



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY HON. WILLIAM SAMOEI
RUTO, Ph.D., C.G.H., PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
KENYA AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE
FORCES, DURING THE OFFICIAL COMMISSIONING OF
PHASE II DEVELOPMENT AT UMMA UNIVERSITY**

SEPTEMBER 30, 2025

KAJIADO COUNTY

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It gives me great pleasure to join you today for the official commissioning of phase II development at Umma University. This is a proud moment for all of us as it represents not just the growth of one institution, but the remarkable journey of our nation in expanding access to higher education.
2. I recall with fondness my association with this university. From its humble beginnings as a College of Sharia and Islamic Studies in Thika to its transformation into a full-fledged university in 2014, when I had the privilege of opening Phase I here in Kajiado. Umma has grown steadily, anchored on a clear vision of academic excellence.
3. Today, with the completion of this 10-storey building - an investment of more than KSh1.4 billion - we see yet another bold step forward. This modern facility, designed to serve over 10,000 students, includes 81 classrooms, six laboratories, a 650-seat examination hall, a conference centre, a 416-seat auditorium, and much more. It is a symbol of ambition, resilience, and a deep commitment to nurturing future generations.
4. Ladies and gentlemen, Kenya has made enormous strides in expanding access to higher education. Today, our country boasts 80 chartered universities, 30 of which are privately owned. Nearly 150,000 students are enrolled in private universities, representing about 23% of the entire university population. This underlines the critical role that private universities continue to play in complementing government efforts.



5. Over the past three years, we have been compelled to undertake bold and far-reaching reforms to safeguard the sustainability of our universities. Not long ago, the sub-sector was in crisis, with 23 out of 40 public universities sinking into technical insolvency, threatening not only their stability but also the future of thousands of students.
6. Through decisive action, we strengthened governance, restructured financing, and introduced the Student-Centred Funding Model, a game-changer for higher education. Scholarships and loans are now awarded on the basis of need, ensuring fairness and equal opportunity for all Kenyan learners.
7. University fees have been reduced significantly. Students now pay between KSh5,814 and KSh75,000 a semester, depending on their ability and programme of study. University funding has nearly doubled, rising from KSh45 billion in 2022/23 to KSh82 billion in 2025/26, while HELB allocations have more than doubled from KSh17 billion to KSh41 billion.
8. Already, nearly 470,000 students have benefited from scholarships and loans. The reforms have also restored financial stability, reducing the number of technically insolvent universities from 23 to 13, while public universities raised KSh11 billion through diversified revenue streams and saved KSh1 billion through cost-cutting measures.



9. Alongside university reforms, our Technical and Vocational Education and Training system has undergone an extraordinary transformation. Enrollment has more than doubled from 297,000 in 2022 to 718,000 this year, driven by supportive policies and aggressive awareness campaigns.
10. We have expanded national polytechnics from 11 in 2022 to 29 today, greatly strengthening our skills training capacity. At the same time, the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy, launched in March 2024, has already assessed 6,734 candidates, with 898 graduating at the launch.
11. To deliver quality training, we have increased trainer recruitment from 7,000 to 10,000 and hired nearly 3,000 new trainers. Industry partnerships have also surged from 65 to 2,583, embedding practical, hands-on experience in training programmes.
12. These achievements demonstrate that TVET is now firmly at the heart of Kenya's transformation agenda, equipping young Kenyans with the practical skills to innovate, create jobs, and drive economic development.
13. Ladies and gentlemen, the progress we celebrate nationally finds full expression here at Umma University. With the support of our partners - the Government of Kuwait and the Direct Aid Society - this institution has been able to expand its facilities and strengthen its capacity to serve thousands of young Kenyans. This partnership is a powerful demonstration of solidarity, whose impact will be felt for generations to come.



14. As we commission this new building, we are not just opening classrooms and offices; we are opening doors of opportunity. Today, we have also laid the foundation for Phase III, which will house the School of Engineering with seven specialised programmes, additional student housing, a medical school, and a teaching and referral hospital.
15. As Kenya implements the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda, our universities and TVETs will continue to play a central role in producing skilled, ethical, and innovative graduates ready to create jobs, drive technology, and tackle the pressing challenges of our time.
16. In conclusion, I congratulate Umma University for this milestone. As a government, we remain steadfast in supporting institutions of higher learning to ensure every young Kenyan has the chance to achieve their full potential.

I thank you.

###

