

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY MR. AMOS N. GATHECHA, CBS,
NDC (K),
DEPUTY HEAD OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE,
DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE KAPAM
SYMPOSIUM,
KENYA SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT, MOMBASA,
TUESDAY, 6TH MAY 2025**

- **Principal Secretary, State Department for Public Service and Human Capital Development, Dr. Jane Kere Imbunya**
- **Principal Secretary, State Department for ICT and the Digital Economy, Eng. John Tanui**
- **Director General, Kenya School of Government, Prof. Nura Mohamed**
- **Secretary General, African Association for Public Administration and Management, Prof. George Scott**
- **Distinguished Guests,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It gives me great pleasure to join you for the official opening of the Kenya Association for Public Administration and Management Symposium under the timely and transformative theme: **“Smart Governance: How Artificial Intelligence is Reshaping Public Administration.”**

This is not just a conversation about the future. It is about **decisions we must make now** to position our public service as a responsive, efficient, and future-ready institution. The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into public administration is not theoretical—it is happening, and the question before us is: *Are we ready?*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Government of Kenya has taken deliberate steps to embed digital transformation within the core of its governance architecture. Within the Executive Office of the President, we have established a **Directorate of**

Smart Government, housed in the Office of Chief of Staff and Head of the Public Service. This is not cosmetic. It is **a strategic shift**—an acknowledgement that digital technology, particularly AI, will define how government operates moving forward.

This direction is aligned with the **Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA)**, which places a premium on the **Digital Superhighway and Creative Economy** as levers for inclusive growth. The public service cannot be left behind in this journey.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are in the early stages of a major transition—from **human-only systems** to **human-hybrid systems**, where public officers work alongside intelligent machines to deliver better, faster, and more targeted services.

Let me be clear:

This is not about replacing the public servant. It is about **retooling and empowering them** to deliver in an environment where **data, automation, and real-time analytics** drive decision-making.

We are entering a new frontier where **policy, leadership, and technology must align**. This calls for a new mindset across the public service—one that embraces change, innovation, and continuous learning.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The **Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)**—characterized by AI, robotics, the Internet of Things, machine learning, and big data—is **no longer optional**. It is the operating environment of today's world.

This new era demands that we not only automate processes but also fundamentally rethink our service delivery models. **Anticipatory governance, agile policy-making, and citizen-centered design** must become the new norm.

We must use AI and related technologies to:

- Detect and prevent crimes through predictive analytics
- Automate citizen services to cut bureaucracy
- Monitor performance in real-time using smart sensors and data dashboards
- Engage citizens through intelligent digital platforms
- Reinvent city management through smart infrastructure

These are **not aspirational dreams**—they are already being deployed in leading cities and institutions globally. Kenya must not lag behind.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Technology is only as effective as the people who operate it.

Therefore, **our transformation must be people-driven.** As a government, we must:

- **Upskill and reskill** public officers to operate in AI-enabled environments
- Build a **culture of innovation and agility**
- Instil a **values-based leadership** model to ensure ethics keep pace with innovation

The future of work in the public sector will reward **critical thinking, emotional intelligence, problem-solving, and leadership.** Routine, repetitive work will increasingly be handled by machines. We must prepare for this transition **deliberately—not passively.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

AI adoption comes with **policy implications**.

Governments must:

- Embrace 4IR technologies and design complementary **education and workforce policies**
- Support digital inclusion to ensure **no one is left behind**
- Develop **governance frameworks** that promote accountability, transparency, and citizen trust
- Balance **technological advancement with data privacy, ethics, and security**

Our goal must be a **digitally enabled, citizen-centric public service** that delivers **more with less**, enhances access, and improves the quality of life for all Kenyans.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me conclude by emphasizing one thing: **Artificial Intelligence is a tool. The real asset is vision and leadership.**

The public service remains the engine of government. To remain relevant and effective, it must evolve—guided by clarity of purpose, sound policy, and unwavering commitment to the Kenyan people.

Let this symposium not just generate ideas but translate them into **clear policy direction and practical strategies** for implementation across our Ministries, Departments, and Agencies.

The future is hybrid. The time to act is now.

It is now my honour and privilege to **declare the KAPAM Symposium officially opened.**

Thank you, and may God bless you all.