



**SPEECH BY H.E. HON. DR MUSALIA MUDAVADI, EGH., PRIME
CABINET SECRETARY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA DURING
THE STARBRANDS MULTISECTORAL AWARDS HELD AT SARIT
CENTRE, NAIROBI, KENYA – FRIDAY, 25 AUGUST 2023.**

The Starbrands Awards C.E.O, Mr. John Benson Ndeng'wa;

Members of Parliament present;

Industry leaders;

Invited Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning

I am honoured to preside over the Starbrands Awards Ceremony which is a premier industry event that pays homage to the exceptional accomplishments of industry leaders, leading brands and innovators. This occasion underscores the power of innovation, unwavering dedication, and the unrelenting pursuit of excellence by the business community. It is an occasion at which we recognize the brilliance that emerges from our diverse and dynamic business landscape.

This morning, we honour visionary business leaders who have demonstrated unparalleled dedication, resilience, and ingenuity in transiting dreams into realities that have shaped the economic trajectory of our Country. We bestow these accolades not out of admiration for their accomplishments, but as a recognition of their embodiment of the potential of resolve, diligence, and the unwavering essence of entrepreneurial drive.

Ladies and gentlemen, Kenya has over seven million SME'S which generate about 30% of the GDP, and has an annual job creation of 30 % of all new jobs. It is from here that the incredible journey began for Dr. Esther Muchemi, the C.E.O of the Samchi Group of Companies. Dr. Muchemi's rise from humble beginnings to becoming a trailblazer in the business world should be an inspiration for those in the MSMEs sector.

I encourage those in the MSMEs sector to look up the song "*Don't Give Up*" by Peter Gabriel in which he lionizes courage of conviction and says;

*"In this proud land, we grew up strong
We were wanted all along
I was taught to fight, taught to win
I never thought I could fail*

*Don't give up
Cause you have friends
Don't give up
You're not beaten yet
Don't give up
I know you can make it good"*

Yes. “*I know you can make it good*”, like Esther from the humble beginnings in the informal sector. Ours is a land of boundless potential within our people that requires we nurture and promote their talents, and provide equal opportunities for all. That way, dedication to excellence and solid commitment to innovation should propel MSMEs into remarkable companies that then set new standards for the industry.

This is why we applaud the indomitable spirit of Simon Kabu, the C.E.O of Bonfire Adventures, a company that has captured the essence of

Kenya's nature and ignited the flames of tourism for our Country. The success story of Bonfire Adventures stands as evidence of the immense potential within our nation's abundant resources and the limitless prospects they offer. Hence, I reiterate to you: "Persist and persevere; I believe in your capacity to achieve greatness."

Also mentioned in the list of honours is Dr. Ekrah Ndung'u, the Chief Executive Officer of the German Institute of Professional Studies. His unwavering commitment to education and cultivating a proficient workforce significantly adds to shaping the destinies of numerous

individuals, resulting in changed lives and enhancing Kenya's reputation on the international stage.

And Kinyua Wa Iratu, the Chairman of the Association of Real Estate Stakeholders. His leadership and strategic vision have played a pivotal role in advancing the real estate sector, a crucial component of our nation's economy. Under his guidance, the sector has thrived, creating jobs, driving infrastructure development, and providing homes for our citizens.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we recognize exceptional achievements as a way of reflecting on the larger picture of the business realm of our economy. The brands and industry leaders we recognize are our captains; engineers of progress, catalysts of change, and proponents of economic advancement. Each success story should create a 'domino effect' in impacting lives to pursue their dreams.

Therefore, Ladies and Gentlemen, businesses are more than just capitalist ventures to be frowned upon. Business creates jobs, encourages innovation and enables community growth through

transforming livelihoods. **But there is a caveat; as business influence grows, so does its socio-economic responsibility. As businesses thrive and exert influence, the importance of ethical conduct becomes paramount. Simply gauging success by financial gains is not fulfilling. Authentic influence is attained when affluence is shared, when sustainability is prioritized, and when societal development is at the core of every decision taken.**

Businesses must stand with the community in combating challenges like climate change, social disparities, and technological disruptions that are reshaping our world. In this threatening dynamic landscape, businesses must emerge as symbols of constructive transformation. Sustainability must be seamlessly integrated into every facet of business operation, from supply chains to environmental stewardship. Further, diversity and inclusivity must be embraced to foster and stimulate progress.

I, therefore, commend the Starbrands Awards Ltd for acknowledging excellence and promoting principled business practices. These Awards convey a powerful message that achievement is intertwined with societal impact, rather than detached from it. I urge all businesses to embrace the mantle of social responsibility and spearhead the movement towards a more equitable, more sustainable, and more prosperous future for all of us.

Let us therefore utilize this moment to celebrate accomplishments, and to reaffirm our dedication towards crafting a better tomorrow. Let us

envisage an economy where success is measured not just in financial terms, but by the positive influences we exert on our society.

THANK YOU! ASANTENI SAANA!