



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY WILLIAM RUTO,  
C.G.H.; PhD; PRESIDENT AND COMMANDER-IN-  
CHIEF OF THE KENYA DEFENCE FORCES, DURING  
THE CEREMONY FOR CONFERMENT OF CITY  
STATUS TO THE CITY OF ELDORET**

**AUGUST 15, 2024**

**ELDORET SPORTS CLUB, ELDORET CITY**

**The residents of Uasin Gishu County**  
**Governor, Uasin Gishu County**  
**Members of the Uasin Gishu County Executive**  
**The Speaker of the County Assembly**  
**Honourable Members of the Uasin Gishu County**  
**Assembly,**  
**Distinguished Guests,**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. We are all gathered here to participate in and witness an event of singular importance, and the culmination of more than a century of growth not just in Eldoret town, but in Uasin Gishu and the entire North Rift region of the country. Eldoret is one of Kenya's oldest towns, and the site of events and institutions of tremendous historical significance, not only for the county but also for our nation.
2. An important facet of Kenya's political and economic history is encapsulated in the urban centre famously nick-named '64', because of Plot Number 64 on which stood the Eldoret Railway Station. We all know the role played by the Uganda Railway in our country's economic, political and cultural history and the dramatic changes our communities underwent after the advent of colonial settlement.
3. As a result of its early promise as a major economic hub in East Africa, Eldoret attracted traders, workers and professionals from far and wide, who settled here, contributed to its economic growth and built a cosmopolitan population whose diversity has been the secret ingredient to Eldoret's vigour and perpetual dynamism. This place bears visible imprints of the legacy of people from India, southern Africa and Britain, as well as every Kenyan community, who settled here and made it their home.



4. Over nearly a century, Eldoret has undergone dramatic transformation, growing from a sleepy farming centre to a bustling metropolis that is the face of Kenya, a home for all and a city of the future. It has established itself as a recognised hub for serious investments in agro-industrial and agribusiness, medical and biomedical, trade and commerce, tourism and hospitality, sporting and entertainment, and finance and technological concerns.
5. This event affords us an occasion to reflect on and celebrate the positive impact of devolution. In just one decade, Uasin Gishu County took over from the Eldoret Municipality and Wareng County Council, overseeing a transformation that has made a compelling case for Eldoret to finally join Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, and Nakuru as Kenya's fifth city. Devolution has enabled Uasin Gishu to harness the immense potential of the agriculturally rich and resource-endowed hinterland throughout the North Rift and to catalyse the ambition and energy of Eldoret's business community to deliver impressive growth.
6. Eldoret ascends to city status at a time when 50% of humanity lives and work in urban areas, making the 21st Century an urban century. As the city of champions, it is essential that Eldoret focuses on the great opportunities and significant challenges ahead, not only because the future is urban, but also because it has what it takes to emerge as the ultimate city of the future.
7. Today, therefore, is also our moment to reflect on the efforts we have made, and the commitment and determination it will take to make Eldoret a smart, livable city that will thrive like a champion in a complex and rapidly changing present and future.



We need to harness our people's initiative, dedication, and industry to leverage technology and transform this city's and county's potential to provide residents with a high-quality urban experience while offering investors, professionals, and entrepreneurs an attractive environment to produce competitively.

8. We must also celebrate the people who have participated in turning Eldoret into the veritable city that it has become over the years. We honour these sons and daughters for their tenacious work, foresight and unending commitment to the idea that was originally FARM no. 64 to now the fifth city of the Republic of Kenya.
9. The future development and prosperity of this city lie in the strategic framework laid down by the county through its planning, policy and regulations, as well as other mechanisms that must deliver a safe, orderly, ecologically sustainable and efficient city that promotes the dignity and well-being of residents and communities. The new city must also foster an economic environment which provides opportunities and a business climate that rewards enterprises which bring their investments here.
10. The performance of any urban area depends on the degree of focus with which its leadership and professionals engage with the critical matter of spatial and urban planning, as this is the only means of achieving orderly, functional, and efficient cities. It is also greatly determined by the level of success in implementing devolution, establishing effective county government structures, and the efficiency of resource mobilisation and expenditure by county governments. The forthcoming regulations under the Urban Areas and Cities Act are intended to further enhance the governance and management of urban areas.



11. At the same time, ongoing partnerships and collaborations have enabled us to make progress in identifying and addressing critical priorities related to urban governance, infrastructure development and the development of mechanisms to promote development and sustainability. I have in mind such initiatives as the Kenya Urban Programme (KenUP) and the Kenya Urban Support Programme Phase Two, which represent a cumulative investment of \$1.35 billion aimed at creating livable cities. Eldoret will benefit significantly from these initiatives, which focus on infrastructural investments such as waste management, connectivity and socio-economic infrastructure.
12. Similarly, Eldoret is also benefiting from various National Government projects, including the ongoing construction of the Eldoret Central Market. Additionally, we are making significant investments to radically transform living conditions in informal settlements under the Kenya Informal Settlements Improvement Programme (KISIP), which will deliver substantial impacts on investment, security, and quality of life.
13. These and many other programs and projects are part of our agenda to reignite the creative, productive, and competitive energy in the City of Champions, giving Kenyans the best chance of winning the race to the future. At the same time, we must remain mindful of the need to address urban vulnerabilities to climate change. This is why the Department of Housing and Urban Development has identified 580 hotspots where we will urgently implement climate resilience programs aimed at protecting the urban vulnerable from the adverse impacts of climate change.



14. I have been following with great interest the work that has prepared Eldoret for city status, and I am satisfied that the leadership, professional commitment and collaborative spirit invested in the proceedings are a sign of good things to come for the City of Champions. It is important that we provide a conducive environment for everyone - from the county assembly and executive to professionals in national and county governments, business community, investors and the residents of Eldoret and Uasin Gishu County - to give their best and give Kenya a city worthy of a gold medal. What you have done so far is commendable, and you must now proceed together to the next higher step.
  
15. I commend the people of Uasin Gishu, members of the Uasin Gishu County Assembly and Executive members, as well as the business and investment community, professionals and every worker and hustler, for their invaluable support and countless hours of effort to make this transition successful.
  
16. It is now my singular honour and pleasant duty, by the authority vested in me by Section 12 of the Urban Areas and Cities Act, to officially confer city status upon the City of Eldoret.

**Congratulations.**

**Thank you,  
God bless you,  
God bless Kenya.**

