



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**SPEECH BY H.E. DR. WILLIAM SAMOEI RUTO,
CGH, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA
AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE
FORCES, DURING THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE
SHIRIKA PLAN**

MARCH 28, 2025

STATE HOUSE, NAIROBI

**Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. I am honoured to join you for the official launch of the Shirika Plan. This historic event marks a transformative step in Kenya along the path of humanitarian leadership, as we advance our capacity to deliver effective, responsive and durable solutions to give relief and protect the dignity of refugees and asylum seekers.
2. Kenya is a generous and hospitable society. As a tradition, we warmly welcome all visitors, understanding that they arrive in our land by different routes for different reasons. Solidarity with people fleeing threats to life and freedom is a long-standing tradition that aligns with our society's obligation to receive all people with consideration and empathy. It is not a coincidence, therefore, that our nation hosts more than 800,000 forcibly displaced persons, mostly from the East and Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes region. Even as we observe with concern that global displacement of persons is approaching unprecedented levels, we also clearly appreciate that traditional, humanitarian-only approaches are no longer sufficient. Crises have become more acute, protracted, complex and dynamic; resources have declined, and the possibility of resettlement remains elusive. Under these challenging conditions, we must adopt a development-oriented model anchored in sustainability, inclusion, and resilience in order to continue to uphold the safety and dignity of displaced persons, and to make them feel at home.



3. Accordingly, the Shirika Plan is our bold, homegrown solution which amplifies the African Union's call for African solutions to not only Africa's problems but also global challenges as well. The Plan's strategy to transform refugee camps into integrated settlements gives inclusion a new expression by promoting the creation of opportunity in a manner that intentionally benefits refugees and host communities alike. In so doing, it recognises the indispensable role of host communities, a number of which have provided exemplary compassion, patiently and generously extending hospitality for over 35 years, and places them at the heart of this vision.
4. This Plan also sets out the government's strategy to guide reform to policy and regulatory frameworks, including the Refugees Act (2021), the adoption of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, the inclusion of refugees in county development plans, and their integration into public education, healthcare, and financial systems. As I speak to you, more than 70,000 refugees are enrolled for universal health coverage under the Social Health Insurance Fund, while IDs for refugees are recognised by the Integrated Population Registration System. Partnerships such as the International Finance Corporation, Kenya Commercial Bank and Swedish International Development Agency's guarantee funds are catalysing their financial inclusion and engagement in entrepreneurship and job creation.



5. Equally importantly, there is undeniable progress with respect to key enablers of inclusion which include the recognition of the refugee ID in SIM card registration and banking, the development of a refugee database which is inter-operable with government systems, and strengthening local governance through the elevation of Dadaab and Kakuma-Kalobeyei camps and communities into special municipalities.
6. As you can see, we are neither short of ideas, commitment or willingness to do the work needed to actualise this critical vision. For this reason, the Shirika Plan, whose development entailed extensive multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder consultations, led by county governments, refugee-led organisations, UN agencies, development partners, and the civil society, is a strategy which reflects the contributions of a broad spectrum of actors. It clearly and boldly reflects our commitment to the Global Compact on Refugees as well as the constitutional mandate to observe and implement measures that not only fulfil, but also expand inclusion, equity, equality, social justice, non-discrimination, and access to equal opportunity in our shared prosperity. When we declare that our national transformation agenda shall leave no one behind, we mean every word of it.
7. To guarantee the best chance of fully actualising the promise of Shirika, I call on our partners in development and humanitarian response, international financial institutions and other organisations to enhance their contribution to our partnership in order to renew the way we transform solidarity by investing in sustainable, scalable and inclusive solutions.



8. I wish to appreciate all our partners because the long journey we have walked together has not been easy. Thank you for your consistency and readiness to do the good work. In a special way, I thank the counties of Turkana and Garissa for their enduring solidarity. The Shirika Plan now gives us a framework to collaborate more ambitiously and pursue historic achievements that will guarantee hope and dignity for refugees, and give host communities due recognition. Let us walk this road, assured that together, we will transform Kenya's refugee and host communities from sites of sorrow and despair into thriving and prosperous hubs of opportunity.

I now declare the Shirika Plan officially launched.

I thank you

God bless you.

God Bless Kenya.

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