Remarks by Ezra Chiloba, Director General, Communications Authority of Kenya (CA) During the Launch of 5G By Airtel Network on 6th July 2023

Hon. Eliud Owalo, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Information, Communications and the Digital Economy,
Prof. Edward Kisiang'ani, Principal Secretary, Broadcasting and Telecommunications
Eng. John Tanui, Principal Secretary, ICT and Digital Economy
Ashish Malhotra, Managing Director, Airtel Kenya
Invited Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Members of Management and all staff present,

Good Afternoon,

1. I am gratified to participate at this milestone not just for Airtel Kenya but for the country as a whole. I wish to thank Airtel Kenya for inviting the Authority to witness this momentous occasion.

2. The launch of 5G network presents a great leap forward for the ICT industry and a manifestation of the incredible strides we are taking as a country to embrace new technological frontiers.

3. The Authority regularly releases additional International Mobile Telephony (IMT) spectrum resources to enable mobile network operators to meet increased demand for data and Internet services.

4. The 5G spectrum licensing for our mobile operators has been a significant step towards realising Kenya's 5G ambitions.

5. As we do so, we are keen on ensuring that ICT industry players deploy sustainable 5G infrastructure and services, particularly in underserved and rural areas.

6. We also need to amplify the immense benefits that 5G technology presents by creating awareness and continually dealing with misinformation around this technology that may have a long-term impact of eroding consumer confidence in this space.

7. In the recent years, conspiracies have associated 5G with the COVID-19 pandemic and also as tool for government surveillance. These claims which continue to spread fear and uncertainty are not supported by scientific evidence and must be debunked.

8. As we continue to work towards successfully deploying 5G technology in Kenya, we must also appreciate the potential challenges and risks associated with this technology. These challenges include spectrum availability, infrastructure development, security and privacy.

9. The Authority has a critical role in addressing these challenges by providing an enabling environment for 5G deployment by developing policies, regulations, and standards that support the rollout of 5G infrastructure and services.

10. Stakeholder involvement is also crucial in addressing the challenges of 5G deployment, including collaboration among government agencies, network operators, industry players, civil society organisations, and consumers to ensure that the benefits of 5G are distributed equitably and that potential risks are mitigated.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. As we advance on this frontier, we continue to draw lessons from global experiences, especially from counties that have already adopted this technology. A number of countries have had to navigate various technical, commercial, and regulatory issues.

12. Infrastructure development is one of the most significant challenges facing the deployment of 5G technology. The deployment of 5G requires significant investments in infrastructure, including fibre optic cables, base stations, and other network components.

13. Many countries have had to ensure adequate infrastructure to support the rollout of 5G services. To address this, we are working with the government and other stakeholders to promote the development of 5G infrastructure, including towers and fibre optic networks.

14. We are also exploring opportunities for public-private partnerships to support the deployment of 5G infrastructure in remote and underserved areas.

15. The spectrum allocation for 5G services is a critical factor in the successful rollout of 5G. Many countries have had to conduct comprehensive frequency planning to ensure the necessary spectrum is available for 5G services. Additionally, countries have had to harmonise their spectrum allocation plans to ensure that 5G services can be provided across borders.

16. Cybersecurity is another significant challenge facing the deployment of 5G technology. As 5G technology involves transmitting sensitive data and managing critical infrastructure, robust cybersecurity measures must be in place to prevent cyber-attacks and data breaches. To address this, we are working with the government and other stakeholders to develop policies, regulations, frameworks, and systems that ensure secure 5G services.

17. To address the public awareness challenge, we are engaging in public awareness campaigns to educate the public on the benefits and potential risks of 5G technology. We disseminate accurate information through various channels, including social media, traditional media, and public events. Additionally, we are working with civil society organisations, telecom operators, and other industry players to promote accurate information and combat misinformation about 5G technology.

18. Despite these challenges, the deployment of 5G technology is crucial in supporting the government's digital transformation agenda and can revolutionise various sectors, including healthcare, education, financial services and transportation, just to name a few various sectors.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

19. The government's digital transformation agenda requires placing technological advancements at the forefront. As a leader in 5G technology, Kenya can attract investment, create new job opportunities, and improve the quality of life for its citizens.

20. Kenya is actively preparing for the upcoming World Radiocommunications Conference later in November this year where discussions 5G and other technologies, will take place, particularly on the spectrum resources required for the services.

21. As we work towards successfully deploying 5G technology in Kenya, we are mindful of the importance of harmonising spectrum bands for radio services and the role that international cooperation plays in ensuring the efficient and effective use of the radio spectrum.

22. Let us continue to work together to promote the development of 5G technology in Kenya and to ensure that our spectrum management practices are aligned with international best

practices by developing policies, regulations, and standards that support the rollout of 5G infrastructure and services.

23. In conclusion, we must ensure accessibility of ICT services and accessibility of ICT services and good quality service (QoS) to realise the potential benefits of emerging telecommunications services such as 5G.

24. High-quality services are essential for supporting new use cases and applications that require low latency, high bandwidth, and reliable connectivity.

25. With stakeholder involvement and a commitment to innovation and excellence, we can successfully navigate the challenges of 5G deployment and ensure that Kenya remains at the forefront of technological advancement.

26. Thank you for your kind attention and congratulations Airtel Kenya on this milestone.