



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**CLOSING REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY HON.
WILLIAM SAMOEI RUTO, PhD, C.G.H., PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF
THE DEFENCE FORCES, AND CHAIRMAN OF THE
COMESA AUTHORITY**

OCTOBER 9, 2025

KICC, NAIROBI



Your Excellency Evariste Ndayishimiye, President of the Republic of Burundi and esteemed outgoing Chair of the COMESA Authority,

Your Excellencies, Members of the Bureau of the COMESA Authority

Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. We have come to the conclusion of our 24th COMESA Summit. The communiqué just presented by the Secretary-General, Her Excellency Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe, is the culmination of our fruitful deliberations built upon the deliverables of the Meetings of the Council of Ministers, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the Business Forum, and the diligent work of our Secretariat.
2. I thank them all for their clarity, dedication, and professionalism, which have enabled us to reach concrete and actionable resolutions.
3. As reflected in the final communiqué, the agenda for the year ahead is both extensive and ambitious. It will be guided by the theme adopted by this Summit, 'Leveraging Digitalisation to Deepen Regional Value Chains for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth'. Guided by this theme, we will move swiftly to digitalise every aspect of our trade facilitation instruments.



4. We invite the private sector to join us through public-private partnerships to develop world-class physical and digital infrastructure to modernise transport corridors, building regional data centres, and investing in secure cloud services.
5. This digital corridor must not end in our capital cities. It must extend to every corner of our region, connecting the smallholder farmer in a rural village to the bustling urban market. The launch of the Digital Retail Payment Platform will link farmers directly with consumers and markets, ensuring fair access and transparency.
6. With the support of my fellow members of the Bureau of the Authority, I assure you of my readiness and commitment to continue implementing the COMESA regional integration agenda. Together with the Vice-Chairperson and the Rapporteur, I will maintain the momentum necessary to ensure that our organisation continues to deliver on its mandate and to meet the expectations of our Member States, business community, and citizens.
7. I urge our Council of Ministers and Ministers of Foreign Affairs to accelerate the implementation of the decisions we have made so as to guarantee the free movement of people, to facilitate seamless trade and investment flows, and to sustain our collective commitment to peace, security, and stability across the region.



8. We have also committed to addressing the concerns raised by the COMESA Business Council, as articulated in the declaration we have just adopted.
9. We shall also ensure that the COMESA–EAC–SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area becomes operational by 2026. To that end, we will strengthen synergies between the COMESA Free Trade Area, the Tripartite Free Trade Area, and the African Continental Free Trade Area.
10. As we do so, we must remember that the free movement of goods and services must be matched by the free movement of people and enhanced physical connectivity across the region and the entire continent.
11. Kenya has taken a bold and progressive step by becoming visa-free for most Africans, reaffirming our enduring commitment to regional integration and unity. By opening our borders, we aim to facilitate the free movement of people, goods, and services across the continent, a cornerstone of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and COMESA’s vision for shared prosperity.
12. This policy underscores Kenya’s belief that our collective strength lies in connectivity, collaboration, and the seamless exchange of ideas, talent, and trade among our nations.



13. Excellencies, the coming year also coincides with our engagement, as Regional Economic Communities and as the African Union, with the European Union, under the capable leadership of our brother, His Excellency João Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola.
14. The Bureau will ensure that COMESA is well represented in these engagements, as this is critical for maintaining our strong and strategic partnership with the European Union.
15. I also wish to reaffirm my commitment to consolidating the excellent work accomplished by my brother, His Excellency Evariste Ndayishimiye, President of the Republic of Burundi, and Rapporteur of the COMESA Authority.
16. We will give renewed focus to internal resource mobilisation, including through mechanisms such as the Market Levy, which is already enshrined in the COMESA Treaty.
17. As part of our collective commitment to deepen regional integration and accelerate investment-led growth, I am pleased to announce that Kenya, as the incoming Chair of COMESA, in collaboration with the COMESA Regional Investment Authority and the Kenya Investment Authority, will host the COMESA Investment Forum on the margins of the Kenya International Investment Conference in March 2026 in Nairobi.



18. The forum will serve as a premier platform to showcase investment opportunities across COMESA Member States, promote intra-regional trade and investment partnerships, and strengthen collaboration between governments, the private sector, and development institutions.
19. Allow me, once again, to express my appreciation to the outgoing Bureau for its leadership and dedication. I also warmly welcome my new Vice-Chairperson, whose experience and insight will be invaluable in steering the Bureau's work forward.
20. I encourage the Secretariat to continue delivering to the high expectations that have brought COMESA this far. Ours is not only the largest Regional Economic Community in Africa, but also the only one with multiple specialised agencies and institutions.
21. I will allocate sufficient time for regular consultations with the Secretariat, under the able leadership of Her Excellency Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe, to facilitate the effective implementation of our strategic plan.
22. I look forward to the Council of Ministers' consideration of the forthcoming 2026-2030 Mid-Term Strategic Plan in December 2025, with a view to its finalisation and formal launch at the 25th Summit in 2026, to be hosted by the Republic of Zimbabwe.



23. Finally, Excellencies, I once again express my deep appreciation, and that of the Government and people of the Republic of Kenya, to each and every one of you for your active participation in this Summit.
24. I wish you all safe travels back to your respective countries. For those staying a little longer, Karibuni sana. Please take some time to savour all that Nairobi and Kenya have to offer.
25. It is now my great honour and pleasure to declare the 24th COMESA Heads of State and Government Summit officially closed.

I thank you.

###

