



**SPEECH BY HON. DAVIS CHIRCHIR, EGH, CABINET SECRETARY,
MINISTRY OF ROADS AND TRANSPORT DURING THE
ENGINEERING PARTNERSHIPS CONVENTION (EPC) 2026**

Distinguished Guests,

Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me pleasure to join you for the opening of the 7th Engineering Partnerships Convention 2026. I congratulate the Engineers Board of Kenya and all partners who have brought us together under a theme that speaks directly to Kenya's future: **“Blueprint for Prosperity: Engineering a Sustainable Blue Economy.”**

Kenya is an Indian Ocean nation with a coastline stretching six hundred kilometres and an Exclusive Economic Zone of more than two hundred and thirty thousand square kilometers. We are also a country with a young population, rising infrastructure needs and a growing regional role. For us, the Blue Economy is not a side conversation. It is one of the most practical frontiers of our next phase of growth.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

KIPPRA estimates that the Blue Economy contributes about 2.5 per cent of GDP and supports nearly two million livelihoods. In 2024, fish production reached 168,424 metric tonnes valued at KShs. 39.6 billion, with more than 1.2 million Kenyans depending directly or indirectly on fisheries and related activities. These numbers confirm what this convention already understands that: with the right infrastructure, local capability, environmental stewardship and investment discipline, the Blue Economy can become a much stronger pillar of jobs, exports and inclusive prosperity.

Friends, this opportunity will not materialize automatically. It will require efficient and resilient ports. It will require reliable roads, modern logistics systems, fisheries infrastructure, cold chains, processing capacity, digital platforms, coastal protection and strong institutions. In short, it will require engineering.

That is why this gathering is so important. You are focusing not on theory, but on the practical work of turning policy into infrastructure, value and national competitiveness.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Globally, the strategic importance of this agenda is clear. UNCTAD reminds us that more than eighty per cent of international trade by volume moves by sea. Here at home, the Kenya Ports Authority reports strong momentum: in 2025, the Port of Mombasa handled 45.45 million metric tonnes of cargo and about 2.11 million TEUs, while the Port of Lamu recorded significant growth as regular services expanded.

These are signals of opportunity, but they are also reminders that momentum must be matched by sustained investment, higher standards and better coordination across the entire logistics system.

Allow me, therefore, to outline several commitments and calls for all of us to action:

First, we have to continue supporting the implementation of the National Blue Economy Strategy and aligning our programmes to its priorities.

Second, we should strengthen integrated transport and maritime infrastructure so that ports, highways, logistics zones, industrial parks and regional corridors reinforce one another. The Dongo Kundu Bypass, the Mombasa–Mariakani dual carriageway and the emerging LAPSSET Corridor show how engineering can unlock efficiency and competitiveness when infrastructure is planned as a system.

Third, we should place greater emphasis on local capability. Kenya cannot build a strong Blue Economy while underinvesting in the people who must design, operate

and maintain it. We must strengthen marine engineering programmes, deepen technical training, expand internships and industrial attachments, and promote research-to-industry collaboration. National transformation must be built on national competence.

Fourth, we should encourage stronger partnerships with investors, development partners and the private sector. These efforts should be geared on the basis of sound project preparation, clear public value and environmental responsibility. Public resources are important; however, they are not sufficient for the scale of opportunity before us. Well prepared partnerships can accelerate delivery, provided risks are understood and engineering standards are upheld.

Fifth, we must protect our oceans, coasts, lakes and ecosystems even as we use them to generate prosperity. Climate resilience must be engineered into every port, every landing site, every coastal road and every logistics system.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Blue Economy sits at the intersection of transport, trade, food systems, tourism, industrialization and regional integration. Our task is to ensure that ports connect smoothly to highways, marine infrastructure is planned alongside environmental safeguards, digital systems improve cargo visibility and safety, and transport planning aligns with Vision 2030, the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda and the National Blue Economy Strategy.

This means strengthening gateway infrastructure by improving access and circulation around freight and passenger nodes. We have to support investment in maritime logistics, ship repair, cold-chain systems and fisheries infrastructure where those assets unlock value. Further, we should be designing infrastructure for long-term reliability, not short-term visibility and also working more closely with counties,

regulators, development partners and the private sector so that investments reinforce rather than duplicate one another.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This country needs us not only as technical experts, but as nation-builders. Bring forward solutions that are practical. Help to reduce cost and improve quality and design infrastructure that lasts. We should aim to build systems that serve both present and future generations.

The Blue Economy is not only about ships and ports. It is about design, data, logistics, fabrication, aquaculture, environmental systems, digital innovation, manufacturing and services. There is space for skills, creativity and your ambition.

The Ministry is ready to collaborate and to build a Blue Economy that creates jobs, raises competitiveness and demonstrates that sustainability and prosperity can advance together.

Let EPC 2026 be remembered as the moment we moved from talking about potential to organizing delivery. It should define a national blueprint that is ambitious, practical and measurable, one that carries the confidence of engineers, the commitment of government and the support of partners.

Kenya has the location, the market and the momentum. Our task now is to build with discipline, purpose and engineering excellence.

It is now my humble duty to declare the 7th Engineering Partnerships Convention 2026 open and invite all stakeholders to participate fully.

God bless you, God bless Kenya.