



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 A SPECIAL RECEPTION IN HONOUR
OF WORLD MARATHON RECORD HOLDER SEBASTIAN
SAWE**

APRIL 30, 2026

STATE HOUSE, NAIROBI

01:59:30

**Our new World Marathon record holder, Sebastian Sawe,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

1. Moments such as this are exceedingly rare. They come, perhaps, once in a generation; sometimes only once in a lifetime.
2. What our very own Sebastian Sawe achieved last weekend on the streets of London - by running a marathon in under two hours - is not merely a sporting triumph; it is a defining moment in the story of human endurance.
3. Future generations will look back on 26 April, 2026, as the day a man broke through a physical and psychological barrier long thought insurmountable; and the name forever attached to that moment will be Sebastian Sawe.
4. To grasp the magnitude of this achievement, we must place it alongside the great milestones of human history: When Neil Armstrong set foot on the moon on 20 July, 1969; and when Roger Bannister shattered the four-minute mile on 6 May, 1954, an accomplishment once believed to be beyond human limits.
5. These moments did more than set records; they redefined possibility itself. They stretch the boundaries of belief, challenge doubt, inspire courage, and compel humanity to aim higher.
6. As Eliud Kipchoge so powerfully reminded us, no human is limited. In his own extraordinary way, Sebastian Sawe has given that truth new meaning.



7. We are truly privileged to have lived in this moment; to have witnessed history not only as a distant memory, but also as a present reality.
8. Sebastian, you have not only broken a record, you have expanded the horizon of human potential.
9. You have done what many believed could not be done. You have made the impossible possible. And in doing so, you have inspired a nation and the world.
10. What makes this accomplishment even more extraordinary is that, until just two years ago, you were not a marathoner. Yet since stepping onto the marathon stage in 2024, you have remained unbeaten. On your debut in Valencia, you recorded 2:02:05, the second-fastest debut in history.
11. From that moment, you have demonstrated rare consistency, unyielding discipline, and the mindset of a true champion. Your return to London to win again, and to set a new world record, confirms one enduring truth: You were destined for greatness.
12. Your victory also extends Kenya's proud and unbroken dominance in marathon running. For over a decade, our nation has held the world record - from Patrick Makau, who took it from Haile Gebrselassie in 2011, to the late Kelvin Kiptum, affirming beyond doubt that Kenya remains the true home of distance running excellence.



13. We take immense pride in this record of success. Our athletes are among our finest ambassadors, projecting the very best of our nation to the world. No amount of investment could secure the global recognition and positive image they so powerfully and consistently bring to Kenya.

Ladies and gentlemen,

14. Excellence like this does not happen by chance; it must be supported, nurtured, and sustained.
15. As Government, we are strengthening sports across the country to sustain this momentum. We are scaling up investment in talent development and building world-class sporting infrastructure.
16. We are building Talanta Stadium, a 60,000-seater facility that will host major events, including AFCON 2027. We have renovated Moi International Sports Centre, Kasarani, and Nyayo National Stadium, as well as other stadia across the country, to meet international standards. We are also constructing 25 additional stadia nationwide.
17. Recently, we signed a lease agreement between Zaria Group and Kenya Railways Corporation for the construction of a modern Arena and Entertainment District in Nairobi's central business district. This development will position the capital as a premier hub for sports, entertainment, culture, and commerce across East Africa and beyond.



18. At the grassroots, we are establishing Constituency Sports Academies to identify and nurture talent early. These academies will give young people access to quality training, modern facilities, and clear pathways into professional sport.
19. To strengthen governance, we are advancing the Sports Bill 2026, which proposes the establishment of a National Sports Regulatory Authority to ensure the highest standards across the sector.
20. We have also enhanced the reward framework for our athletes. Gold medal winners in athletics now receive KSh3 million, silver medalists KSh2 million, and bronze medalists KSh1 million.
21. For the Commonwealth Games, gold medal winners will now receive KSh2.5 million, silver medalists KSh1.5 million, and bronze medalists KSh1 million.
22. Daily allowances for athletes have been increased from \$60 to \$200, and for officials from \$80 to \$300 when representing the country abroad.
13. These measures are designed to support sports development and ensure that our young men and women have every opportunity to nurture and advance their talents.
14. By investing in sports and the creative economy, we are creating pathways for our youth to turn talent into sustainable livelihoods and meaningful careers.



15. As we celebrate this success, we also send our best wishes to Team Kenya, currently in Botswana for the World Relays Championships. The team is led by Ferdinand Omanyala alongside rising star Mercy Oketch. We are confident they will represent Kenya with distinction.
16. Once again, Sebastian, congratulations. You have made us proud; you have lifted our flag higher and shown the world the strength of the Kenyan spirit.
17. Above all, you have reminded us that what once seemed impossible is within reach if only we dare to believe in ourselves and pursue our highest aspirations with courage, consistency, and resolve.

I thank you.

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