



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY WILLIAM
RUTO, C.G.H.; PhD; PRESIDENT AND
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE KENYA DEFENCE
FORCES, AT A PRESS CONFERENCE WITH HIS
EXCELLENCY GENERAL UMARO SISSOCO
EMBALÓ, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
GUINEA-BISSAU, DURING THE STATE VISIT**

APRIL 5TH, 2024

BISSAU, GUINEA-BISSAU

Thank you very much for making it to this important milestone in the history of Kenya-Guinea-Bissau bilateral relations,

1. I take this opportunity to thank His Excellency Gen Umaro Sissoco Embalo for inviting me to undertake a State Visit to your great country, for the warm welcome my delegation and I have received in your beautiful city since our arrival and for the opportunity to have the bilateral meeting to discuss issues of mutual importance to both Kenya and Guinea Bissau.
2. Kenya and Guinea Bissau enjoy cordial bilateral relations anchored on a Memorandum of Understanding that established a Joint Commission for Cooperation (JCC), which was signed on 16th July 2022.
3. In our meeting, we noted that consultations are underway with a view to holding the inaugural JCC this year. The purpose of JCC will be to develop instruments to facilitate bilateral cooperation in diverse sectors of mutual interest, including security, agriculture and livestock, fisheries and the blue economy, environment and forestry. Others are capacity building for public servants at the Kenya School of Government, trade, health training and collaboration with the Kenya Medical Training College, tourism, air transport services, immigration, mining and education.
4. I have assured His Excellency of my personal support and the commitment of the Government of Kenya in making sure that the first meeting of the JCC is successful.



5. During our discussions, we noted the low volume of trade between our two countries and agreed that there is immense potential for Kenya and Guinea Bissau to achieve significant volumes of trade, especially because of the opportunities arising under the Africa Continental Free Trade Area Agreement.
6. We also noted the need for collaboration between the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry and its counterpart in Guinea Bissau as another avenue for greater trade cooperation between our two countries.
7. Additionally, His Excellency and I also discussed the importance of air transport services in enabling trade and people-to-people cooperation and agreed to strengthen air transport cooperation with Guinea Bissau. Consequently, our national carrier, Kenya Airways, will be encouraged to fly the Guinea-Bissau route as a way to enhance trade and investment between our two countries and the larger West Africa market.
8. Further, His Excellency and I have discussed the ways by which Kenya and Guinea Bissau can collaborate in the agriculture sector in order to address food security challenges. Some include facilitating contract farming and provision of seedlings, livestock breeds, experts and agricultural extension officers.
9. His Excellency and I also explored our two countries' tremendous potential in the fisheries sector and the need to explore the opportunities in the blue economy. Possible areas of cooperation include the sustainable management of fisheries, protection of marine biodiversity, innovatively fighting sea pollution, the promotion of environmental sustainability and stronger international cooperation in the blue economy.



10. As you already know, Kenya and Guinea-Bissau have a shared vision for peace, security and stability. We therefore have an opportunity to collaborate under various multilateral frameworks, including by way of sharing intelligence to ensure that peace and security are enhanced in our respective regions, Africa in general and the world at large. The establishment of a Security Cooperation Agreement between our two countries will therefore provide an excellent framework for deeper cooperation.
11. I look forward to working closely with His Excellency on continental matters, in my role as the Champion of the African Union Institutional Reforms, a responsibility that was bestowed on me during the 37th Ordinary Session of the Heads of States and Government. This support will be crucial as we strive to restructure the various AU organs, conclude division of labour between the African Union Commission Organs, Specialised Agencies and Regional Economic Communities, and streamline the agenda of the AU Assembly to effectively cover strategic issues.
12. In reforming the AU, it will be crucial to centralise the position of the Pan-African Parliament as the people's representatives to provide oversight over the Executive and accountability in the organisation.
13. It will also be necessary to operationalise the African Court of Justice as a means to create institutions for making the AU a fit-for-purpose organisation.



14. Additionally, His Excellency is aware that the African Union Executive Council unanimously adopted a crucial decision declaring it is the turn of the Eastern Africa region to submit candidates for the position of the African Union Commission Chairperson.
15. I thank His Excellency most sincerely for accepting to support Kenya's candidature for the position of AUC Chairperson for the 2025-2028 period. Kenya's candidature is informed by the role we play in enhancing and sustaining the Pan-African agenda. We hope to work with all member States in the African Union's endeavour to achieve Agenda 2063.
16. During our discussions, I informed my dear brother that Kenya will be hosting the World Bank's 21st International Development Association (IDA21) of the World Bank in Nairobi this month on April 28-29, 2024. This is an important meeting for raising concessional financing for the least developed countries. I thank His Excellency for accepting my invitation to attend the meeting. His ideas, suggestions and insights will be useful.

Thank you.

