



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 CELEBRATION OF MASENO
SCHOOL'S 120TH ANNIVERSARY**

MAY 9, 2026

KISUMU COUNTY

The Distinguished Maseno School Community, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. There are schools that educate students, and there are institutions that shape the destiny of nations. Maseno School belongs to the latter category.
2. Some 120 years ago, when this institution was founded, the Republic of Kenya as we know it today did not exist. There was no independent State, no national flag, no Constitution, and no Presidency.
3. Yet here, at the foothills of the Mabungo Hills, along the border of present-day Kisumu and Vihiga counties, the foundations of what would become a towering institution of academic excellence were already being laid.
4. For 12 decades, Maseno School has stood not merely as a centre of learning, but as a living monument to the enduring power of education, discipline, leadership, service, and nationhood.
5. Generations have passed through its gates carrying the hopes of families, communities, and a young nation searching for its place in history.
6. Empires have risen and faded. Governments have changed. Political seasons have come and gone. Yet Maseno has endured, producing leaders, scholars, clergy, scientists, public servants, and patriots who helped shape Kenya and East Africa into what they are today.
7. This anniversary, therefore, is not merely a celebration of longevity. It is a celebration of continuity, institutional excellence, and national memory.



Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. As one of the oldest formal institutions of learning in Kenya, established in 1906 by missionaries of the Church Missionary Society, Maseno occupies a unique place in the educational and historical journey of our country.
9. What began with six sons of African chiefs gathering under the shade of the 'Oseno' tree has evolved into one of the most distinguished educational institutions on the African continent.
10. The name 'Maseno' is derived from the Hickory tree, scientifically known as *Carya*, but locally called 'oseno' in Dholuo and 'oluseno' in Luhya, a fitting symbol for an institution whose roots run deep and whose legacy has endured across generations.
11. From its earliest years, Maseno embraced not only academic instruction, but also practical and technical education in fields such as masonry, carpentry, and tailoring, reflecting a philosophy of education that sought to prepare young people not merely for examinations but for life, service, and leadership.
12. This vision is fully aligned with the transformative reforms we are implementing under the Competency-Based Education and Training system. Our goal is to nurture every learner according to their unique talents, abilities, creativity, and aspirations so that no child is confined by a one-size-fits-all model of education.
13. We are building an education system that empowers young people to discover their true potential early and pursue career pathways that fully harness their gifts; whether in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, the arts, sports, entrepreneurship, agriculture, or technical skills.



14. In an increasingly competitive and innovation-driven world, Kenya's future prosperity will depend on our ability to produce not only academically qualified graduates but also problem-solvers, innovators, creators, researchers, and ethical leaders capable of transforming our nation and positioning Africa at the forefront of global progress.

Ladies and gentlemen,

15. Over the last 120 years, Maseno School has benefited from visionary educators and administrators, among them the renowned Edward Carey Francis, whose contribution to education in Kenya remains legendary.
16. Today, the story of Maseno School is inseparable from the story of Kenya itself. I have been taken around this institution, and I have encountered sites that are not merely school landmarks but important monuments of our national heritage.
17. I have seen the historic Oseno tree under which the first six students began their journey. I have visited the house where the late Jaramogi Oginga Odinga lived while teaching here between 1943 and 1945. I have also seen the chapel built in 1906 at the very dawn of the institution's existence.
18. These are not ordinary places. They are living chapters of Kenyan history. I therefore commend the successive boards of management, principals, teachers, alumni, and the wider Maseno community for preserving these historic landmarks for future generations. Nations that preserve their history preserve their identity.



Ladies and Gentlemen,

19. The graduates of Maseno School are known and respected across Kenya, Africa, and the world. This institution has produced distinguished leaders in public service, academia, science, diplomacy, business, religion, and public life.
20. Among its illustrious alumni are Kenya's first Vice-President Odinga, renowned scientist Prof Thomas Risley Odhiambo, Barrack Obama Senior, Prof David Wasawo, Prof Reuben Olemba, freedom fighter Achieng' Ouko, and many others whose contributions continue to shape society.
21. But perhaps Maseno's greatest distinction is not simply the prominence of its alumni. It is the culture of excellence the institution has sustained across generations.
22. While many schools rise and fall with seasons and circumstances, Maseno has consistently remained among the leading centres of academic excellence in Kenya. That consistency is not accidental. It is the product of culture, discipline, institutional pride, and an unwavering commitment to excellence.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

23. As Government, we do not regard investment in education as an expenditure; we treat it as the most strategic investment we can make in the future of our nation. Education is the engine that drives social mobility, economic transformation, innovation, and national progress. It is the foundation upon which the destiny of every great nation is built.



24. That is why we have consistently given priority to the education sector in our national budget. Today, nearly 30% of our budget is allocated to education, one of the highest commitments on the continent. The education budget has grown from KSh500 billion in 2022 to KSh702 billion in the current financial year, and will further rise to KSh767 billion in the 2026/2027 financial year.
25. These are not merely figures in a budget. They represent classrooms built, teachers employed, laboratories equipped, opportunities expanded, and dreams made possible for millions of young Kenyans.
26. We have made significant progress in addressing the teacher shortage by employing more than 100,000 teachers in just three years, one of the most ambitious teacher recruitment programmes in our nation's history.
27. At the same time, we are undertaking a major expansion of educational infrastructure across the country. So far, we have built more than 23,000 classrooms and are currently building 1,600 laboratories, particularly in areas where access to modern science infrastructure has historically been limited.
28. In this context, I have been informed that while Maseno's academic standing has continued to rise, some of its support infrastructure has not expanded at the same pace. This is a matter that deserves attention because institutions of this stature must be supported to match their historic mission and modern responsibilities.
29. We shall therefore work closely with the school administration, alumni, and stakeholders of Maseno School to upgrade its physical infrastructure so that it fully reflects its stature, heritage, and standing as one of Kenya's premier institutions of learning.



Ladies and gentlemen,

30. Even as we embrace the future, we shall continue drawing inspiration from institutions like Maseno School. The question before us is no longer whether Maseno School has a glorious past. History has already answered that question. The real question is whether institutions with such a powerful heritage, resilience, and intellectual tradition can help lead Africa into the future.
31. I believe they can, they should, and they will. I therefore urge the Maseno School community not to merely preserve its proud legacy, but to boldly shape the next frontier of African leadership, innovation, science, ethics, and public service.
32. The future of our continent will depend on institutions capable not only of transmitting knowledge but also of producing courageous thinkers, transformative leaders, and visionary citizens equipped to navigate and define the world of tomorrow.

I thank you.

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