

**TALKING NOTES**

BY

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THE CHIEF OF STAFF AND HEAD OF THE PUBLIC  
SERVICE**

DURING

**VIRTUAL MEETING**

WITH

**THE STATE DEPARTMENT FOR ROADS AND  
TRANSPORT**

ON

**THURSDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2026**

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# NOTES

- **Principal Secretary, State Department for Roads, Eng. Joseph m. Mbugua;**
- **Principal Secretary, State Department for transport; Mr. Mohamed a. Daghar;**
- **All Chairpersons of Boards, Members of Boards and CEOs of Institutions within these State Departments;**
- **Senior Officials and staff from these State Departments;**
- **All Distinguished participants;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Good morning,**

**A. Appreciation and Recognition of Service**

**1. Allow me, at the outset, to express my sincere and heartfelt appreciation to each one of you serving within the Roads and Transport Sectors.**

**2. The work you do is fundamental to the functioning of our economy and the daily lives of our citizens. Roads and transport systems are not just infrastructure, they are the arteries through which economic activity flows, enabling movement of people, goods, and services across the country.**

**3. Every road constructed, every kilometre maintained, every transport system regulated, and every safety measure implemented** has a direct impact on **productivity, connectivity,** and national development.

**4. Beyond the institutions and systems, we often refer to, it is you as individuals,** working in planning, construction, maintenance, regulation, and enforcement, who carry the responsibility of ensuring that **this sector delivers effectively.**

**5. I** recognize that this work is complex and demanding. You operate in challenging environments, often under **tight timelines, with high public expectations and constant scrutiny.** You are required to **balance quality, cost, safety, and efficiency,** while ensuring that projects are **delivered to standard.**

**6. Your** efforts are visible. They are reflected in the expansion of our road network, in improved connectivity between regions, and in the ongoing efforts to modernize our transport systems.

**7. This** is not ordinary work. It requires **professionalism, technical competence, integrity, and a strong sense** of public responsibility.

**8. I** also acknowledge that you carry out this work in circumstances **where expectations** are high and **resources must be carefully managed.** Yet, you continue to deliver.

**9. I** want you to know **that your work matters.** Your role in enabling **mobility, supporting economic growth, and connecting** our nation is essential to the realization of our development agenda.

## **B. Alignment with Government Priorities**

**10. Ladies and Gentlemen,** as we take stock of the progress made, we must now firmly anchor these achievements within the broader Government agenda, **including our deliberate march towards a Singapore-like transformation**—an ambitious pathway to **First-World Status** defined by efficiency, innovation, and global competitiveness.

**11. Under** the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda, the roads and transport sector is a central pillar of national development. **It is the backbone that supports economic activity, facilitates trade, connects communities,** and enables **access to essential services.**

**12. Without efficient and reliable transport systems,** the cost of doing business rises, markets become inaccessible, and economic growth is constrained. **This places a critical responsibility on this sector to deliver infrastructure and services that are efficient, safe, and sustainable.**

**13. One of the key priorities under the Government's agenda is the expansion and maintenance of road infrastructure** to support agriculture, industry, and trade. **Farmers must be able to access markets. Goods must move efficiently across counties and borders. Urban areas must function with reduced congestion and improved mobility.**

**14.** Under the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda and the Medium Term Development Plan, ports are positioned as strategic gateways for trade, regional integration, and economic growth. The focus is on enhancing efficiency in cargo handling, reducing turnaround times, modernizing port infrastructure, and strengthening logistics systems to support seamless movement of goods.

**15.** This includes improving operational performance, leveraging technology, and ensuring that our ports remain competitive within the region. A well-functioning port system is essential for lowering the cost of imports and exports, facilitating trade, and positioning Kenya as a leading logistics hub in East and Central Africa.

**16.** Similarly, the rail sub sector is central to the vision of building an integrated, efficient, and sustainable transport system. Under BETA and the Medium-Term Development Plan, the focus is on maximizing the use of rail for bulk cargo and passenger transport, strengthening connectivity between ports and inland destinations, and improving reliability and efficiency of rail services.

**17.** Rail is expected to play a key role in reducing pressure on road infrastructure, lowering logistics costs, and supporting industrial growth. **A**n effective rail system will enhance the movement of goods across the country and the region, while contributing to a more balanced and sustainable transport network.

**18.** At the same time, the transport sector must ensure **safety and order**. Road safety is not optional. The rising number of accidents, loss of lives, and injuries on our roads is a matter of serious concern. This calls for stronger enforcement, better infrastructure design, and a more coordinated approach across all relevant institutions.

**19.** Equally important is the modernization and integration of transport systems. This includes improving public transport, enhancing logistics and freight systems, and leveraging technology to improve efficiency, transparency, and service delivery.

**20.** The sector also plays a key role in supporting investment. Investors rely on predictable, efficient, and well maintained infrastructure. Delays in project implementation, poor quality works, or inefficiencies in transport systems directly affect investor confidence and economic performance.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**21.** The expectations placed on this sector are therefore high. You are not just implementing projects. You are **enabling economic transformation**, supporting livelihoods, and shaping the future of this country.

**22.** And for that reason, your work must align **fully with national priorities** and deliver results that are visible, reliable, and impactful.

### **C. Accountability and Internal Weaknesses**

**23.** Having outlined the importance of this sector and its alignment with national priorities, we must now confront a difficult but necessary reality. **There are internal weaknesses within the roads and transport sector that continue to undermine performance, compromise quality, and erode public confidence.**

**24.** These challenges are not new. **They are well known, widely experienced, and, in many cases, preventable. Allow me to address them directly.**

**i. Integrity gaps and Corruption in the Sector:** There are persistent concerns regarding how projects are procured, awarded, and executed. **I**n some cases, contracts are inflated, processes are influenced, and decisions are not always based on value for money or technical merit.

a) **W**e have seen situations where projects are awarded but do not reflect commensurate value on the ground. **W**here costs appear high, yet the output does not meet expected standards. **W**here variations are introduced without clear justification. **T**his is not just inefficiency. **I**t is a loss of public resources.

b) **Corruption within the transport system does not only undermine efficiency, it directly compromises safety and costs lives. There are instances where unroadworthy vehicles are inspected and irregularly cleared to operate, only for them to end up on our roads as moving hazards. When vehicles that do not meet safety standards are allowed onto the road through compromised processes, the consequences are predictable. Avoidable accidents occur. Lives are lost. Families are affected.**

**c)** These are not accidents in the true sense. In many cases, they are the result of failures within the system. Safety on our roads cannot be negotiated, and it cannot be compromised. Any process that allows **unfit vehicles to operate** is not just a breach of procedure, it is **a direct threat to human life.**

**d)** There are growing concerns around the persistence of over-speeding and other traffic offences on our roads. Excessive speed, reckless driving, and disregard for traffic rules continue to be major contributors to **road accidents, despite the existence of clear laws and enforcement mechanisms.**

e) This points not to a gap in policy, but to a failure in enforcement and compliance. **When traffic rules are routinely ignored without consequence, indiscipline becomes normalized, and the system begins to fail.**

f) His Excellency the President has been clear on the **need for firm and immediate enforcement measures**, including the introduction of **instant fines for traffic offences. While we are aware of the ongoing court processes on this matter, and we must allow due process to take its course, we must remain ready.**

g) **These are the kinds of innovations that this sector requires, measures that enhance enforcement, improve compliance, and restore order on our roads.**

**ii. Integrity gaps in cargo handling and clearance processes:** There are persistent concerns around **integrity within cargo handling and clearance processes.** In some instances, delays are not procedural, but **induced**, creating opportunities for manipulation of documentation, preferential treatment of certain consignments, and informal practices that distort fairness and transparency.

**T**here are also serious concerns around integrity in how cargo is allocated and moved within the rail systems in our country. **I**n some instances, access to rail services is not always based on clear, transparent, and equitable processes. **T**here are allegations of preferential treatment, where certain consignments or clients are given priority over others through informal influence. **T**his distorts fairness, undermines confidence in the system, and discourages broader uptake of rail services.

**W**here systems are not consistent and predictable, they create room for **rent seeking behaviour and undermine confidence in port operations.**

**iii. Operational inefficiencies and delays in cargo movement:** Cargo handling and clearance processes are not as efficient as they should be both in the Rail and Port transport systems. Delays in turnaround times, congestion within operational areas, and lack of seamless coordination across actors slow down the movement of goods. This increases the cost of doing business and weakens the competitiveness of our ports as regional logistics hubs.

There are many cases where scheduling, documentation, and cargo movement processes are manipulated, leading to artificial delays or irregular prioritization. Cargo that should move efficiently is delayed, only to be expedited

through informal channels. **This** creates inefficiencies, disrupts supply chains, and introduces unnecessary costs for businesses relying on rail. **Such** practices are not operational challenges. **They** are integrity failures within the system.

**There** are also concerns around weak controls in freight **operations**, including under declaration of cargo, inconsistencies in billing, and gaps in revenue accountability. **Where** systems are not tightly controlled and monitored, opportunities arise for revenue leakage, which directly affects the financial sustainability of the rail system.

- iv. Weak coordination across port related processes:** There are gaps in coordination among the various processes that support port operations. Where systems do not operate in a synchronized manner, delays occur, accountability becomes diffused, and efficiency is compromised. **A** port system that is not fully coordinated cannot deliver seamless logistics services.
- v. Poor workmanship and substandard infrastructure:** There are instances where infrastructure especially roads deteriorate shortly after completion. **S**urfaces fail, drainage systems are inadequate, and repairs are required far earlier than expected.

- vi.** This raises serious concerns about quality control, supervision, and accountability during project execution. A road is not just to be built. **It must be built to last. When infrastructure fails prematurely, the cost is borne by the public, both financially and through inconvenience.**
- vii. Stalled, delayed, and incomplete projects:** Across the country, there are projects that remain incomplete, delayed, or abandoned. **Contractors leave sites. Timelines are not met. Costs escalate without delivery. These delays affect connectivity, disrupt communities, and undermine confidence in Government delivery. In some cases, projects become long term inconveniences instead of solutions.**

- viii. Weak maintenance culture:** There is a tendency to focus on new construction while neglecting maintenance of existing infrastructure.
- ix. Roads that are already in place deteriorate due to lack of timely maintenance.** Potholes remain unattended. Drainage systems are not maintained. Over time, **minor issues become major repairs.** This is not sustainable. **Maintenance must be treated as a priority, not an afterthought.**

**x. Overloading and weak enforcement in transport systems:** Overloading of vehicles continues to damage road infrastructure. **D**espite existing regulations, enforcement is not always consistent. When enforcement is weak, roads designed for specific loads deteriorate faster, increasing maintenance costs and reducing their lifespan. **T**his is a clear example where lack of discipline in the system leads to direct economic loss.

**xi. Fragmentation and lack of coordination across agencies:** Multiple institutions operate within this sector, including those responsible for roads, railway, water, transport, safety, and regulation. However, coordination is not always seamless. This results in overlaps, gaps in responsibility, and delays in decision making. In some cases, projects are implemented without adequate alignment across agencies. The result is inefficiency and reduced impact.

**xii. Weak accountability and limited consequences for failure:** Perhaps most concerning is that where failures occur, consequences are not always clear, consistent, or visible. **P**rojects delay without accountability. **P**oor quality work is not always sanctioned. **I**nefficiencies persist without corrective action. **W**hen there are no consequences, standards decline.

**xiii. Lack of discipline and order in the public transport system:** There is a growing concern around the lack of discipline and order within parts of the public transport system, particularly in the matatu sector. Indiscipline on our roads, including disregard for traffic rules, dangerous driving, overlapping, obstruction of lanes, and non-compliance with designated routes and stages, has become a daily experience for many Kenyans.

**a)** This is not just a matter of inconvenience. It directly affects road safety, contributes to congestion, increases travel time, and, in many cases, leads to loss of lives.

- b)** Equally concerning is that this behaviour persists despite the existence of clear laws, regulations, and enforcement institutions. This raises serious questions about consistency in enforcement, coordination among agencies, and the overall discipline within the system.
- c)** Public transport must operate within a framework of **order, predictability, and safety**. This is not an abstract ideal, it is a standard that is consistently achieved in **First World Countries**, and there is no reason why we cannot achieve the same. This sector carries the responsibility to make that standard a reality.

**d) Without discipline, even the best infrastructure will fail to deliver its intended results. Roads and Railway alone do not create efficiency. It is order, compliance, and enforcement that turn infrastructure into a functioning system.**

## **D. Citizen Expectations and Our Responsibility**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**25. At the centre of all that we do is the Kenyan citizen, who ultimately judges the effectiveness of this sector not by policies or structures, but by what they experience in their daily lives.**

**26.** For the ordinary citizen, this sector is about movement, access, safety, and reliability. It is about being able to travel safely, to transport goods efficiently, to access opportunities, and to do so in a system that is **orderly, predictable, and fair.**

**27.** Citizens want **sanity in this sector.** They **want order** on our roads. They **want discipline** in our transport systems. They **want reliability across all modes of transport, and** beyond that, they **expect quality and timely service delivery.**

**28.** They expect infrastructure that works, systems that are coordinated, and services that are accessible. **Above all,** they expect a transport environment that is safe, predictable, and dependable.

**29.** Many Kenyans today are **exposed to how transport systems** function elsewhere. **They have travelled, they have seen,** and they understand what efficiency, order, and reliability look like. **They know that these are not extraordinary standards, they are basic.**

**30.** When they return home, they do not leave those expectations behind. They come back expecting **the same level of order, the same level of discipline,** and the same level of service from their own systems. **And rightly so. As taxpayers, they are entitled to it.**

**31.** They are entitled to safe, efficient, and well-coordinated transport services. They are entitled to value for the resources they contribute. These are not unreasonable expectations. They are the minimum that we owe them.

**32.** The truth is, these **expectations are not beyond our reach.** We already have the mandate. We already have the institutions. We already have the frameworks.

**33.** If each one of us undertakes our responsibilities fully, diligently, and with integrity, if each institution delivers on its core mandate without compromise, then we can meet these expectations. **The challenge is not capacity. The challenge is execution.**

**34.** Collectively, we must ensure that this sector **operates as a coherent system.** That infrastructure is supported by discipline. **That** services are delivered with efficiency. **And** that outcomes are visible to the citizen.

**35.** But equally important is individual responsibility. **A**t the end of the day, the citizen does not interact with a system, they interact with a person. **A**n officer making a decision. **A**n officer enforcing a rule. **A**n officer delivering a service.

**36.** It is that individual action that determines whether the **system works or fails**. If we each do what we are **mandated to do, fully, candidly, and without compromise**, then this sector will function as it should.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**37.** The question we must ask ourselves is simple. **When a Kenyan interacts with this sector, what do they experience? Order or chaos? Safety or risk? Efficiency or delay?** Ultimately, that is the standard by which we will be judged!

## **E. Commitment to Service and Responsibility**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**38.** Having reflected on the expectations of the citizens we serve, we must now turn the **focus inward, to ourselves as public officers.**

**39.** The responsibility placed upon us is not ordinary. It demands professionalism, integrity, discipline, and an unwavering commitment to service. This is the standard we must uphold, consistently and without exception.

**40.** As Government, we are deliberately building a Public Service that is **responsive, accountable, and results driven**, one that **delivers quality services efficiently, reliably, and with integrity**. This direction is clear, and it is not negotiable.

**41.** It therefore requires each one of us to take **honest and personal reflection** on our role within this system. **If you are committed to service, to professionalism, and to delivering results for the people of Kenya, then this is your space, and you must step forward and perform to the highest standards.**

**42.** However, if one is not prepared to uphold these values, if one is unwilling to act with integrity, discipline, and accountability, **then a deliberate decision must be made.** This sector cannot carry individuals who compromise safety, delay critical services, manipulate processes, or undermine public trust. **The responsibility we hold is too great, and the consequences of failure are too serious.**

**43.** Those who are not ready to be part of the Public Service we are building **must reflect seriously and, where necessary, step aside to allow those who are committed, capable, and ready to serve** to take up that responsibility.

## **F. Expectations from this Engagement**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**44.** The expectations of the roads and transport sector, just like many sectors that we have engaged are clear, deliberate, and non-negotiable. **These are as follows:**

- i. Alignment with the Government's Development Agenda:** All programmes and activities must align fully with the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda. This includes delivering on key priorities such as road infrastructure development and maintenance, efficient transport systems, road safety, and facilitation of trade, logistics, and mobility across the country.
  
- ii. Reinforcing values and professional standards:** Integrity, accountability, professionalism, efficiency, and responsiveness must define how we operate. These values must be reflected in procurement, project implementation, enforcement, and service delivery across the sector.

- iii. Mindset and attitude transformation: We** must move from routine processes to results. From activity to impact. **It** is not about the number of projects initiated, but the quality, timeliness, and reliability of what is delivered.
  
- iv. Breaking institutional silos: We** must operate as one coordinated system. **Planning,** construction, maintenance, regulation, and enforcement must be aligned. **Fragmentation** leads to inefficiency and weakens impact.
  
- v. Citizen centred service delivery: Our** work must be felt by citizens. **Safe roads. Orderly** transport systems. **Reduced** congestion. **Reliable** services. That is the standard.

**vi. Prudent management of public resources:**

All resources must be used efficiently, transparently, and strictly for their intended purpose. There must be zero tolerance for wastage, inflated costs, or misuse of public funds.

**vii. Strengthening monitoring and**

**evaluation: We** must track progress, monitor performance, and demonstrate results. **Not** just roads built, but roads that last. **Not** just systems introduced, but systems that work. **Not** just enforcement policies, but compliance achieved.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**45.** These expectations are directly linked to the challenges we have discussed and the results we must now deliver. **T**his message must not end here. **I**t must cascade to every level, every institution, and every officer without exception. **E**very leader present here bears personal responsibility to ensure that this agenda is communicated, understood, and implemented.

**46.** **A**ll institutions are directed to align their work plans accordingly, strengthen accountability mechanisms, and ensure strict adherence to the values and standards outlined. **P**rogress must be reported. **O**utcomes must be demonstrated. **G**aps must be addressed.

**47.** Let there be no ambiguity. Implementation is not optional. **I**t is expected. **I**t is required. **A**nd it must be visible in the quality, efficiency, and integrity of the services delivered.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**48.** **I** urge each one of you to return to your duty stations with urgency and purpose. **A**s a nation, we cannot afford inefficiency, disorder, or failure in this sector. **T**he cost is too high, in lost time, lost productivity, and in far too many cases, lost lives.

**49. We** are already behind where we ought to be in delivering a transport system that is efficient, safe, and orderly. **We** cannot afford to lose any more time. **The** task before us is significant, but it is achievable if we act decisively, diligently, and without delay.

**50. Let** us move with speed. Let us move with focus. **And** let us move with determination to restore discipline, efficiency, and trust in the roads and transport sector.

**51. The** time for action is now. **Because** in the end, what will matter is not what we said, but what we did.

**Thank you and God bless You.**

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