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OFFICE OF THE PRIME CABINET SECRETARY AND MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AND DIASPORA AFFAIRS
STATE DEPARTMENT FOR PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS

REMARKS BY THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, STATE DEPARTMENT FOR PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS, DR. AURELIA CHEPKIRUI RONO, PhD, CPA(K), CBS, DURING THE REVIEW OF THE PUBLIC POLICY REPOSITORY MODULE AT CRESCENT LODGE, NAIVASHA.

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a pleasure to join you at this stage of the review of the Public Policy Repository Module.

Let me begin by expressing our appreciation to the Public Financial Management Reform programme (PFMR) for partnering and supporting this important exercise. We value that partnership and the support it has provided in helping us take forward this work. In this regard, allow me to make special mention of PFMR's towards the State Department's consultative exercise convened last year for purposes of identifying areas of policy, legal and operational conflicts and inconsistencies that impede the effective realization of the GLA. This exercise, held from 29th September to 3rd October, made an invaluable contribution to the advancement of our GLA coordination mandate.

I also recognize our resource persons from the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Digital Economy (MICE) and team from the State Department for Parliamentary Affairs who have been engaged in the review over the past few days.

I am well briefed on the progress of the exercise and the work undertaken so far. I understand that the review has gone beyond the existing functionality of the module, and incorporated measures for the optimization of business processes, the quality and management of policy information, user experience, public engagement, as well as strengthening of the Repository, as part of the State Department's wider information systems.

That is the right approach, bearing in mind that what is under deliberation is not merely a digital module. It is about how the Government manages, organizes and makes accessible an important body of knowledge- our public policies.

We interact with policies every day, directly or indirectly. Policies articulate Government priorities, provide direction for implementation and, in many cases, lay the foundation for legislative initiatives and other Government interventions. Therefore, the importance of the accessibility, accuracy, authenticity, timeliness, and proper organization of policies, and attendant information cannot be over-emphasized.

Accordingly, I invite us all to view the Repository as a wholesome Government policy resource, rather than simply a place where policy documents are uploaded.

I envision a Repository that allows users to establish, with reasonable ease, a policy's subject matter, its objectives, its owner or responsible institution, implementation period, status, and which enables access to relevant authoritative information.

I am encouraged that the review has considered these issues, including search and retrieval, categorization, policy status, implementation timelines, validation, updating, public feedback and the overall user experience.

For me, one of the most important areas is the business process integrated into the system.

We need to prioritize clarity on, for instance, who submits policy information, who reviews it, who validates it, who approves its publication and who is responsible for keeping it current. The system can only be as reliable as the processes and responsibilities supporting it.

We must also recognize that policies have a lifecycle. They are developed, approved, implemented, reviewed and, in some cases, amended, replaced or withdrawn. The Repository should be able to reflect that reality so that a user is able to not just access a document, but to understand its current position as well.

The proposed linkages with the wider Legislative Agenda Management Information System are also important. The different components should work together where necessary, while maintaining a clear purpose and an intuitive experience for users.

I also applaud the team's benchmarking efforts, particularly against platforms such as KIPPRA, Kenya Law and KNBS. There is value in learning from what has worked elsewhere, particularly on matters such as search, classification, metadata, accessibility and presentation. At the same time, we should develop a resource that optimally responds to the needs of all intended users and aligns with the mandate of the State Department.

Researchers, development partners, members of the public and other stakeholders should be able to access reliable policy information without necessarily having to understand the internal architecture of Government systems.

The proposed use of artificial intelligence can also add value, particularly in helping users obtain concise information from lengthy policy documents. But as we embrace such tools, we must retain the principle that the original, validated policy remains the authoritative source.

As we progress with this review and move towards implementation, I would like us to remain focused on three things: accuracy, ownership and sustainability.

Accuracy, because policy information must be reliable and authenticated.

Ownership, because every part of the process must have a clear institutional responsibility.

And sustainability, because this should not be a one-off exercise that produces a new platform which is eventually left with outdated information.

Our goal should be to establish a living public policy resource — one that is regularly updated, easy to navigate, credible and genuinely useful to both Government and the public.

I appreciate the work that has gone into this exercise and, once again, thank PFMR for the support that has made it possible. I encourage the team to adopt the findings from this review and translate them into practical solutions that will strengthen our approach to the management and provision of accessible public policy information.

Once again, I commend all of you for the good work, and wish you fruitful deliberations.