



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**REMARKS BY H.E. DR. WILLIAM RUTO, CGH,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA AND
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE
FORCES, DURING THE FLAGGING OFF OF THE
WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP (WRC) SAFARI
RALLY**

MARCH 20, 2025

KICC, NAIROBI



Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is my pleasure this morning to officiate the flagging-off ceremony of the WRC Safari Rally, which is undoubtedly the best rally leg in the world. I congratulate the organisers of this 72nd edition for once again placing Kenya on the global sports tourism map.
2. I have it on the authority of WRC and FIA reports that the Safari Rally is one of the most eagerly anticipated events worldwide, while the Hell's Gate Power Stage is among the most-watched globally. Additionally, the famous Miti Mbili jump in Kedong is one of the most iconic images in the WRC rally world.
3. Since 1953, the WRC Safari Rally has been a key part of Kenya's sporting heritage and a pillar of our sports tourism. Hosting this event — the only FIA World Rally Championship leg in Africa — is a win-win partnership for Kenya, the continent, and the FIA. I assure both the FIA and WRC that the Government of Kenya remains committed to supporting this event now and in the future.
4. However, we also want to create more opportunities for young Kenyans to participate in motorsport. To this end, the Government of Kenya will support the FIA's Affordable Cross Car Project, which aims to develop motorsport talent globally. I thank the FIA for providing free design blueprints for these cars, and encouraging local manufacturing while minimising costs. I urge our local motorsport federation to collaborate with the Technical and Vocational Training Authority to make local production a reality.



5. Today, I was also pleased to host representatives of the FIA Helmet Wearing Programme, an initiative that plays a crucial role in enhancing road safety for our boda-boda riders. This programme, implemented in Kenya by the Automobile Association of Kenya with support from the FIA Safe and Sustainable Mobility Grants Programme, is funded by the FIA Foundation. By providing life-saving helmets, this initiative reinforces our national commitment to reducing road fatalities in line with our 2024-2028 National Road Safety Plan.
6. The 2025 WRC Safari Rally has been organised under a whole-of-government approach, and I commend the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Creative Economy, and Sports for working closely with their counterparts in the Ministries of Interior, Tourism and Wildlife, Trade, MSMEs, Environment, and the county governments of Nairobi, Kiambu, and Nakuru.
7. The Kenya Tourism Board, Kenya Pipeline Corporation, Kenya Wildlife Service, the Wildlife Research and Training Institute, Kenya Power and KenGen, among others, have immensely contributed to this year's Safari Rally. We thank them all. This collaborative approach must be emulated across all public initiatives.
8. I also wish to thank our corporate sponsors for their invaluable contributions and encourage the private sector to continue partnering with the government to host world-class events. The future of the Safari Rally depends on increased private sector involvement, and I commend the WRC Safari Rally team for raising over KSh400 million, both directly and indirectly, to support this event.



9. Additionally, I am pleased to learn that the WRC Safari Rally Project has initiated discussions with the Toyota Gazoo Racing team to train Kenyan drivers and mechanics. As a government, we will fully support this initiative.
10. To all Kenyans and visitors, welcome to Kasarani and Naivasha for the WRC Safari Rally. Stay safe and bring your families along to enjoy the spectacle. The ongoing rains in Naivasha are a blessing, and we anticipate that the 2025 WRC Safari Rally will be one of the toughest yet most exciting editions ever.
11. Finally, we extend our best wishes to all local and foreign drivers as they take on both old and new rally stages. To our local drivers, led by 21-year-old Tinashe Gatimu, the entire country is rallying behind you. We will be cheering you on. Go make Kenya proud!

Thank you.

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