



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY HON. WILLIAM
SAMOEI RUTO, PhD, C.G.H., PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF KENYA AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF
THE DEFENCE FORCES, AT THE OPENING OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON NUCLEAR ENERGY
2026**

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NAIROBI

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I take this opportunity to welcome all delegates to this landmark International Conference on Nuclear Energy.
2. This conference is very crucial because the deliberations here will set a new paradigm for many countries, especially in the Global South, on a critical source of energy. No country in the world has ever achieved its development ambitions without adequate and reliable energy.
3. Energy is the lifeblood of industrialisation, innovation, and economic transformation. It powers our factories, fuels our enterprises, and enables the productivity that drives growth and prosperity.
4. It is for this reason that we in Kenya have made a deliberate and strategic decision to significantly expand our energy capacity. From our current installed capacity of 3,300 megawatts, we are committed to scaling up to at least 10,000MW in the next five to seven years, 3,000MW of which will be generated from nuclear energy.
5. Consequently, Kenya plans to commence construction of a 2,000MW nuclear power plant in Siaya County next year (2027), with commissioning of the project expected in 2034.



Ladies and gentlemen,

6. It is not lost on me that the word nuclear often evokes fear and uncertainty in the minds of many. There is a perception that nuclear energy poses a significant danger to human well-being. This perception, while understandable, is not supported by evidence.
7. In fact, nuclear energy has been safely and reliably used for decades by the world's most advanced economies to power their development. France, for example, has relied on nuclear energy since the 1970s, which today accounts for up to 70% of its electricity generation.
8. Similarly, the United States has operated nuclear power plants for over 60 years, with nuclear energy contributing nearly 18-20% of its electricity mix and providing dependable baseload power.
9. Here in Africa, South Africa stands as the continent's pioneer in nuclear energy, having begun generation in the 1980s through the Koeberg Nuclear Power Station near Cape Town. With an installed capacity of about 1,860MW, the facility has provided decades of safe and reliable baseload power, currently contributing up to 6% of the country's electricity supply. This experience demonstrates that nuclear energy is both feasible and sustainable when supported by strong institutions and sound regulatory frameworks.



10. This is why nuclear energy and nuclear technology have been identified by the United Nations as key enablers in achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.
11. Beyond providing reliable power, nuclear energy offers several additional benefits for an emerging economy such as Kenya. Allow me to highlight a few.
12. First, nuclear energy is clean. It produces virtually no greenhouse gas emissions, making it a powerful ally in our fight against the effects of climate change and in achieving our national carbon reduction goals.
13. Second, nuclear energy is reliable. Nuclear power plants operate round the clock, providing a stable and consistent supply of electricity that is crucial for industrial use and grid stability.
14. Third, diversifying our energy mix with nuclear power reduces reliance on volatile fossil fuel markets, enhancing energy security and strengthening national resilience.
15. Fourth, the development of a nuclear power programme brings significant investment in infrastructure, creates jobs - from highly skilled engineers and technicians to support services, and facilitates the transfer of advanced technology, stimulating growth across multiple sectors of our economy.



16. The integration of nuclear energy into our national grid, therefore, represents a strategic transition toward securing a stable, long-term solution for Kenya's rising electricity demand. With an operational lifespan of between 60 and 80 years and a capital recovery period of less than 20 years, nuclear power stands as a cornerstone of inter-generational sustainable development.
17. By optimising our energy mix through nuclear power, Kenya will realise a significant reduction in electricity costs of between 4 and 5.5 US cents a unit.

Ladies and gentlemen,

18. The Government of Kenya has continually undertaken open and transparent engagement with all relevant stakeholders, including host communities, to ensure that the development of the nuclear power programme remains fully aligned with the frameworks, protocols, and safeguard systems of the international nuclear regulatory regime.
19. Development is for the people, and it must be done with the people. I urge all stakeholders, including county governments, to engage deeply with this programme.
20. To the people of Siaya County, the site of Kenya's first nuclear power plant, I invite you to be partners in this journey. I encourage you to seek a deeper understanding of the immense economic benefits this project will bring, from high-value jobs to infrastructure development.



21. During the peak construction phase, the nuclear project will generate about 5,000 to 12,000 jobs, ranging from manual labour to highly specialised engineering roles.
22. Once operational, it will provide hundreds of permanent, well-paying technical positions. Local technical and vocational education and training institutions will see increased investment to equip residents with the skills needed to take up the opportunities.
23. In addition, to support a facility of this magnitude, the government and developers will undertake significant upgrades to local infrastructure. This includes the expansion of all-weather roads, improved water supply systems, modern healthcare facilities, new schools, community centres, and enhanced telecommunications.
24. Additionally, with thousands of workers living in the area, the project will stimulate the local economy by increasing demand for housing, hospitality, retail, and agricultural produce, while enabling local enterprises to grow and scale.

Ladies and gentlemen,

25. Kenya welcomes the COP28 declaration to triple global nuclear energy capacity by 2050. Achieving this ambition will require all nations to scale up their efforts and adopt concrete, realistic implementation plans.



26. For this to materialise, we must also re-examine the financing architecture for nuclear power projects. While the private sector will play an increasingly important role, multilateral development banks, including the World Bank, have a critical role to play in assessing project bankability and providing affordable financing.
27. I therefore call upon international organisations and other institutions to support the enabling conditions for nuclear energy development, including policy, capacity-building, financing mechanisms, and the establishment of a level playing field for all zero-emission energy sources.

Ladies and gentlemen,

28. Central to this journey is our commitment to establishing a world-class regulatory framework aligned with international best practices. We recognise that a robust, independent, and transparent regulatory system is the foundation of a successful nuclear programme.
29. Kenya will therefore enact comprehensive legislation and adhere to the highest global standards of nuclear safety, security, and safeguards, as we build a regulatory framework that inspires both domestic confidence and international partnership.
30. Kenya has continued to work closely with international partners, including the United States, in advancing the implementation of its nuclear power programme.



Through this collaboration, we have become a partner in the Foundational Infrastructure for Responsible Use of Small Modular Reactor Technology programme, supporting the responsible development of nuclear energy.

31. In addition, Kenya and the United States have signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Civil Nuclear Cooperation. Kenya is now on track to conclude the 123 Agreement within the next three months.
32. As I conclude, let me reaffirm that nuclear energy will be a true game changer for Kenya. It will sustainably and safely power our industries, accelerate our development, and propel us firmly on the path to a first-world economy.

I thank you.

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