



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**REMARKS 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 THE NEW YEAR DIPLOMATIC
ADDRESS TO HEADS OF MISSION AND INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS**

FEBRUARY 9, 2026

STATE HOUSE, NAIROBI

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

1. It is my honour to welcome you, and I thank you most sincerely for accepting my invitation and taking the time to join us today.
2. We established this annual engagement as a deliberate and regular feature of our diplomatic calendar in recognition of the essential role that sustained consultation with the resident diplomatic corps plays in advancing cooperation and understanding.
3. This gathering, therefore, offers us a timely opportunity to reflect together on the significant developments of the past year, at the national, regional, and global levels, so that we may proceed with a shared understanding of the realities shaping our relations and our responsibilities.
4. Excellencies, 2025 marked a defining phase in Kenya's socio-economic development journey. It stands out as the period when many of the reforms and strategic initiatives undertaken by this administration began to yield measurable and visible results.
5. Across key sectors, policy choices have translated into tangible progress, affirming both the soundness of our direction and the resilience of our people. These gains have strengthened confidence in the course of our economy, deepened social cohesion, and laid firmer foundations for inclusive and sustainable growth in the years ahead.



6. Central to the progress recorded in the past year is the continued expansion of universal health coverage through the Social Health Authority. With more than 29.3 million Kenyans now registered, the health sector reforms have not only enhanced social protection, but they have also reduced vulnerability and enhanced human dignity.
7. We also made steady progress in strengthening food security and agricultural productivity, with production in some sectors improving by over 50%. Targeted interventions in the digital registration of farmers, fertiliser access, quality seed, irrigation, and market support have stabilised food supplies, boosted incomes, and safeguarded rural livelihoods.
8. Our education sector has regained stability and a clear direction following the successful completion of the transition to the Competency-Based Education system, a reform that places skills, creativity, and practical knowledge at the centre of learning. At the tertiary level, the student-centred funding model has restored confidence in our universities, many of which previously faced severe financial strain, by aligning support with both need and merit, and strengthening institutional sustainability.
9. We have also undertaken the most extensive teacher recruitment drive in our nation's history, hiring 100,000 teachers in just three years - a decisive investment in classroom capacity, improved learning outcomes, and the long-term future of our young people.



10. Employment creation remains a defining national priority. In 2025, opportunities expanded across housing, labour mobility, the digital economy, and small enterprise development. Our overarching objective is to organise our economy around work, production, and value creation, especially for our youth.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

11. As I outlined in my State of the Nation Address last year, we committed ourselves to an ambitious 10-year national transformation programme designed to fundamentally expand our productive capacity and long-term competitiveness.
12. This plan rests on four strategic pillars: The accelerated expansion and modernisation of our road network to unlock mobility and trade; the scaling up of our energy generation capacity to power industry and innovation; the rapid growth of irrigation infrastructure to bring an additional 2.5 million acres under cultivation; and the full realisation of our statutory commitment to education, research and development funding at 2% of GDP and building toward a research fund of KSh1 trillion over the next decade.
13. We estimate that these initiatives will require about \$40 billion (KSh5 trillion) in investment. Yet we are firmly resolved to mobilise these resources without adding unsustainable debt to our balance sheet or placing an additional tax burden on our citizens.



14. For this reason, we are operationalising key strategic financing instruments, notably the National Infrastructure Fund and the Sovereign Wealth Fund, structured to mobilise long-term capital, crowd in private investment, and fast-track priority projects while safeguarding fiscal discipline and long-term economic stability.
15. Kenya, therefore, welcomes the international community, including development finance institutions, sovereign investors, pension funds, and the private sector, to consider committing capital to the National Infrastructure Fund, which offers opportunities for long-term investments that deliver sustainable returns.
16. The Sovereign Wealth Fund will secure inter-generational equity and enhance resilience to external shocks through disciplined, transparent, and long-term stewardship of national resources.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

17. In 2025, Kenya continued to deepen bilateral relations across Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and the Americas. These engagements strengthened cooperation in trade, investment, security, migration, climate action, education, and technology, while expanding people-to-people exchanges.



18. We look forward to further widening and deepening diplomatic engagement in 2026 as we advance bilateral cooperation frameworks globally; promote peace and security; strengthen trade and investment ties; expand scientific, technological, and cultural exchanges; foster regional integration; facilitate labour mobility; and harness collective efforts toward shared continental and multilateral aspirations.
19. The principles of pan-Africanism, good neighbourliness, and regionalism continue to shape our diplomacy. Kenya currently serves as Chair of the East African Community (EAC) and will chair the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa Authority (COMESA) this year.
20. These responsibilities align with Kenya's long-standing view that enhanced regional cooperation remains central to Africa's economic transformation and sustainable development.
21. At the continental level, Kenya continues to contribute to Africa's institutional strengthening. As African Union Champion for Institutional Reform, we have supported ongoing efforts to enhance the effectiveness, credibility, and responsiveness of the Union, particularly in the areas of peace, governance, and financing.



22. In addition, as Chair of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change, Kenya has advanced a coordinated African position on climate action, climate finance, and adaptation, ensuring that Africa's priorities are clearly articulated and pursued with unity in global processes.
23. Kenya also looks forward to hosting the Africa-France Summit in May this year, which will showcase Africa's innovative capacity and demonstrate the strength of cross-continental partnerships. We will also host the Fourth EAC-COMESA-SADC Tripartite Summit, which is expected to significantly advance the regional integration agenda.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

24. Regional peace and security remain a core focus of Kenya's foreign policy. Stability in the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region is inseparable from our own national security, economic prospects, and development trajectory. Kenya, therefore, remains actively engaged in regional and continental efforts to prevent conflict escalation, strengthen governance, and build resilience in fragile and conflict-affected states.
25. In the Great Lakes Region, Kenya has played an active role in efforts to reduce tensions and advance dialogue among parties in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.



Together with His Excellency Emmerson Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, I co-chaired several EAC-SADC summits, which culminated in the merger of the Nairobi and Luanda processes, strengthening coherence and reaffirming regional ownership of the peace framework.

26. In December last year, I also witnessed the signing of the Washington Accords for Peace and Prosperity between the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, marking an important diplomatic milestone.
27. Kenya maintains that international initiatives, including the Washington and Doha processes, must reinforce and remain aligned with the consolidated African-led framework to support sustainable outcomes.
28. In Sudan, Kenya remains deeply concerned by the ongoing conflict and its grave humanitarian consequences. There can be no military solution, and an inclusive, civilian-led political process remains the only viable pathway to sustainable peace.
29. In South Sudan, Kenya reiterates its call to all parties to fully honour their commitments under the Revitalised Peace Agreement.



30. In Somalia, Kenya continues to encourage constructive dialogue between the Federal Government and Federal Member States as the foundation for national cohesion and effective governance. We underscore the importance of predictable financing and a conditions-based transition in the African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission to safeguard hard-won gains.
31. Beyond our immediate region, Kenya continues to contribute responsibly to global peace and security. As the lead nation of the Multinational Security Support Mission in Haiti, we stand in solidarity with the Haitian people's quest for the restoration of security, order, and the rule of law.
32. We are now focused on a coordinated and orderly transition of that mission to the Gang Suppression Force supported by adequate international financing, strengthened command structures, and a United Nations Support Office, measures essential to consolidate progress and prevent relapse into instability.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

33. In 2025, Kenya played an active and constructive role in global efforts to reform development financing, strengthen peace operations, and advance sustainable development in a manner that is inclusive, equitable, and responsive to contemporary realities.



34. At the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development held in Seville, Spain, Kenya joined the international community in reviewing progress under the Addis Ababa Action Agenda while confronting emerging global financing constraints.
35. Our engagement underscored the urgent need to reform the global financial architecture to better support domestic resource mobilisation, sustainable debt management, and the mobilisation of private capital for development.
36. At the same time, Kenya's commitment to global environmental governance was demonstrated during the 7th Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, held here in Nairobi, where Kenya called for the translation of global declarations, including the outcomes of COP30 - into concrete action addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution in ways that are visible in people's lives and protective of future generations.
37. Our leadership in environmental diplomacy also extends to ocean governance. The ratification of the Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction reaffirmed our commitment to rules-based multilateralism, ocean sustainability, and the protection of global commons.



38. In June 2026, Kenya will host the 11th Our Ocean Conference under the theme, Our Ocean, Our Heritage, Our Future. This gathering will mobilise global commitments on marine conservation, sustainable fisheries, and climate resilience, while showcasing Africa's contribution to ocean action and the blue economy.
39. Kenya's multilateral engagement also encompasses social development. At the World Summit for Social Development held in Doha, Qatar, we reaffirmed that poverty eradication, decent work, and social inclusion are inseparable from sustainable development. These principles continue to guide both our domestic policy and our international partnerships.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

40. Kenya remains a firm proponent of a rules-based international order. Amid growing global instability, we reaffirm our commitment to sovereignty and territorial integrity as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.
41. As the UN marks its 80th anniversary, the world stands at a critical inflection point with multilateralism under increasing strain. It is our firm belief that a strong United Nations - and steadfast adherence to multilateral principles - remains indispensable in addressing the complex and interconnected challenges of our time.



42. We are proud to host the only United Nations headquarters in the Global South, and remain committed to providing the political, security, and infrastructural support necessary to expand the UN presence in Kenya.
43. We recognise that the United Nations remains one of humanity's greatest collective achievements. Yet persistent funding shortfalls and administrative constraints continue to limit its responsiveness.
44. Kenya, therefore, supports renewed efforts to strengthen and adequately resource the UN system. The defunding of UN agencies weakens multilateral cooperation and diminishes the international community's capacity to respond to conflict, humanitarian crises, global health threats, and development challenges.
45. At the same time, Africa also marks two decades since the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, through which the continent has spoken in one voice in calling for just and equitable reform of the UN Security Council.
46. Africa's continued exclusion, despite bearing a significant share of the Security Council's agenda and peacekeeping responsibilities, undermines the legitimacy and effectiveness of the United Nations. Comprehensive reform, including permanent African representation, is essential to the institution's relevance in the 21st Century.



Excellencies,

47. As I conclude, I commend the diplomatic corps and international organisations represented here for your continued cooperation, goodwill, and partnership with Kenya.
48. As we progress through 2026, let us deepen collaboration and ensure that our shared efforts translate into measurable and meaningful outcomes for our peoples and for humanity.

I thank you.

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