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**SPEECH BY THE KENYA FILM CLASSIFICATION BOARD CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER DR. EZEKIEL MUTUA, MBS, DURING THE 2019 AFRICAN TECHNOLOGY POLICY STUDIES NETWORK (ATPS) ANNUAL FORUM, CONFERENCE, AND SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS HELD AT CROWNE PLAZA ON THURSDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2019**

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It gives me great pleasure to join you for the Africa Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS) Conference and the landmark celebration of your Silver Jubilee.

Let me from the onset congratulate you for this milestone and wish you great success in your future endeavours.

The Kenya Film Classification Board is delighted to partner with ATPS in holding this event as it is partnerships that continuously broaden our scope of engagement with our stakeholders and deepen our policy formulation efforts, especially in the rapidly changing digital media.

Indeed, one of our major undertakings currently is the review of our principal law - the Films and Stage Plays Act Cap 222 to address technological advances especially online content distribution with a view to protect children from exposure to harmful content.

This forum comes at a time when our youths have become true netizens, utilizing technology to explore opportunities for businesses globally.

The creative economy has utilized the digital space in more robust ways by creating, distributing, broadcasting and even exhibiting content online.

At the click of a button, one can not only get information about the latest music or film releases but can actually watch them online. These are the dividends of digital migration that ensures faster and convenient access to data, voice and videos online.

With better internet connectivity and technological advances, the youth have turned to the internet not only for socialization but also as a platform for jobs and wealth creation.

According to Internet World Stats, Kenya has an 85% internet penetration. This is the highest level of penetration in Africa. Affordable and more reliable internet connectivity continues to draw many online businesses, but it exposes our people to value and vice in equal measure.

As the body tasked with the protection of children from harmful content, we are aware that technology is a double-edged sword.

We are grateful to the President for taking the lead in enhancing cyber security by signing into the Cyber Security and Protection Bill. It is worth mentioning that as the country's content regulator, this law finds a perfect nexus with our mandate.

We would like our youths to utilize technology for advancing their well-being. The internet offers immense opportunities to connect, partner, and grow both socially and economically.

However, to leave the internet ungoverned is to open a floodgate of possible social ill. With at least 7M Kenyans on Facebook (Internet Users Statistics for Africa 2017), many of whom are young people, digital citizenship exposes a significant number of us to possible harm.

As you could be aware, we have bloggers, commentators, vloggers, and other content creators who abuse the internet by posting unpalatable content. This is content that is in breach of the classifiable elements allowed by the Board for consumption and exhibition of content in Kenya.

In order to ensure responsible use of the internet, the Board is carrying out research on classification trends in the country.

We have also partnered with other regional blocks in the continent under the African Film Content Standard Setting Steering Committee to ensure that regulation of content across various jurisdictions in Africa is standardized.

All these efforts require continuous research to inform sound policies and the Board is pleased to partner with ATPS and utilize the abounding expertise in this organization to improve on our work.

Once again thank you for inviting us to this conference and for the great partnership. I wish all the participants great and insightful engagements.

**Thank you**