SPEECH DELIVERED BY PROF. JAMES LEGILISHO OLE KIYIAPI
PERMANENT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, DURING
THE OFFICIAL CLOSING OF THE GLOBAL CHILD NUTRITION
FORUM CONFERENCE HELD AT HILTON HOTEL, NAIROBI ON
FRIDAY 6TH MAY, 2011 AT 8.30 AM.

The President of Global Child Nutrition Foundation, Ms Gene White,
The Executive Director Partnership for Child Development, Dr. Lesley Drake,
The Minister for Education Chad, Hon. Tchiroma
Permanent Secretaries from Participating Countries present,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am happy to be with you this afternoon as you come to a conclusion of this very important forum. The Kenyan Government was privileged to
host the 2011 Global Child Nutrition Forum. As a country the deliberations and resolutions arrived at during this conference will not only be used in strengthening the existing programmes but also assist to improve the coordination between the different sectors for the benefit of children in particular and our countries and its peoples.

I am informed that the Forum had presentations from different professionals from different countries across the Globe. I am certain that the high representation from different countries in the 2011 GCNF Conference in Nairobi will lead to enhanced collaboration where different countries implementing School Meals Programme can learn from one another.

The theme of the conference 'Scaling up sustainability by linking school feeding to agricultural development' confirmed the global commitment to achieve the United Nations' eight anti-poverty Millennium Development Goals by 2015. I hope that all participants in this conference will double their effort towards the achievement of these important goals in their respective countries. The importance of school feeding programs as a social safety net cannot be over emphasized as a tool for eradicating hunger in the world.
Ladies and Gentlemen, the Universal Primary Education cannot be achieved with a hungry population. This calls for effective collaboration with all partners and collaborators to ensure that school meals are provided in the most sustainable way. As you are all aware, when the School Meals are linked to local agricultural production, the program can benefit local farmers and producers by generating a stable, structured, and predictable demand for their products thereby building the local market. The Home Grown School Meals initiative in Kenya was developed along the NEPAD initiative in 2009. This was at a time when the WFP could no longer support the high number of pupils in the regular school feeding programme due to high cost of food and transport. As the host country of 2011 Global Child Nutrition Forum (GCNF), I do hope that School Feeding Programmes in your respective countries will greatly benefit from the ideas and experiences shared during this important conference.

Madam President, education is a human right and is central to the establishment of a productive human resource base which is critical to the realization of countries’ development agendas. The availability of a strong human resource base is quite important for any meaningful development to be realized in a country. It is for this reason that the
achievement of the Education for ALL (EFA) goal by the year 2015 in conformity with International Declarations and conventions.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Kenyan Government is committed to promotion and enhancement of access to quality education. In this regard the Ministry of Education has disbursed close to Kshs.800 million directly to schools for the purchase food for 538,000 children in the new initiative of Home Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSFP) in the last 2 years. The beneficiary children in the new initiative were previously under the regular Feeding Programme supported by WFP. Another Kshs.464,000,000 is being processed to mitigate against the drought government of Kenya has laid emphasis in the rights of children to education and food of good quality. The school meals programme in Kenya (and indeed in most other countries) is one of the strategies the government is using to reach the majority of the disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils in informal settlements in cities and in the Arid and Semi Arid areas. To this end, since independence the Government has always recognized the importance of education as a major factor in our National Development and poverty eradication efforts. Consequently, the Government has continued to invest heavily in Education Sector in order to increase access, retention, equity and transition rates from Primary to Secondary Levels. The Government is committed to the
which we are experiencing currently in the country and will benefit 1.1m vulnerable children.

Madam President, I hope that the forum has provided an opportunity for the delegate exchange views on the best ways of addressing some of the emerging challenges, like the food insecurity and other issues facing most countries. The school feeding programme has been accepted as the best strategy to enhance enrolment and reducing absenteeism in schools. The programme also increases the children learning capacity and enhancing cognitive abilities. The main advantage of the Home Grown School Feeding Programme is that food sourced locally can provide a strong incentive to local farmers to produce and sell food to schools.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to thank the Board of management of Global Child Nutrition Foundation (GCNF) and the Partnership for Child Development (PCD) through you, Madam President Gene White and Executive Director PCD Dr. Lesley Drake, for accepting Kenya’s request to host the 2011 GCNF. On the same note I wish to thank all the organizing committee members through the Technical Review Committee for working for long hours to ensure the 2011 Global Child Nutrition Forum is a success.

Finally Ladies and Gentlemen, let me thank all the delegates who took their time to attend this Forum. I do hope that you enjoyed your stay in Nairobi. With this remarks it is now my pleasure to declare the 2011 Global Child Nutrition Forum officially closed.