



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY HON. DR.
WILLIAM SAMOEI RUTO, C.G.H. PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA AND COMMANDER-IN-
CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCES DURING THE
ANNUAL CITIZEN'S FESTIVAL IN BERLIN**

SEPTEMBER 13, 2024

BERLIN, GERMANY



**H.E. President Dr. Frank Steinmeier & the First Lady
H.E. Elke Büdenbender,
Citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.
Hamjambo! Guten Abend**

1. I bring you warm greetings from the people of Kenya, with whom the German people have had continuous relations for longer than our two nations have enjoyed diplomatic ties. Dr Johann Ludwig Krapf and the Rev Johannes Rebmann were the first Europeans to explore Kenya's deep interior and experience the splendour of Africa's second-highest peak, the majestic snow-capped Mt Kenya. Since then, we have never looked back, and the people of Kenya and Germany have done much and achieved a lot together.
2. It is therefore a delightful privilege to be with you today as we celebrate values which define a people: Culture, the spirit of volunteerism and community, at this Annual Citizens' Festival. I thank the people and government of Germany, the President and the First Lady, for inviting us to take part in this festival, for welcoming us so warmly, and for making it possible for Kenya to participate as this year's profile partner country.
3. We are honoured by this acknowledgement of our deep and strong bonds, and our shared recognition that culture is a powerful means of promoting unity and deepening understanding among diverse peoples.



4. Both Kenya and Germany are incredibly diverse nations which, from the earliest days, recognised the imperative of national unity that transcends differences and harnesses diversity to generate the driving force of progress in every field of national endeavour. Our partnerships across numerous sectors testify to the power of culture in defining a people's developmental trajectory, and the vast opportunities that are created through partnership, collaboration and cooperation.
5. This is why 'together' is such a potent expression when applied to human endeavour. Everything in the world becomes easier in direct proportion to the degree in which we do it together. Dr Krapf wrote the first German-Kiswahili dictionary. In Kiswahili, "together" is "Pamoja".
6. I thank you for the inspired theme of this year's festival, which clearly describes its essence in terms of the shared values that bind our nations and peoples, and which our global community needs now more than ever. "Pamoja- Stronger Together" invites us to appreciate the power, richness and possibilities which diversity brings to the table, and reminds us that in the age of globalisation, the ability to embrace our differences increasingly determines our capacity to grow, compete, and succeed. Kenya, like Germany, is enriched by its diversity.
7. It is appropriate that this year's event coincides with the 60th anniversary of Kenyan-German diplomatic relations, which have laid the foundations for us to anchor our enduring friendship which, as I have pointed out, goes back much farther
8. We are delighted to have this opportunity, here at the Bellevue Palace, to showcase our culture, whose diversity has been the foundation of our nation's resilience, innovativeness and dynamism.



9. Kenya is a land of extraordinary cultural richness, a tapestry woven from the unique threads of over 40 distinct ethnic communities which live in harmony, in a land of equally breathtaking geographical diversity. If you travel about 800km across Kenya from the west to the east, you will see Africa's largest and the world's second-largest freshwater lake, and its beautiful catchment basin, ascend the western escarpments of the Great Rift Valley up to our lush and forested western highlands, witness the magical sights of the Rift Valley, with its lakes and volcanic mountains. As you ascend its eastern escarpments, you will be privileged to behold Mt. Kenya in its towering majesty, before descending through Kenya's baobab-strewn eastern plains, the *Nyika* or plateau, to the sandy beaches of our Indian Ocean coast.
10. On this journey, you will experience an equally spectacular variety of natural fauna and flora and if you venture northwards, you will find the Chalbi Desert and the surrounding arid and semi-arid rangelands, while venturing southwards will take you to the grasslands of the Tsavo and Mara which teem with big game.
11. Through tolerant, harmonious interaction, every community contributes to the strength of our national unity project through unique traditions, language and customs, creating the vibrant mosaic that defines our national identity. From the Maasai warriors of the savannah to the Swahili, our diversity literally represents our collective strength as a nation.
12. Because of our long experience, we firmly believe in the enduring power of culture to deepen national unity and sovereignty, enhance regional and international cooperation, foster multiculturalism and promote peaceful coexistence throughout the world.



Kenya is committed to deploying the power of cultural diplomacy to facilitate dialogue and solidarity within and between countries. Our engagement in this respect promotes our rich culture and also fosters collaboration with other nations.

13. Kenya also recognises cultural diversity as a key driver of sustainable development. We believe that we all share the responsibility to cultivate a global environment where cultural dialogue thrives, paving the way for a more inclusive and harmonious world.
14. As we commemorate 60 years of our diplomatic relations, we are reminded that our cultural heritage is not merely a relic of the past but a living, breathing part of our daily existence. Our heritage is also the bedrock of our identity and a firm foundation upon which we build a future that respects the positive legacies of our past while embracing the promise of tomorrow.
15. Kenya is a unique place in the history of human fossil-rich sites like Turkana and the Great Rift Valley, which have provided invaluable insights into the origins of our species. These discoveries remind us that despite our diverse backgrounds, we all share a common ancestry. Archaeological and other scientific authorities have converged on the robust consensus that the East African savannah was the place where the ancestors of modern humans first lived. In particular, the Lake Turkana Basin has been identified as the site where the first modern human lived, leading scientists to label it as the **cradle of mankind** .
16. One of the highlights of Kenya's exhibition at this festival is the **Turkana Boy**, a 1.6-million-year-old nearly complete skeleton of Homo Erectus. Studied by scientists worldwide, this discovery has enabled humanity to obtain valuable information about our forebears.



17. There is no doubt, therefore, that Kenya is the very first home of the very first human beings to walk this earth. We are proud, therefore, to welcome all people throughout the world, back home, because, in every sense, Kenya is the Home of Humanity. The Turkana community's expression for "Welcome home!" is "Tobong'u Lore"
18. We are also grateful that this Citizens Festival has provided us with a platform to showcase the work of **the Ushanga Initiative**, a fair-trade beadwork enterprise by women and youth from pastoralist communities. Each bead represents a story of cross-border collaboration and, through these collective efforts, we advance a vision of inclusive growth and cultural exchange. This initiative is a testimony how Kenya and Germany's intersecting paths contribute to a stronger, more resilient world.
19. In a world that is frequently pulled apart by the impulses of fragmentation and polarisation, gatherings like the Annual Citizen's Festival are a powerful reminder that humanity has another way; a better way of facing the future. This festival shows that we can unlock infinite possibilities through collaboration. This is the message underscored by the diverse range of activities, including music, creative performances and roundtable discussions, which reflect the promise in the inclusivity and dynamism of our communities, the promise of our bilateral community and the grander possibilities in the universal community of humanity.
20. I encourage us all to celebrate humanity, community, culture and diversity in this festival, and to reflect every day on how we can play a role in promoting the spirit of philanthropy.



Let us create more opportunities for people to get involved and contribute our part in ensuring that the voices of volunteers are heard, shared and valued. This is the best way to build a more inclusive and compassionate society.

21. As we enjoy the festivities, let us remember that the spirit of **"Pamoja"** does not end here. It is a call to action, a reminder that we are all part of something greater than ourselves. As members of one global family, our destinies are intertwined; what matters to any one of us matters to every one of us. Our future, the future of our planet and of humanity, depends on our ability to recognise our common interest and the power we give ourselves when we stand together and act as one.
22. If we commit to go forward together, I am confident that the next chapter of Kenya-Germany collaboration will be even more inspiring. Let us move into the future as one, propelled by the power of our unity, the strength in our diversity and our common aspirations because **"Pamoja"** - stronger **together** - we are unstoppable!

Thank you and enjoy the festival!

