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PRESS RELEASE

Kenya Strengthens Sustainable Roads Infrastructure as KIHBT Hosts Landmark International Research Conference in Mombasa

Mombasa, Kenya | May 20, 2026 — Kenya has reaffirmed her commitment to building a modern, resilient and sustainable transport system through innovation, research and skills development.

The Principal Secretary for Roads in the Ministry of Roads and Transport, Eng. Joseph Mbugua, made the disclosure when he officially opened the inaugural Kenya Institute of Highways and Building Technology (KIHBT) International Research Conference 2026 in Mombasa.

The three-day conference has brought together policymakers, engineers, researchers, development partners, industry leaders, and technical experts from across Africa under the theme: "Enhancing Capacity Building and Skills Development for Sustainable Road Transport."

The forum serves as a strategic platform for advancing research-driven, climate-smart, and technology-enabled transport solutions aimed at strengthening sustainable infrastructure development in Kenya and the Eastern Africa region.

In his keynote address, Eng. Mbugua described KIHBT as a critical institution in strengthening the technical and professional capacity required to support Kenya's growing infrastructure development.

"Research, innovation and well-trained professionals are not luxuries; they are strategic investments that secure the future of our infrastructure, economy and national competitiveness," said the Principal Secretary.

He emphasised the need for evidence-based and forward-looking infrastructure solutions to address emerging challenges in the transport sector, including road safety, climate change impacts, drainage failures, rapid technological transformation and increasing demand for sustainable mobility systems.

The Principal Secretary highlighted key reforms being undertaken by the Government to modernise the transport sector, including the rollout of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS), digitisation of weighbridge operations, modernisation of materials testing systems and the accelerated adoption of electric mobility solutions.

Eng. Mbugua said that Kenya's transition toward green transport is steadily gaining momentum following the implementation of the National Electric Mobility Policy, with over 24,000 electric motorcycles and 9,000 electric vehicles currently operating on Kenyan roads.

Eng. Mbugua further called for increased investment in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), green infrastructure and enhanced inclusion of women, youth and persons with disabilities within the roads and transport sector.

In her remarks, the Principal Secretary for TVET, Dr. Esther Muoria, said the conference comes at a pivotal moment in Kenya's development journey, where infrastructure expansion must be matched by high-quality technical skills, innovation and institutional capacity.

"As His Excellency the President has consistently stated, Kenya is a construction site. A transformation of this magnitude requires not only financing and machinery, but also skilled professionals, practical research, innovation, strong institutions and technical excellence," she said.

Dr. Muoria commended KIHBT for its growing role as a Regional Flagship TVET Institution under the World Bank-supported East Africa Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project (EASTRIP), adding that the institution continues to strengthen its position as a regional centre of excellence in roads and infrastructure training.

She observed that the future of transport infrastructure is increasingly being shaped by sustainability, digitalization, safety, inclusion and intelligent systems, adding that no country can achieve world-class infrastructure without world-class skills.

The conference is addressing a wide range of critical thematic areas, including climate-resilient infrastructure, sustainable construction materials, infrastructure financing, policy and regulatory frameworks, road safety, green mobility, active transport systems, digital transformation, and Intelligent Transport Systems.

Delegates from Uganda, Ethiopia, Madagascar and several other African countries are participating in the conference, underscoring the region's shared commitment to advancing integrated and sustainable transport systems.

Among those present were KIHBT Principal Arch. Geoffrey Githiri, Chief Engineer (Mechanical) Eng. Richard Thitai, Ag. Chief Engineer (Materials), Eng. Albert Ndege, Ag. Chief Engineer (Roads), Eng. Nicolaus Musuni, senior government officials, researchers, development partners and industry stakeholders.

The conference is expected to generate actionable research outcomes, strengthen regional partnerships and inform policy interventions aimed at accelerating sustainable transport infrastructure development across Kenya and the African continent.

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