



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, DURING A SPECIAL ADDRESS
TO THE NAIROBI CITY COUNTY ASSEMBLY**

APRIL 9, 2026

NAIROBI CITY

**Governor Johnson Sakaja, Governor of Nairobi City
County,
Honourable Speaker,
Honourable Members of the County Assembly,
Distinguished Leaders,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. Thirteen years after the birth of devolution under the Constitution of Kenya, I stand before you today as the first President and Head of State to address the County Assembly of our capital city.
2. I do so with clarity, with conviction, and with a profound sense of duty.
3. Because Nairobi is not just another county. Nairobi is the capital of the Republic of Kenya. It is the seat of our sovereignty, the face of our nation, the engine of our economy, and the standard by which much of the world judges this country.
4. When Nairobi works, Kenya works. When Nairobi fails, Kenya pays the price.
5. That is why we must speak plainly and with candour to each other today.
6. For too long, Nairobi has been a city of immense promise trapped by chronic dysfunction. A city of extraordinary potential suffocated by disorder, delayed by indecision, undermined by poor planning, and held hostage by interests that profit from chaos.



7. This city that should be the pride of Africa, has too often been forced to settle for standards that are frankly unacceptable. And let us be honest: this did not happen overnight.
8. It happened because, for many years, too many leaders chose comfort over courage. Too many people in positions of responsibility looked away when hard decisions were required. Too many tolerated mediocrity. Too many postponed actions. Too many chose political convenience over public good.
9. And the result is what we see around us.
10. A capital city where flooding still kills our people. A capital city where garbage too often defines neighbourhoods. A capital city where roads are congested, drainage is broken, sewerage is overstretched, planning is weak, and basic order is too often absent. A capital city where too many residents still live without dignity in the very city whose labour, talent, and enterprise sustain our national economy.
11. This cannot continue. Because Nairobi is too important to Kenya to be governed casually. It is too central to our national prosperity to be left to drift. It is too consequential to our international standing to be allowed to decay under the weight of indecision and excuses.



12. Today, Nairobi contributes 27.5% of Kenya's economy, generating over Ksh 4.1 trillion annually. It hosts the only United Nations headquarters in the Global South. It is home to diplomatic missions, multinational firms, regional institutions, innovators, entrepreneurs, workers, traders, and millions of Kenyans who come here every day in pursuit of opportunity.
13. Nairobi is not merely a city. It is a national asset. And if we are serious about Kenya's future, then we must be serious about Nairobi.
14. That is why the Cooperation Agreement signed between the National Government and the Nairobi City County Government on 17th February 2026 is not a ceremonial document. It is not public relations. It is not politics for headlines.

Honourable Members,

15. Your role in the governance and proper functioning Nairobi County cannot be overstated. You have a duty to ensure that the needs and concerns of your constituents are properly addressed. I want to thank you for your efforts in reviewing and approving this Cooperation Agreement. It demonstrates your commitment to addressing the challenges that our great city faces. It is a deliberate act of national correction.
16. It is an acknowledgement that the problems of Nairobi have grown too large, too urgent, and too consequential to be handled through fragmentation, turf wars, bureaucratic hesitation, or business-as-usual governance.



17. We have therefore made a clear decision: the era of drift must end, and the era of coordinated execution must begin.
18. Because what Nairobi needs now is not another round of speeches. It is not another cycle of blame. It is not another season of complaints. Nairobi needs disciplined leadership. Nairobi needs order. Nairobi needs execution. Nairobi needs results. And that is exactly what we intend to deliver.

Honourable Members,

19. I have listened carefully to what Kenyans say about this city. I have heard their frustration. I have heard their disappointment. I have heard their anger. I have heard what residents say, what businesses say, what visitors say, what investors say, and what Kenyans in the diaspora say when they compare Nairobi to other cities across Africa and beyond. And the truth is this: many of them are right.
20. They are right to ask why our capital still struggles with basic urban order. They are right to ask why growth has not been matched by planning. They are right to ask why this city, with all its importance, has for so long looked and functioned below its status. They are right to demand better.
21. From fewer than 300,000 people in 1960, Nairobi has grown into a city of close to 5 million residents, swelling even further during the day. But this growth has not been matched by the infrastructure, systems, planning discipline, and service delivery that a modern metropolis requires.



22. More than 60% of residents live in informal settlements. Access to piped water remains inadequate and unreliable. Sanitation and sewerage systems remain under severe strain. Mobility is constrained by congestion and insufficient transport infrastructure. Environmental degradation and encroachment have made flooding more destructive. Spatial inequality, unemployment, and exclusion continue to fuel insecurity and vulnerability in parts of the city.
23. These are not isolated problems. These are symptoms of a city that has, for too long, been managed reactively instead of strategically.
24. And we must also say this without fear: there are people who benefit from this dysfunction.
25. There are cartels that profit from disorder. There are interests that thrive in illegal connections, illegal dumping, illegal occupation, illegal construction, and broken systems.
26. There are those who make money from weak enforcement, poor coordination, and institutional paralysis. There are those who shout the loudest against reform precisely because they benefit most from failure.
27. We know them. And let me be clear today: under this administration, the era of appeasing cartels at the expense of the public interest is coming to an end.



28. Because leadership is not about protecting comfortable arrangements for a few. Leadership is about delivering justice, dignity, order, and opportunity for the many.
29. And that means some hard decisions will have to be made.
30. If roads must be expanded, they will be expanded. If encroachments must be removed, they will be removed. If drainage channels must be cleared, they will be cleared. If illegal structures must come down, they will come down. If systems must be reorganised to restore order, they will be reorganised. We must stop pretending otherwise.
31. We cannot demand world-class infrastructure while defending lawlessness. We cannot cry about floods and then resist drainage works. We cannot complain about congestion and then oppose road expansion. We cannot demand cleanliness while protecting illegal dumping. We cannot ask for order while resisting every intervention required to create it.
32. Progress has a cost. Reform has a cost. Order has a cost.
33. And if we are not prepared to bear the temporary inconvenience of fixing this city, then we must stop pretending that we are serious about changing it.
34. For your information, State House has received notice from the multi-Agency Team reclaiming riparian land that part of the State House boundary wall along the Kirichwa Kubwa River falls within the riparian reserve must be moved at least fifteen metres from the high-water mark. That wall will come down.



Honourable Members,

35. The great cities of the world did not become great by accident. They became great because leaders before us chose discipline over disorder, long-term planning over short-term politics, and public interest over private convenience.
36. A serious city guarantees mobility, it guarantees water and sanitation, and it guarantees safety.
37. A serious city plans where people live, how they move, how they trade, and how infrastructure supports growth.
38. A serious city protects green spaces, manages waste properly, and creates a dignified urban environment in which enterprise and opportunity can thrive.
39. That is the standard we must now impose upon ourselves. And that is why this Cooperation Agreement matters.
40. It is not about transferring functions. It is not about weakening devolution. It is not about confusion of mandates. It is about ending fragmentation and restoring coordinated delivery in the one city where failure carries national consequences.
41. This framework is fully anchored in the Constitution and the law. Article 6(2) is clear that the two levels of government are distinct, yet interdependent, and must conduct their relations through consultation and cooperation. Article 189 requires both levels of government to work together and provides for structured collaboration.



The Urban Areas and Cities Act recognises the special status of the capital city, and the Intergovernmental Relations Act provides for joint committees and intergovernmental coordination.

42. And under this Cooperation Agreement, formalised on 27th February 2026 during the inaugural Joint Steering Committee, we now have a structured implementation platform backed by an initial Ksh 80 billion to drive visible and measurable transformation.
43. We are delivering a safer city through the installation of 50,000 street lighting points, including the revival of 40,000 existing lights and the installation of 10,000 new solar and smart streetlights. Fabrication is already underway. Installation begins this month. By the end of May, Nairobi will begin to see visible improvements across key corridors and neighbourhoods, and within six months this city will be markedly brighter, safer, and more secure.
44. We are also extending safe electricity through last-mile connectivity in informal settlements, beginning this month with Hospital Ward, and moving into Kibra, Korogocho, Mathare, and Kamukunji within the next 90 days. This is not just about power. It is about dignity, safety, enterprise, and inclusion.
45. We are expanding water supply through strategic interventions, including the Ng'ethu-Gigiri waterworks, which will add 50,000 cubic metres of daily water supply. The Gigiri–Shauri Moyo evacuation corridor is also being advanced to stabilise supply in high-demand zones, including areas supporting affordable housing development.



46. On sanitation, we are undertaking what should have been done years ago. We will build two parallel 27-kilometre trunk sewers along the Nairobi River Corridor, develop a 60,000 cubic metre per day treatment plant, expand last-mile sewer connectivity, and support the long-term expansion of sewerage systems for this city.
47. On roads and drainage, we are implementing a 247-kilometre urban roads programme. The first phase of 63 kilometres is already ongoing and expected to be completed by June 2026. Another 58 kilometres commenced this month, and subsequent phases are being funded to begin without delay. This will be complemented by drainage interventions in identified flood hotspots so that we stop managing floods as annual surprises and start treating them as infrastructure failures that must be fixed.
48. Solid waste management, one of the clearest symbols of Nairobi's disorder, is also being fundamentally overhauled.
49. The Nairobi City County Government will provide 100 acres of land for a Material Recovery Facility and multiple transfer stations across the city. Work is already underway at Dandora, where 40 trucks are on site clearing legacy waste and additional capacity is being mobilised. Within three months, we expect the core system to be operational. Within six months, Nairobi should begin to experience the kind of functioning waste management system that any serious capital city should already have.



50. And let me say this clearly: the National Government is not standing at the sidelines. We are backing this effort in a real and practical way, including support to the tune of **Ksh 2 billion annually** to strengthen solid waste management and accelerate delivery. Because this is not just a county issue. It is a public health issue, an environmental issue, a dignity issue, and a national image issue.
51. We are also modernising markets, because Nairobi's economy is built not only in boardrooms and office towers, but in markets, workshops, stalls, transport corridors, and trading ecosystems where ordinary Kenyans struggle and strive every day.
52. Under the Nairobi Rivers Regeneration Programme, the first phase of the Gikomba riverfront markets is underway, with further phases planned to reorganise and upgrade one of the most important trading ecosystems in the country. Additional investments are also being made to support traders affected by flooding, including new garage markets and trading spaces.
53. And because a functioning city must also be a safe city, we will strengthen urban security through the establishment of a Nairobi Metropolitan Police Unit framework to support coordinated, responsive, and effective security management across the capital.
54. In further improving security in Nairobi, I have directed the Ministry of Interior to commence implementation, within the next sixty days, of enhancements to the Integrated Command and Control Communications Centre in Nairobi. This will improve CCTV camera coverage across the city and accelerate digitisation within our security services, including digital Occurrence Books,



advanced data analytics, and artificial intelligence systems—all aimed at improving responsiveness, efficiency, and turnaround times in our police stations.

Honourable Members,

55. What we are doing through this agreement is significant. But it is not the full picture.
56. Because even beyond this cooperation framework, the National Government is making one of the largest and most consequential public investment commitments ever directed at Nairobi.
57. By the end of last month, the Nairobi Metropolitan region had 93 ongoing and planned Affordable Housing Programme projects spanning houses, markets, and institutional accommodation. These projects will deliver over 180,000 housing units and market stalls, with more than 112,000 already under implementation and nearly 70,000 more in the pipeline.
58. In investment terms, that is over Ksh 220 billion in ongoing projects and another Ksh 139 billion in planned developments, bringing the total housing-related pipeline in Nairobi alone to well over Ksh 360 billion.
59. This is not just a housing programme. It is urban reconstruction.
60. Because affordable housing is not only about walls and roofs. It is about planning. It is about infrastructure. It is about services. It is about jobs. It is about restoring dignity to working people and ending the absurdity of a city where those who sustain the economy cannot afford to live decently within it.



61. The Raila Odinga International Talanta Sports Stadium is nearing completion as we prepare for the 2027 AFCON tournament. The Bomas International Convention Complex is being developed to strengthen Nairobi's position as a premier MICE destination. Plans are underway to expand Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and reinforce Nairobi's role as the aviation gateway to the region. Critical road infrastructure projects are ongoing to ease congestion and improve mobility across the city.
62. And our investment is not only in concrete and steel. It is also in people.
63. In education, we are expanding classroom infrastructure to meet growing enrolment and improve learning environments for our children, where we allocated an additional Sh 1 billion in the last financial year for grade 9 classrooms
64. In healthcare, Nairobi's system is undergoing a serious transformation. Today, 2.6 million residents are registered under SHA, and a record Ksh 23 billion is flowing into health facilities. But our ambition is not simply to expand access. Our ambition is to build a healthcare system worthy of a capital city — one anchored by the transformation of Kenyatta National Hospital and the development of a modern referral facility built for the future.
65. We are also investing in Nairobi's youth through programmes such as NYOTA and other targeted interventions to expand access to jobs, skills, and enterprise opportunities.



66. And as Nairobi rises, so too must its identity as the creative and cultural heartbeat of this region. That is why we are advancing the Creative Economy Bill 2026 and putting in place an incentives framework to make Nairobi the Sub-Saharan capital of film and content creation — a city where talent is monetised, creativity is industrialised, and young people can build livelihoods from the power of their ideas.
67. Taken together, these investments are not random projects. They are part of a deliberate national strategy to renew, modernise, and reposition Nairobi as a functional, competitive, orderly, and globally respected capital.

Honourable Members,

68. But ultimately, this is not just about money. It is not just about plans. It is not just about programmes. It is about leadership.
69. It is about whether we, in this generation, will finally do what others before us failed or feared to do.
70. Will we confront resistance when it comes? Will we stand firm when vested interests complain? Will we push through when cartels fight back? Will we make the decisions that are right, even when they are not immediately popular? Or will we retreat into the same old cycle of hesitation, excuses, blame, and underperformance?
71. These are the real questions before us.
72. Because leadership is not tested when decisions are easy. Leadership is proven when the right thing is difficult.



73. Leadership demands courage, discipline, sacrifice, and the willingness to endure criticism in the short term so that future generations may inherit something better in the long term.
74. And history will not remember us for the excuses we made. History will remember us for what we changed, or failed to change, when the responsibility was ours.
75. So let us not be the generation that inherited a great capital and left it broken.
76. Let us be the generation that finally imposed order where there was disorder. That restored dignity where there was neglect. That defeated cartels where there was capture. That chose reform over fear. That chose posterity over popularity. That chose courage over convenience. That chose to build, not merely to talk.
77. Let us be the generation that finally made Nairobi work.
78. Let us do it now, firmly, unapologetically, and without turning back.

I thank you.

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