in Africa.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The proper use of ICT creates a conducive environment for knowledge to flow at all level of society and thus enriching business activities. The judicious use of the ICT is a determinant factor for knowledge to be properly distributed to the ever demanding society with a quest to know more and more. The gap between developed and under developed countries, is decreased by the proper proliferation of knowledge.

ICT can facilitate Smart Education, Smart Healthcare, Smart Governance, Smart Business, Smart Agriculture, Smart Environment, and Smart Infrastructure, all of which aim to enhance delivery of key services to citizens.

For example, a combination of technology and education will allow us to make huge advances in the provision of healthcare services worldwide – and especially in the developing world, where there exists a gulf between healthcare availability and healthcare provision.

As smartphones become ever-more widespread in the developing world, we can also expect to see an increase in the number of healthcare applications being developed. These applications can make a real difference on the ground, even when there is no Internet. There are now simple but revolutionary applications under development that can be used to diagnose a number of diseases on the spot. These applications, process a picture of a blood sample taken by the phone; and detects the specific disease.

Broadband has also the power not just to revolutionize education, but to bring it into the lives of everyone, no matter where they live. ICTs have already transformed the way we look at education and learning, and this marks the biggest shift in the sector since the founding of the first great ancient higher-learning institutions, which were essentially lecturer centered.

Distance learning could never have happened without ICTs and broadband, which have brought two crucial new forces to play: the death of distance, and the democratization of information and knowledge.

There can be no doubt that ICT has changed Africa fundamentally in the past decade. Information and Communication Technology has already enabled Africa to make a tremendous leap in delivering public and private sector services, and in improving lives generally.

Indeed, there is hardly any African socioeconomic activity that has not benefited from information and communications technologies in the last decade.

But we are still at the very early stage of harnessing its potential to generate greater prosperity by connecting our continent to global networks of business, knowledge and productivity.

I am pleased that the African Leadership in ICT course is one effort aimed at building the capacity to contribute to the advancement of knowledge society development in Africa.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The African Union Commission reiterates its continued support to harness the potential of technology and knowledge, and to find effective and innovative ways to put this potential at the service of African citizens.

In conclusion, I wish to congratulate today's graduating cohort of the African Leadership in ICT.

I wish you all the best in your future endeavors that will be aimed at contributing towards the advancement of the knowledge society development in Africa.

I Thank You