



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**SPEECH BY HON. (DR.) ALFRED MUTUA, EGH,
DURING THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE
2ND SUB-SAHARA AFRICAN REGIONAL
CONFERENCE ON QUALITY SKILLS
DEVELOPMENT AND APPRENTICESHIPS ON
15TH MAY 2025 AT MOMBASA CONTINENTAL
RESORT**

**Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good morning,**

It is a great honor and pleasure to preside over the 2nd Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Conference on Quality Skills Development and Apprenticeships, which I consider to be a very important event. On behalf of the people and Government of Kenya, I extend a warm welcome to all participants. Let me also extend a hand of appreciation to you for accepting our invitation to participate in this conference.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Majority of the labor force operates within the informal economy in Africa. While some activities provide reasonable livelihoods and incomes, many individuals engaged in informal work face decent work deficits. The transition from the informal to the formal economy should be seamless, while preserving the fundamental rights of the informal workers. This process must be inclusive, ensuring equitable opportunities, fair treatment, and comprehensive social protections for all.

Equally important is the cultivation of an environment that supports the establishment, preservation, and long-term sustainability of

enterprises and decent jobs within the formal sector. A proactive approach is necessary to prevent the informalization of the jobs in the formal economy.

I am pleased that the International Labour Organization (ILO) Recommendation 204 of 2015 serves as a guiding framework for a structured transition from the informal to the formal economy. This recommendation marks a major step toward building a more inclusive and sustainable approach to integrating informal economic activities into the formal sector.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Informal apprenticeships play a crucial role in equipping workers in the informal sector with essential skills. These informal apprenticeships are highly practical, integrating industry best practices and real-world applications that lead to strong employment outcomes. They also serve as a critical pathway for individuals who have little or no formal education and training. However, despite their significance, informal apprenticeships are often associated with decent work deficits.

It is therefore encouraging that the International Labour Organization (ILO) Quality Apprenticeships Recommendation No. 208 of 2023 stands as a

pivotal framework guiding the integration and advancement of quality apprenticeships within education and training, lifelong learning, and employment policies. By fostering quality apprenticeships, this framework enhances decent work, productivity and employability.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you engage in your panel discussions, seize the opportunity to turn a new page and write a transformational chapter in our history. To realize our greatest aspirations, which is the advancement and prosperity of our continent, we must ensure that Africa is no longer seen as a secondary or marginal player but as an active and decisive

force in the global economy. In this respect, we must reflect on solutions to the key challenges facing our continent, particularly in achieving quality skills development and apprenticeships. Finding innovative and effective approaches to address these issues is not only essential but urgent.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I also invite you to deeply reflect on how we can further accelerate efforts to reduce youth unemployment in Africa, as a means of harnessing the continent's demographic dividend. With one-third of the world's population—and of the working-age population—expected to be African by 2075, Africa is the only region where the workforce will

continue to grow for decades to come. To fully unlock this potential, young people must be equipped with the right skills and integrated into productive employment. Empowering the youth is a definite path to achieving long-term sustainable development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This conference, therefore, marks a significant milestone in our collective journey towards developing a skilled workforce—one that is employable, productive, enterprising, innovative, adaptable, and globally competitive. But what we must achieve during this conference, is to deliver a clear vision of what to do next, and the joint

commitment to get there. As the major outcome of this conference, the Mombasa Declaration on Advancing Quality Skills Development, Apprenticeship Systems, and Economic Transition in Africa, should become a critical tool for the continent.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I conclude, I urge you—as architects of Africa's future—to think with clarity, speak with unwavering conviction, and act with strategic purpose. The African success story will not write itself—it will demand our collective strength to reshape the destiny of this continent. It requires us to confront

challenges head-on and turn them into triumphs that will inspire generations to come.

With those remarks, it is now my pleasure to declare the 2nd Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Conference on Quality Skills Development and Apprenticeships officially open and wish you fruitful deliberations.

Thank you. God Bless you. God bless Africa.