



SPEECH BY PRESIDENT, INSTITUTION OF ENGINEERS OF KENYA

DURING OPENING SESSION OF 2ND WORLD ENGINEERING DAY, HELD ON 4TH MARCH 2021 AT CHANDARIA HALL, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

Our Chief Guest, Hon. James Macharia, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Transport Infrastructure, Housing, Urban Development and Public Works

Our Guest, Prof. Arch. Paul Maringa, Principal Secretary, State Department for Infrastructure

Co-host, Chairman Engineers Board of Kenya, Eng. Erastus Mwangera

Presidents of WFEO, FAEO, EAFEO

Director Generals, CEOs, and Executive Directors of State Agencies.

EBK Board Members.

Council members of the Institution of Engineers of Kenya.

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning.

I am pleased to celebrate with you today the 2nd World Engineering Day.

The World Federation of Engineering Organizations, on March 4, 2018, signed a declaration of collaboration with UNESCO to advance the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals. These include climate action, clean water and sanitation, gender education, clean energy, zero hunger, and no poverty.

The 2nd World Engineering Day 2021 (WED2021), is themed "**Engineering for A Healthy Planet- Celebrating the UNESCO Engineering Report**". 2nd WED will be held in Paris, France this afternoon during which the 2nd UNESCO Engineering Report "**Engineering for Sustainable Development: Delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals**" will be launched. Also, throughout the world, member organisations, including IEK, are celebrating WED with various events.

About IEK

The Institution of Engineers of Kenya (IEK) is a learned society of engineering professionals in Kenya and co-operates with national and other international institutions in developing and applying engineering to the benefit of humanity and the country at large.

IEK has over 9,000 members drawn from engineers working in various government institutions (both in the national and county governments), consultancies, financial institutions, contractors, educators, designers, and manufacturers.

One key objective of IEK is facilitating exchange of information and knowledge among our members so that members are kept abreast with emerging technology, knowledge, and practices in engineering to enable them continue to give high quality of engineering services to the public.

About World Engineering Day

Infrastructure development is a critical enabler to our country's economic development. Engineers continue to play an indispensable role in realizing achievement of Vision 2030 and Big Four Agenda to transform Kenya into "a newly industrializing, middle income country providing a high quality of life to all its citizens in a clean and secure environment".

The World Engineering Day provides a much needed platform to highlight the critical role engineers play in making the world more sustainable. It gives an opportunity to discuss critical issues and engage the wider community on the work ahead to achieve the UN 2030 Agenda so that **no one is left behind**.

In Kenya, IEK and EBK are co-hosting the WED celebrations which are being held in Nairobi and across the country. Our IEK branches have organised various activities including road shows and mentorship of high school students. As a build up to the 2nd WED, over the last two weeks, IEK and EBK also organised TV and radio talk shows, commissioning of the EBK examination centre. These have raised public awareness on the role of engineers as well as engagement with stakeholders on key infrastructure projects like the Nairobi Expressway. This has generated a lot of interest and public support.

Today, IEK will also launch its inaugural issue of the Engineering in Kenya magazine. The magazine will provide a much needed forum for our engineers and general public to exchange knowledge and ideas on engineering matters. In addition, IEK will hold Career Week for university students, a mentorship program that is scheduled to run from 8th – 12th March 2021 and will involve 12 local universities offering engineering courses. The aim of the IEK Career Week is to foster continued students' interest in the engineering career and to expose the students to various career opportunities available to them after graduation.

Our commitments

Our Chief Guest, the engineering fraternity appreciate your presence and that of senior government officials here today. It is a clear demonstration of Government's commitment to supporting the development of engineering in Kenya.

On our part, we as engineers are fully aware of the heavy responsibility placed on us to design and build facilities which are safe and promote wellbeing of our citizens. Our engineers commit to apply our specialized knowledge and skills towards implementation of Government programs for social-economic development. Our engineers design a wide variety of projects and thus have a rich knowledge base

which is available to offer solutions to problems facing our communities. We are able to provide assessments, recommend alternatives and provide properly designed high-functioning systems to meet the needs of the country.

IEK is also willing to provide support to Government to enhance its oversight role during project implementation. In particular, we are willing to design training programs for senior Government officers especially those exercising oversight roles on government construction projects.

In the second part of today's program, we shall be highlighting the achievements of our engineers and the impacts and outcomes of engineering.

Changing times

Today we are living in unprecedented times. COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically changed the way we live. Since early 2020, we have been confronted with social distancing, stay at home, lockdowns and the unfortunate loss of lives from the disease. AS the country and the world looks at post COVID economic recovery, Engineers are called upon to deploy innovations, to reskill and to adapt. Further, Engineers will need to leverage the rapidly changing technology and provide contemporary, fit for purpose solutions.

Enabling environment

Our Chief Guest, in order to effectively deliver services to our clients, engineers need an enabling environment. We seek your support in the following areas:

- (1) Enabling regulatory framework; there are number of laws which are not aligned to best engineering practices (these include sections of procurement regulations which offend the construction contract provisions, completing the road reforms under the Kenya Roads Bill and the nullified Misc. Amendment Act, 2018 among others that are pending before the senate)
- (2) Need to enhance participation of local engineers in large scale engineering projects by formulation of policies that promote effective knowledge transfer mechanisms to enable the country to become self-reliant in engineering skills.
- (3) Enhanced engineers schemes of service; IEK submitted memorandum to PSC seeking enhancement of engineers schemes of service and for non-practicing allowance for engineers serving in public service. We are aware that other professionals are paid this allowance.
- (4) There are a number of vacancies of engineering jobs within the Public Service. Kindly consider promotion of engineers to fill vacancies in the Civil Service. IEK also calls for exemption of engineers from employment freeze since these cadre is critical for delivery of Vision 2030.
- (5) Gazettement of Engineers scale of fees
- (6) Appointment of Engineers in leadership and management in National and County governments; currently a number of leadership and management positions of technical nature which are not held by Professional Engineers.

- (7) Upscaling of GE Internship program by setting aside 2.5% from each project so that all GEs graduating from college are able to get jobs
- (8) Harassment of engineers on site; IEK has noted with concern incidences where our members were assaulted on site or arrested. We request that the Ministry makes provisions to enhance the safety and security of our engineers while on duty.
- (9) Support EBK to sign Washington Accord for mobility of engineers
- (10) Today, only 11% of IEK members are women. We are also calling on Government to design affirmative actions to increase the greater participation of women, persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups in engineering.
- (11) The body of knowledge of engineering is continually evolving and needs to be supported by new knowledge, new technologies and new methods. There is need therefore to consider dedicated funding for R&D particularly in area of affordable building materials.
- (12) The draft National Automotive policy is promoting local car assembly which means that Kenya will not develop specialized skills for car manufacturing. There is need to review the policy to promote local car manufacturing for employment creation and use of local skills.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish to conclude with the words of the former President WFEO, Marlene Kanga “You simply can’t have our modern life without engineering.” So today, let us celebrate and honour engineers for their great contributions to societal wellbeing.

It is now my pleasure to invite the Chairman of Engineers Board of Kenya, Eng. Erastus Mwongera to give his address.

God Bless you.

Eng. Nathaniel Matalanga, PE, FIEK
PRESIDENT
THE INSTITUTION OF ENGINEERS OF KENYA