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GAINER: This is Maya Gainer. I am here with Mugo Kibati who is the Director of the Vision Delivery Secretariat—

KIBATI: *Former Director-General.*

GAINER: Up to 2013. So then when you joined the Vision Delivery Secretariat what did you see as sort of the biggest challenges to implementing Vision 2030?

KIBATI: *Well, let's start by saying when I "joined" the Vision Secretariat, there was no Vision Secretariat. I had to first of all become a creating and recruiting—creating the structures, getting them approved by various ministries and government bureaucracies. So I had to go to the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Public Service to approve the structures, approve the salaries, pay structures and all that. Then I had to begin the recruitment exercise, creating full departments. For the first six or so months I had to rely on the Ministry of Planning for all my procurement and budgetary needs because I had no accountants of my own or procurement officers, nothing of the sort.*

So first and foremost was just to create the structures of the secretariat and get people in. Thereafter was to introduce the secretariat to the government. Introduce Vision 2030, the project, to Kenyans. Those were two tremendous challenges. First of all when you have a new unit in government, there are always tough roles in any—you know government is basically a bureaucracy in which people protect turf. It was unclear to a lot of people what exactly the role of this new entity called Vision Delivery Secretariat would be, how powerful, how does it affect my work. I therefore had to secure the unequivocal support of the presidency, the prime minister, the head of public service in ensuring that any request that I made would be seen to have the backing of these three offices. So the first thing was to ensure that there was a letter to the entire government from the head of public service introducing me and the secretariat and entreating them to be supportive and to collaborate with me.

Then of course there was introducing the Vision to the public which in Kenya was challenging. Kenyans had for forty years, forty-five years then, been grown accustomed to highfalutin government programs and promises like water for all by the year 2000. All sorts of things that never panned out. Therefore there was going to be the challenge of first of all gaining credibility for this project with the public and then popularizing it with the public so that eventually popular public support would be the fulcrum on which politics, political support for the project would depend.

So these were what I would say the initial challenges. I think the first one year was really focused on those two challenges. You mentioned early on that we were in a coalition government. That had its benefits as well as its downsides. The benefit that I think a lot of people lose sight of, having had Vision 2030 launched during a coalition government was the fact that it had political buy in across the board.

GAINER: Right.

KIBATI: *It was a situation in which we did not have an opposition in parliament. Therefore no real constituency in a wider public that felt it was outside*

government. Everybody in the country felt they were in government. So when this project was launched by both the President and the Prime Minister there was complete—there was ownership, wide ownership, broad-based ownership politically and across the public. That was a good benefit.

The downside of course was that in a coalition government you have people who are ostensibly supposed to be one government, all lining behind one program but because they are political competitors that slips into the bureaucracy. Therefore one of the things I made sure of—which was not common practice with many bureaucrats was to make sure that I always dealt with both sides of the coalition on every single project and every single development. Initially what was the challenge? There was suspicion on both sides

There was suspicion on both sides because clearly, obviously, this is a country that unfortunately has been bedeviled by ethnicity. Politics unfortunately has also revolved around ethnicity. Obviously I am Kenyan but obviously I come from some ethnic—everybody comes from some ethnic group. So the problem I have always had and which obviously reared its ugly head at the beginning of my stint at Vision 2030 is that those people who expected because of the basis of my ethnicity I would play ball with them politically and therefore I would favor their side of the coalition government were taken aback when they realized that I wasn't going to do that; I was going to be talking to both sides. I was going to make sure that Vision 2030 achieved a nonpartisan, neutral stature.

Of course the people on the other side who also expected on the basis of my ethnicity or took it for granted on the basis of my ethnicity obviously I was on the other side and not on their side. So basically both sides became suspicious of me which I ultimately took to be a badge of honor and important to Vision 2030 because one of the reasons why today in 2015, two years into the new government—. The new government of course is now a normal coalition. We have now strident government, versus opposition politics and opposition clearly opposing government programs. But Vision 2030 remains a project and a program that has national, broad-based appeal, that everybody references whether they be government or opposition. I feel strongly because in those five years when I was the chief executive of the project under the coalition government, I made—I took great pains to make sure that every single policy project development under Vision 2030 had the support of both sides and everybody was kept in the loop.

My letters, for instance, would have as much as twenty CCs because I made sure that everybody in the coalition that needed to know about a particular project, a particular policy in the government was copied on the same letter at the same time. So as I say, in the first one year this was quite tough but after a year people got accustomed to it. People got accustomed to the fact that this is how Mugo is running Vision 2030, this is what Vision 2030 is and in the end people accepted it.

In 2012—that was the fourth year—when you went into parliament—because I felt we needed to get into parliament ahead of the general election to make sure that after (Mwai) Kibaki, after President Kibaki's departure and Vision 2030 continues, we needed a sessional paper. So we took a sessional paper to

the Ministry of Planning, to parliament and got it unanimously approved by Parliament, we got Sessional Paper #12. I'm sure you've come across it—number 10, Sessional Paper #10 of 2012 on Vision 2030 basically establishing Kenya's Vision 2030 as the official national development plan for this country. That was unanimously approved in parliament partly because no one had any suspicions about an agenda for 2030 other than Kenya's transformation. People take that for granted but I can tell you—.

GAINER: Not easy.

KIBATI: *This was a very politically and ethnically discordant state where everything is assumed to have an ulterior motive, an agenda which is either ethnic or political. Vision 2030 actually cleared that bar. Now I also over the years had to—so my first object was to get the government itself to buy into Vision 2030, again you can't take that for granted. The fact that Vision 2030 had been launched by both the President and the Prime Minister the thing is that every part of the bureaucracy has got its own agenda, its own rhythm. These are all bureaucracies. So each of the ministries has a—a minister, a permanent secretary. They have their agenda. So to get them to ensure that every ministry's strategic plan is aligned to Vision 2030 required communication with the head of public service.*

To get the Performance Contracting department to align to Vision 2030, to ensure that at the center of performance contracting was Vision 2030, in other words, the weighting for the performance contract targets were basically heavy weighted Vision 2030. That was a whole—it took me a year to do that. I needed to have at least 30-40% of the weighting of the operational bits of performance contracts because performance contracts had a lot of administrative components to them, anticorruption 5%, AIDS control policy, 5%, agenda 5%. So the actual substance of the project really was about 50%. So to achieve 30-40% of that was my goal. Of course you can imagine. Not that actually to achieve 60-70% of the 50%, that really matters. Weighting was a huge fight with the then Permanent Secretary for Performance Contracting.

It required intervention of the Prime Minister and then the Minister for Public Service, the Hon. Dalmas Otieno, who actually after long fight between me and the PS of Performance Contracting sat in a meeting where he arbitrated between myself and the PS, and I had to explain why I wanted higher weighting. Eventually I did get to 30%, 30% of the hundred which meant 60% of the 50 that mattered and that made a significant difference. It mattered now that I had leeway.

So first of all to get Prime Minister to include me in the vetting process for all performance contracts so that all performance contracts had to be vetted by me. But that was just step one. The thing is you also need the correct weighting. So once I got the 60% of the 50 which is 30% of the total, then I had leeway to put in projects, Vision 2030 projects under every ministry, every government parastatal, every government institution including county councils and city council and public universities, all those. About 450-475 institutions. We used to have to vet the contracts every year and that really helped me make sure that at least within government, everybody was aligned to Vision 2030, everybody understood that when they woke up and went to the office

that morning, Vision 2030 was mainstream, not some pet project on the side with a PS creating an office for some so-called office Vision 2030 on the side. It had to be mainstreamed. The way to do that was to make sure that the performance contracts had—.

For instance, the Ministry of Transport, Lamu port, Mombasa port expansion, Standard Gauge railway line, and commuter rail. All those, I was able to put in the performance contracts of not just the Permanent Secretary but also the Managing Director of Kenya railways. The Managing Director Kenya Ports Authority had part of their performance contract not just their day-to-day running the port of Mombasa but the Kenya Port Authority Director knew this Lamu port. It is a huge part of my deliverable and my targets and I have to actually do something about it.

So that is what I did. So first of all was government.

GAINER: Before we move on from that, can you talk a bit about what kinds of arguments or strategies you used to persuade people that this should be their main focus? I imagine not everyone was open to the idea like you said, the turf wars making this really a central priority instead of doing their own thing.

KIBATI: *I had to use a lot of carrot and stick. First and foremost was to make them understand, look, this is about transforming Kenya. Vision 2030 was a collective exercise where in 2005 private sector, government, cabinet, academia, came together and said we need to transform this country. And five-year plans just don't do it because you cannot do transformative projects in five years. Some of the infrastructure projects policy recommendations would take years to actually implement and execute. But it is important for this country, for our children, to be able to transform this country, create more jobs for our children, make sure that if it is healthcare, education, quality of life for our citizens and our children to improve. So that wasn't an exercise—I was only part of it.*

In those days it was the private sector. It was a collective exercise. So I think that was important to remind people remember that this is about transforming our country and the President believes that this is central to his legacy. So I had to use a bit of convincing them, but also saying this is from on high. This is what you're hired to do.

The performance contracts were sort of the stick, to put it, to demonstrate to them that the government from the highest guy in the land expects you to be part of this transformation program and you have a big role to play. But then also one of the things that I did—I would say this was year two of performance contract—because I was also from private sector, I'm not a government bureaucrat. So I had a lot of planning to do myself. In a way my being an outsider was of benefit because I didn't have any of the blinkers and I could charge through things without caring. But on the other hand, there is a downside to being an outsider because bureaucracies also exist for a reason. The best thing to do which I learned is that you must quickly learn how the bureaucracy works and then make it work for you.

What I realized in the first year of the performance contract was that each of the ministries, each of the actors, whether it be a managing director or permanent secretary had their own issues. They had their own challenges in executing their programs. So I, in the second year, focused a little less on the actual projects. For example, I went to the Kenya Port Authority Managing Director; Lamu port is already a focus point of his. So I focused a little less on that and focused more on what do you need from other government entities that you are finding difficulty in getting?

For instance in my discussion with the Ministry of Tourism—we had the projects of the Maasai Mara and the resort cities. They'd tell me look, we don't have an engagement with the security people to secure parks, we don't have an engagement on the issue of roads. Some of the roads in parts are terrible. So I said okay, fine, what do you want the Ministry of Roads to do for you as Ministry of Tourism. What do you want the Ministry of Internal Security to do for you and the Ministry of Tourism? I'll go to the performance contract of the Ministry of Roads and Internal Security and put in those studies as Vision 2030 targets which they had to do. Of course that bought me a lot of good will from the relevant ministry. I did that across the board.

What am I saying, I had to understand what mattered to the various bureaucrats and then also adopt their agenda as my agenda so that they could adopt the Vision 2030 agenda. That actually—by year two I think the Vision Delivery secretariat was now seen as a very powerful body by people who hitherto had found it to be a challenge, an obstacle, a nuisance of power. So the Vision Delivery Board meetings: we attempted to have them monthly, and we had about nine a year.

The idea of Vision Delivery Board meeting was to actually call on all the various project managers to come in and give reports, status reports. But it would also allow them to use that opportunity to tell everybody else what they needed. On the board, the board had 25 permanent secretaries. The most critical ministries from the head of public service, to treasury, to roads, to education, to health, they were all in the board.

So if you are an actor who is struggling, even trying to get that government department, or that government department to do something for you, the Vision Delivery Board now became a place where you could come, find all the bosses, all the PSES sitting there and you could ask and it would be resolved in the board meeting. After the board meeting—.

GAINER: So another Secretary would follow up.

KIBATI: *Right, I would then write the CEO or the permanent secretary, copy the minister, very high level and say at our board meeting it was resolved that you, as the PS for this and this and this have to do A, B, C, D for this particular project. That became a very effective and attractive—. So a lot of PSES started calling and saying when is the next board meeting, can I have this on the agenda. It moved from a new entity that doesn't exist, has no locus, no standing, no basis in the bureaucracy and this thing is multi-bureaucracy, especially in these British-type bureaucracies, to an entity that became—that*

was on the calendar of key policy makers, key project drivers, because they felt that at this board meeting they could move their agenda.

GAINER: So it sounds like that was definitely a way to resolve coordination issues.

KIBATI: *Absolutely.*

GAINER: Make sure that if something were off track you could have a board meeting.

KIBATI: *One of the challenges, one of the roles I had to play which was a very challenging role was to coordinate projects and almost all Vision 2030 flagship projects. In fact, all of them were multi-departmental, multi-ministry projects that required very close coordination and where you had a lot of people who were at the same level feeling like why am I spending time driving his project, or working on his project as opposed to one of my projects. So yes, it was a very important coordination tool, and the secretariat would then follow up in between the board meetings, make phone calls, convene meetings. We had a report, a positive report that everybody contributed to that we then sent to the cabinet via the Minister of Planning. We also were able to get cabinet decisions which is why again the board meeting was very important because then I would determine, we would determine, what now rises to decisions that need to be made by the cabinet.*

GAINER: So what kind of criteria would you use to say this needs to go?

KIBATI: *Look, the state of the project, the maturity level of the project. Also if there were decisions that needed or that weren't part of the mandate of the ministry so it required an extra mandate given to them. When budgetary decisions that were outside the approved national budget at the time. If we needed to reallocate budget, sometimes you do that. If you had a ministry that was not spending its money and another ministry somewhere else which is starved for money, so those kinds of budgetary decisions, decisions to do with procurement. Very tricky frankly speaking because I felt strongly and I still do. This is a topical issue today dealing with the corruption authorities today.*

I felt that the procurement law that we had was actually designed not as a project delivery procurement law, but as an anticorruption procurement law.

GAINER: Yes, that sounds—.

KIBATI: *That has stalled so many projects. In 2005 when this law came into force, the focus of everybody was wow, there is so much leaking, there is so much corruption. So every little—let's tie up people in knots. So procurement today, the procurement law, just makes it very difficult for chief executives or permanent secretaries to procure because the focus it has is to stop you from procuring what you should not procure or to stop you from procuring without mandate, and I think it was overdone. So the standard gauge railway had two court challenges. The tender process went through, after the tender was awarded, frivolous court -challenges that were eventually thrown out, both were thrown out one year after the tender was awarded. But you know a year after a tender was awarded, prices have changed. Contractors come—you have to renegotiate pricing. The environment has changed. It's not the same as it was*

last year. So to me I found myself having to go to cabinet one or two times for what we refer to as government-to-government arrangements.

For instance, we felt that one of the benchmarks for a number of projects was the government of Singapore. We felt that the port of Singapore is essentially benchmarked as the number one port in the world in terms of efficiency, in terms of goods throughput. I mean they're just number one. Their transportation infrastructure, IT systems, especially economic zones, they have best special economic zone policies and they actually did a lot in China.

So we went to Singapore. Now the government of Singapore will not participate in a tender. Either you want us to support you or you don't. If you want us to support you, invite us, but don't come to the government of Singapore and say you've got a great port can you come and assist us and then expect that you will get a tender. So we have a single, one of our projects we had a single electronic window system for the port of Mombasa. The concept and the idea of a single electronic window system came from Singapore. They have the best system in the world and Singapore is also known, alongside Switzerland, they're the number one anticorruption country in the world. You don't go to Singapore and expect to do anything.

So I was quite confident. Look I go to the cabinet and say they're the best in terms of what you're looking for at the port but they also in terms of corruption zero. So as the cabinet you can actually approve—we will have a government-to-government arrangement with them where they're going to support us, projects A, B, C, D, include the port, special economic zone. So can you as cabinet approve for us to procure the single electronic window system from the government of Singapore, which they did. We procured it. It was installed—it is in the process of being installed as we speak. It has made a tremendous difference.

Rwanda and Uganda are much happier with Kenya because of the system. But now we have somebody actually as one of the guys who had to step aside due to corruption issues, the managing director of the electronic window system had to step aside because of that particular procurement which is ridiculous because—

GAINER: The cabinet approved it.

KIBATI: *The whole cabinet. He did not just wake up one morning and procure it, and I actually pushed for the cabinet to approve it. The reason why—my view has been that if Mugo Kibati is sitting at his screen buying his own stuff, yes he is a procurement risk, because he is, no one knows what he is doing. But if he makes it a government-wide issue, rising to the level of the cabinet, surely, I mean the checks and balances are there, the President chairs the cabinet meeting.*

GAINER: You'd have to have quite a vast conspiracy.

KIBATI: *Exactly. So you cannot pick one person and take him to the wringer. But the fact of the matter is those are some of the challenges that we had to face. We had a lot of challenges in terms of procurement law. I often times had to push*

and push. You know I had arguments with the head of public service about what I should put in the cabinet papers because he felt—he asked the cabinet to approve things which he felt the cabinet should not need to approve. I said who's going to approve it? This is Vision 2030, it's a transformative project, we're supposed to do different things. You can't do business as usual. So I also had a a standing presentation at the National Economic and Social Council where I felt that I had to keep sending the message, it is not business as usual people. Okay? We have got to do things differently. So this all meant sometimes sticking my neck out. A few times I had to stick my neck out.

Again, the fact that I was an outsider allowed me to stick my neck out a little more than a career civil servant might be able to do. We also had—now in terms of fundraising, we also had to look for investors, to interest investors, private investors, not just get treasury.

GAINER: How did you decide what makes sense for the government to fund, where should we be looking for private investments?

KIBATI: *Very easy. It was just an analysis of the project economics. Because the project economics and financials lend themselves to a commercial—if the project is commercially viable, try private sector. So if you're talking about an airport or a port, you know you construct it for commercial viability. But roads are difficult. Roads in certain parts of the country where there is high traffic, high volume and people are willing to pay toll charges, yes, but there are roads in parts of the country which are economically important to the country but the volumes just don't rise to commercial viability. That has to be a government project.*

So if it is health and education, really if we have the imperative that we want every child to be educated, there is an element of that in terms that can be privatized but a big element of that is going to be public. So really it is commercial viability. We do commercial viability tests.

Then once we had projects that we felt lent themselves to public/private partnerships, we had road shows, so I organized two road shows, one in New York and one in London. The one in New York was headlined by the prime minister, the one in London we twinned with the London Olympics and was headlined by the President himself. We showcased all these projects. There was the techno-city, technology city, there was the Lamu port, a new airport. We had some highways that we felt could be tolled, toll roads, the railway line.

Then also it was important to educate, not just the Kenyan public but the international community about Vision 2030. So all I'm talking about is government now. Then I had to go to government.

Now I had to go to the public which meant going on national TV, radio, creating a website. We did a lot of work creating a website. The website was a bit of a challenge because we had to put information there about the different projects, the status of the projects, target dates. I said look, we've got to be open. We're Vision 2030, I know this doesn't happen with a lot of government departments but we're going to put in project timelines and expectations. Even if most of these are not achieved, the public has got to be part of the army ensuring that

these projects are implemented. They can't do that if they don't know what the project is supposed to be.

So we went on to that. We had a campaign. Now I didn't have a lot of money. The treasury just didn't give me a lot of money so I didn't have money to go on TV and do all sorts of fancy advertisements. What I had to do was again to go back to the tools that I had, the performance contracts and force the various project managers themselves to do the advertising of their projects and to make sure that when they advertised their own projects, when they branded them clearly as Vision 2030 flagship projects. That was a challenge but I put it in performance contracts and I gave it a rating, suddenly everybody began. So many of the billboards you see had nothing to do with me; I did not spend a cent of my money because I didn't have any to spend, but Kenya Ports Authority when they're launching a new port [terminal] or Kenya Railways when they're launching a commuter rail or SGR (standard gauge railway) or Terminal 1A at the airport, Vision 2030 flagship project. They had to do that to fulfill targets I put in their performance contracts so that Kenyans could see this and connect the dots.

I think it was important for Kenyans to understand wow, this transformation isn't—it is multi-faceted, it is holistic, it is comprehensive. It is not a one—but Ministry of Agriculture has a role, industry has a role, tourism has a role, education has a role, healthcare has a role and because the next step was up to the public about their own role as private sector.

Then of course there was what we refer to as the political pillar. You're familiar these days with economic, social, political pillar. Political pillar really had one major project, the constitution. So how do we get involved in that? I read every draft of the constitution, every draft, over and over, and commented on it.

One of the things that I—the head of public service had done was to include me as a member of the committee even though I wasn't a permanent secretary. I was officially on the committee of permanent secretaries. So I attended all PS's meetings whatever they were. That allowed me also to communicate to them at the PS's meetings and give Vision 2030 updates and say here is what needs to be done and here are the challenges.

So when it came to the constitution we were able to mobilize all permanent secretaries to educate the public on the process of the referendum. That was an important thing, and why is the constitution important? It was important because of the new structures it brought into place because political pillar is about ensuring transforming this country to a country where people's aspirations can be achieved through democratic process. So the people's will is achieved through the democratic process. So if you don't have—.

GAINER: Issue-based politics.

KIBATI: *Exactly, issue-based politics. If you don't have a proper electoral body that is able to arbitrate elections credibly, if you do not have a judiciary that is independent, you can't do that. So independent judiciary, a credible electoral body, all this is part of the new constitution. To me, they were important for the political reforms that will come later. So it wasn't about us going and saying you*

politicians have to do ABCD, we had nothing to do with that. That is the public's job. It was about institutions of politics, or the institutions that have anything to do with the political process. So although [Indecipherable] reforms, the judiciary, police reforms which are still ongoing today albeit with difficulty.

So police reforms, judicial reforms, electoral reforms, all that was part of the new constitution which was critical to Vision 2030.

GAINER: So that was kind of a foundation for them, how implementation would go for the rest of the time.

KIBATI: *Absolutely.*

GAINER: Before we get into sort of the political aspects a little bit I wanted to talk a little bit more about the communication and the outreach because that seems to be really critical function of the secretariat. What messages did you use to achieve really a lot of public excitement while still managing expectations because like you said, for a long time people have heard promises and been disappointed.

KIBATI: *I went slow on public communications until we had very concrete plans to demonstrate to the public. In fact the first one year, we went quite slow with public communication with Vision 2030. But when we had concrete plans on key projects, concrete plans on say Thika Road, concrete plans on commuter rail, concrete plans on Lamu port and Konza. Then we began to communicate. But all of the things I wrote—one of the op-eds I wrote was Vision 2030 was going to be a marathon and not a sprint. It is a 22-year program. You have to keep remembering that. So some of the projects that we are talking about now will take twenty years to execute but we have to start now and we have to put our efforts in now even though the benefits are going to come many years down the road. That was a constant message that I had to communicate. But I had to mix and match with a few—you have to have some quick wins. So Thika Road, commuter rail, roads were a major part of this across the country. Thika Road is only big to people in Nairobi, so that was a big project for them. All the interchanges, that was huge. But in places like northeastern Kenya, which had never had highways, building the highway from Isiolo to Moyale was massive. And when we finished the Isiolo-Merille highway with 120 km and I took pictures of that and showed them to the whole public, it was northern Kenya. The same thing in Loitokitok, it is just a normal regular highway, not an eight-lane highway, just a two-lane highway.*

Then we also had—so it was reported to showcase plans for the future but also show—remember we had these plans last year? Here is Thika Road, here are the commuter rail stations, here is a new berth number 19, number 20 of Mombasa port. It was important to keep doing those kinds of things. Then also—but the long-term reform, education reform, long-term. People don't even know that we've been doing education reforms, people don't notice it, where to look at the curriculum, change the curriculum, even though, again, implementation has been very slow. Labor reforms, environmental reforms. Those are kind of esoteric to most people but they are important and they have to be carried out. Healthcare reforms you know. Kenyatta National Hospital, making sure that we had more than just one referral hospital, now we have eight referral hospitals in the process of being developed. Three so far, but the

target is eight referral hospitals. Those are very long-term projects. You can't just have long-term projects and you can't just keep talking about the future. You must have some quick wins, very challenging.

The challenge—the downside of quick wins is that people might be so focused on quick wins they might compromise long-term objectives with short-term solutions which actually are not good for the long-term.

GAINER: Right, you have to—still the vision is a long-term thing.

KIBATI: *Exactly. There is a reason—.*

GAINER: At both the government and public levels you need that understanding that we're not always going to see quick wins.

KIBATI: *Exactly. And one of the challenges, one of the things that I have tried to communicate to the current government before I left was that remember there may be projects that commenced in the previous regime, previous administration, that will come to fruition in this. One good example is standard gauge railway. I was the on the trip to China with President Uhuru Kenyatta because I was on my way out but that was kind of the last important meeting to secure the financing for the SGR, but it had been a five-year process to get to that point, the conceptualizing of the project, the designs that had to be approved and then structuring and then finally financing. So my message was, you also need to have projects, which commence now which will be long-term which may come to fruition in ten years' time.*

Another good example is energy. Right now we have 280 megawatts of geothermal that have come on line over the last six months but those projects began in 2008, 2009 because a geothermal power station takes a while to conceptualize, to get funding for. So that communication about this project, the longevity of the projects wasn't just a challenge to the public, it was a challenge for everybody including government, politicians. Politicians want quick wins. They want a five-year, they want to get results by the time of the next election so they are able to showcase what they have done. I mean this is understandable. That sometimes runs counter to a long-term project like Vision 2030. So one of the things that we had to do was to say look, we're going to implement Vision 2030 in five-year phases. We must be able to break long-term projects, like say LAPSSSET (Lamu Port Southern Sudan-Ethiopia Transport) project, and ensure there are five-year quick wins that form a part of the total solution. So that each political administration is able to showcase what it has done and take credit for it. So hopefully in these five years, the first three berths of Lamu Port will be launched and significantly constructed.

But the port will not be complete; the port will take twenty years to complete. In the previous administration the police headquarters was built, the port headquarters was build, but they didn't build the three berths.. So we had to take this project and find a way of taking a twenty-year project and cutting it into bits so that you have five-year wins. The public also likes that.

So in my communication to the public, I took great pains—I think the first year I just explained what Vision 2030 long-term transformation is, what other

countries have done and what this country needs to do. Then I began showcasing project by project while reminding people that there may be projects that will be done in the next twenty years.

GAINER: Then one of the most challenging aspects of the communication I would imagine is reaching some of the really rural dispersed populations because it is easy to go on TV and people in Nairobi will see you, but in Turkana maybe not so much.

KIBATI: Yes.

GAINER: So how did you approach that?

KIBATI: *Frankly speaking I took a very pragmatic approach. You cannot do what you cannot do, and you should not waste time trying to do what you cannot do. It is important, and not just for Kenya alone, the elite must first understand and must be aware and you must be trying to get them. In China for instance, you don't have every Chinese—you have these five-year plans, ten-year plans, a few people in the Communist party know what they're going to do for the next ten years, most Chinese don't know. But the projects progress.*

In a democracy, it is a bit of a challenge. So the elite must be informed. They must be part and parcel of the project implementation. Then for far-flung areas you must find a way of connecting Vision 2030 to them with what matters to them. So we actually went beyond flagship projects. We said look, we're not just going to focus on flagship projects. We're going to say water, even water, access to water, that is Vision 2030. Rural roads, that is Vision 2030. Rural electrification. So we moved from 800,000 to 2 million people in five years connected to the grid.

So if I went to a rural area like Turkana or Marsabit or whatever, I would say for this particular area, access to water and rural roads and rural electrification, that is what we should talk about here as Vision 2030. Because to them it is transformation. We have to find a way of connecting people to this transformation project for the whole country by saying if the people of Nairobi want commuter rails, interchanges, multi-lane highways, new airports—that is what is transformation to them, when you go to people in rural areas, what matters to them is what is transformational. So actually you are keeping true to Vision 2030 because that is the transformation of everyone's life.

So you go to an area where there is no electric power, no roads, no water. These are farmers so they care about water and stuff like that. That's what we did. So we had 175 local authorities covering the country. So for them we had very standard minimum Vision 2030 projects. As I say the electricity, roads, access to water.

Where we had any kind of an urban center, not necessarily Nairobi or Mombasa but urban centers—waste management. You can say look, this is going to grow into a city one day, what is your waste management plan? So that is how we sort of went out and sold the idea of Vision 2030. Because it is making sure that you connect to what matters to people today.

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- GAINER: It sounds like that may have gone then beyond the sort of original document, extending things a bit but in line with sort of the projects identified.
- KIBATI: *If you look at the original document, it has got flagship projects. But it has also a section that says "Other Projects."*
- GAINER: Right, it says explicitly flagship projects just lead the way—
- KIBATI: *So the flagship projects are those that would in and of themselves—the project by itself, is transformative for the whole country. Now those types of projects typically are not easily understandable in the far flung rural areas unless the project happens to be the Konza, for instance, happens to be in an area where because it is in that area, people know there is a big project coming here, it will change our lives. So it was somewhat clear to them but you know 100 km away or 100 miles away in Kambu, it may not—Konza doesn't make sense to them. To the elites in Nairobi and Mombasa, it does make sense because they want to go there, get jobs there, provide services, provide food and all that stuff. So the flagship projects are there, but you also have a section in the book of services, other projects. Those other projects are small projects like the roads and electrification and all that stuff.*
- So it was envisaged that look, to transform the country, what is transformational in Turkana and transformational in Nairobi are different things. But as long as you transform people's lives whether in Nairobi or Turkana, it is still Vision 2030. Frankly speaking, if I were born in Turkana, no water, no electricity, no roads, but my son grows up in a place where he has water, electricity and roads, that is Vision 2030. It may not be to somebody in Nairobi, but in Turkana, it is transformational.*
- I'll tell you the LAPSET project in northern Kenya actually was geared towards transforming the whole of northern Kenya. Some people got it, some people didn't. So when I went to Isiolo and said—Isiolo resort city, will transform the whole of this place. These people need food—here are the farms. They'll need milk. They will need people for construction of these houses. They will need people to work in the restaurants. People sometimes—by the way, in every area, no matter how remote, there are always a few elites. There are always a few opinion leaders, local MP (Member of Parliament), counselors, you name it and they understand these things as soon as you—. So we made a point of going to each of these places, even to Turkana where we have a resort city planned in Eliye Springs. We explained to them what the resort city will do.*
- One major project for Turkana was the cradle of humankind and you say to in Turkana, the MPs, the counselors and say, we want this to be established as a cradle of humankind. The current governor of Turkana, was one of the MPs I spoke to then. You know what his main project is?*
- GAINER: No.
- KIBATI: *Cradle of humankind.*

GAINER: So then—we're running out of time so I just have a couple of questions to wrap up. Are there places where progress has been easier than others and why do you think there may be some variation in what moves fastest?

KIBATI: *Definitely. I mean there will always be places where progress moves faster than others. I mean it just so happens that places in which people are better educated, are higher up in the economic—the social-economic ladder, projects move faster.*

GAINER: And are there certain sectors where it has been easier to move forward?

KIBATI: *Absolutely. There are sectors where depending on the particular leader, particular permanent secretary, the particular managing director, certain projects move faster than others. For that reason—so for instance, roads move very quickly. Rail seems to move tremendously. Education for a while didn't move. I think it has slowed down a bit now. Then in terms of areas, clearly there were areas where community sensibilities sometimes needed to be massaged a bit more.*

For instance, Lamu port was a lot of work in terms of community outreach on Lamu port, because of the communities around Lamu were not as sophisticated as the communities in Nairobi/Kiambu where we built Thika road—When you really think of it, we never had much community outreach. We just built it, right? But in Lamu you can't do that. You first of all have to go to Lamu and tell it hey, we have this idea, what do you think. So we had to carry them along all this. So yes, the projects moved differently depending on the particular government department leadership—the particular area and the community that is in that area and the history and the economics and the education that was in the community. So we had to be very alert to all this.

GAINER: Definitely. So then in what ways do you think the vision has been most useful for Kenya as a country?

KIBATI: *I think that—I would say a couple of things. First of all, Kenyans did actually get the idea. I think by the time I left everybody knew about Vision 2030 in this country. There are some people who knew about it, had read the booklet, who were very excited and some who only had heard of Vision 2030 but were not clear what it was. Suffice it to say everyone had heard of Vision 2030, and everybody at least knew this was about changing Kenya into a better place. That to me was important. It provided a framework by which you could engage international investors and governments. I remember talking to Chinese and some American investors both, very different, but who understood that with this kind of a framework, I would be able to plan for my business, for my company.*

We've got a lot of American companies like GE (General Electric) and Google settling here, settling in Nairobi as the headquarters of their African offices. But I think that the biggest thing, the biggest legacy of Vision 2030 is that the expectations for national development, the expectations that Kenyans have of their leadership changed dramatically, dramatically because in 2010 when I took—not your ordinary Kenyans—I took 70 chairmen and chief executive officers, 140 people to Mombasa to tell them about Vision 2030, what we had planned and what each of them had to do. A couple of chairmen—including

one who was a former speaker of national assembly, very senior guy, got up and said, "I've been in this country for many years. I was in government before you were born young man. This is all lies, it will never happen. I wish it could but it won't." This is 2010.

When Thika Road was launched in 2012. Once the first commuter rail station was launched in 2012. I called these people. Suddenly, they were like, "you know, it is possible." This was the top guys in the country who did not believe in 2010 that certain things were possible in this country. Today forget them. Your average citizen, the voter expects their governors to provide them Thika roads across the country, to provide them commuter rails. They're no longer elected—when we elected Mwai Kibaki in 2003, all people wanted him to do was to fill the potholes on the roads. That's it. Please Mr. President, fill them. They never had a concept of expanding or building new roads, new highways, new railway lines, new ports, new cities. That didn't exist before Vision 2030.

Today a quarter of your governors in this country are promising new cities, new highways, new airports because that is what the public is demanding. For me, the fact that we've got the public to a level where they actually felt that they can demand that, the expectations were raised, changes the dynamics of this country.

GAINER: So then two very short ones and we'll finish. Looking back at the experience of managing this for five years, what do you think in retrospect could have been done better?

KIBATI: *Well obviously, there are many things. The secretariat—I was appointed after the project launched. Perhaps you should appoint the managers of the project and then launch the project; that could have been a bit better. I do think that the secretariat should have been officially and formally in the Office of the President as opposed to me having to use my own networks and my own personality to persuade the offices of the presidency and persuade the treasury to engage. Because the way—*

GAINER: Was that maybe a political compromise—?

KIBATI: *The way the VDS (Vision Delivery Secretariat) was designed, it depended too much on the personality of the chief executive. So if the chief executive didn't have networks and personal pull, because it was placed in the Ministry of Planning, which is a pretty—*

GAINER: It is kind of off to the side.

KIBATI: *Not a powerful ministry, it doesn't have convening power. So I had to use convening power that my ministry did not have, just my own—the fact that I had networks of my own, my own personal pull, aided by the Head of Public Service. So I think that is a bit—a project like this needs to have—and I tried to make sure that it depended on institutional frameworks. That is why we went to parliament with the sessional paper. So that could have been done but I think that—*

GAINER: Was it just kind of a political compromise to put it—

- KIBATI:** *It was a political compromise of the coalition government.*
- GAINER:** Because you didn't want it either in the Prime Minister's or the President's office.
- KIBATI:** *Exactly. That's right, because initially if you look at the document, it was meant to be in the Office of the President. I still think that is where it belongs but the politics made it impossible to put it in either the PM's office or the President's office. So they had to go look for a guy who can come and access both of those. So that is one thing. Those are a couple of things that could have been done better: the positioning of the VDS, the launching sequencing, not the cart before the horse.*
- GAINER:** Because there was a bit of a lag while you had to set up all those structures.
- KIBATI:** *Exactly, so for instance, it was launched in 2008 and I was appointed in 2009 so people are like what's happening? Nothing is happening. It was launched. I think also that we may—I still think the political system still is not quite connected to long-term development projects. Maybe that is part of the evolution of democracy. We are not able to really say we have a five-year program but we have a longer-term program. I felt I had to keep fighting for that, even in the first six months of the new administration. I had to fight for the launching of the second medium-term plan of Vision 2030 with the new bureaucrats and make sure that the performance contracts still had Vision 2030 and they still do, to date.*
- So there is a bit of an evolutionary process. I wouldn't say there is very much one can do about it because that is part of society evolution because the political pressures of reelection make it imperative that you have your own projects which are attached to you. The challenge and the trick is how do we get this long-term project which everyone owns, no matter their political persuasion—but we connect them to the five-year electoral cycle. It requires people running for office to showcase projects that they can own.*
- GAINER:** And that is hard to do when you think about it.
- KIBATI:** Yes.
- GAINER:** Then finally, if you were to be advising people in another country about how they could similarly implement a long-term strategy, what would be the lessons you would tell them to take for Kenya's experience?
- KIBATI:** *Wow, that I can't answer in one sentence.*
- GAINER:** I know, that's an all-day question.
- KIBATI:** *I can't do justice to that question because everything I've spoken about. You need to be very clear about what your objectives are. You need to find a way of what—you cannot—if you in Zambia or if you are in Turkey, you cannot work with policies or programs that would work with Kenyans. You've got to say I*

don't have Singaporeans, I have Kenyans. So I must work with the Kenyan society as it is.

For instance when you go in there is a bureaucracy. The bureaucracy has a history, a long-term history. You have to do two things simultaneously. You've got to transform the bureaucracy, and you've got to work with the bureaucracy. If you try and come and say this bureaucracy is useless, I'm going to side step it, you'll get nowhere. On the other hand if you come in and you get mired into the bureaucracy, then you're not making any difference. So how do you—for me the challenge was—understand the bureaucracy, use the bureaucracy, but also transform the bureaucracy. You've got to choose and see what are the core aspects of this bureaucracy that you have to work with and what are the ones that actually could be changed as long as you get buy-in on this. You sort of have to do a very interesting dance.

Society—you have to work with society the way it is. You cannot say you guys are wrong. I'll wait for you to get this level of education. No, you've got to say, these people, I need to work with them, where they are, sensitize them, get them to understand why this is important for them. It might take two years in county X, it might take five years in county Y and I've got to live with that.

I think that transformation, because the word transformation is about making sure you have a clear transformational goal and objective that everybody understands. It is their job to make sure everyone understands it, but they all won't move at the same pace towards that transformational goal but they must all understand it equally. Then each of them works with them at their pace, but work with them and make sure that they are transforming. Don't get into the rut of after two years now I've given up and I'm not going to work with the bureaucracy as it is. You do have to step on a few toes. You do have to shut a few—you've got to shatter, break some doors, but you can't break every door. You've got to pick and choose. I want to break this door but this one, I think I'll take my time opening it because I think this part of the bureaucracy is critical to work with as is. That is unique for every country.

GAINER: Yes.

KIBATI: *You must take the time to understand that for your country.*

GAINER: Thank you so much, I really appreciate your time.