



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**REMARKS BY H.E. HON. WILLIAM RUTO, PHD.,
CGH., PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA
AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE
FORCES, DURING THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF
YOUTUBE BLACK VOICES**

JUNE 13TH, 2023

STATE HOUSE, KENYA

- **ALEX OKOSI, MANAGING DIRECTOR, YOUTUBE EMERGING MARKETS,**
- **AGNES GATHAIYA, COUNTRY DIRECTOR GOOGLE KENYA AND EAST AFRICA,**
- **Distinguished YouTubers,**

Good afternoon!

1. Over the past century, “new” regions emerged as players in world affairs, new nations were born and there was an unprecedented population explosion. For a while, it seemed as though humanity was going to crash against the cliffs of eternal crisis, at a rate that was beyond all control, and it was predicted that international misunderstanding and conflict as well as human suffering were going to be the order of the day.
2. Obviously, this view was based on an old ‘culture clash’ paradigm which predicted constant friction among established ‘civilisations’, as well as between dominant and emerging powers primarily on the basis of cultural differences which could only accentuate conflict over resources, markets and boundaries.



3. In the second decade of the 21st century, the United Nations has 193 members, and the predominant condition throughout the world is peace. For the greatest measure, the nations and people of the world can be described as a global or international community. How the idea of a single, far-flung community, a human collective defined by shared values arose to retire the gloomy predictions of worldwide chaos, is the miracle of our time.
4. Much of the credit for the fostering of human understanding across boundaries, continents, and oceans, which is the necessary condition for the emergence of a substantive global community, is the technological revolution based on global telecommunications connectivity, which positively transformed the world for good. In particular, the rise of the Internet, which transformed the world into a Global Village.
5. Every village has its public square, with robust infrastructures to maximise interaction and exchange. There are market platforms for the exchange of goods and services, and discursive forums for debate and expression.
6. With the rise of information, entertainment, and education over time, the infrastructures of expression have become markets in their own right. In the village square, freedom



reigns supreme. People have to enjoy the greatest freedom and opportunity to imagine, create and express their ideas, to connect and collaborate, to exchange everything, from goods and services to opportunity itself. In the global village square information is both a vital service and a valuable commodity, facilitating trade and exchange, knowledge and ideas, partnership and collaboration, creativity and innovation.

7. The rise of YouTube is both a driver and manifestation of this fundamental development. From the revolutionary online video-sharing platform it was when it made its debut on the village square, YouTube now engages **2.5 billion** viewers every month, who consume more than a billion hours of video daily. Operated mainly by individuals, YouTube is an extraordinarily prodigious platform, offering music videos news video clips, short and feature films, songs, documentaries and trailers, live streams and vlogs, among others. In 2021, the platform generated **USD 29 billion** in revenue. The users who upload more than **500 hours** of content every minute earn a share of this revenue. As a result, YouTube has become a major employer with many creatives finding more than decent livelihoods on it.



8. By enabling content creators to monetize their channels and generate incomes through advertising revenue, brand partnerships and merchandise sales, YouTube has empowered these individuals to become entrepreneurs by leveraging their content to build viable businesses, embrace innovation and engage with an ecosystem of creative opportunities.

9. The impact is considerable. Using the measure of 100,000 units of respective local currencies in revenue, we can witness what this intervention has achieved in Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa. Year-on-year, the number of creators generating 100k monthly has risen by more than 15% Nigeria, while in South Africa, the figure is double at 30% and here in Kenya, 25%. The growth in the number of channels with more than a million subscribers is also impressive: Nigeria more than 50%, South Africa over 30% and Kenya more than 110%.

10. I applaud YouTube for its endeavour to boldly confront the challenging cultural issues of the day. As a repository of the world's cultural heritage, it is the custodian of the global village's record of contests, festivals, rites and ceremonies, traditions, music, dance as well as many other traditions. This promotes easy cultural exchange as the content is accessible



across cultures. It also showcases emerging creators whose work enriches the world's cultural output.

11. Black and African contributions have defined and dominated art and culture throughout history, and it is important, not only that the fact of this influence is faithfully reflected, but also that global platforms are inclusive and fully represent the world's cultural diversity.
12. I applaud YouTube's **#YouTubeBlackVoices** Fund for investing in the expansion of opportunities to celebrate and promote Black art and creativity worldwide. Justice can only be said to be realised when artistic, creative, and expressive freedoms are enriched through deliberate affirmative interventions to correct historical imperfections of the village market.
13. Impressively, the **#YouTubeBlackVoices** Fund invested USD 100 million into dedicated mechanisms to identify and develop Black creators and Black music on YouTube by facilitating their access to resources to develop their capacity. These include the provision of a **partner-manager**, seed **funding** for YouTube channel development as well as customized **training**, development and networking to **378**



creators globally from diverse professional backgrounds including musicians, beauticians, entrepreneurs, comedians, activists, poets, personal trainers, parents, photographers, gamers and more. This is highly commendable.

14. As a country, we are proud that over 100 YouTubers from Nigeria, South Africa, Canada, the UK and Kenya, are congregated in Nairobi, the host city of the global closing ceremony for the 2023 **#YouTubeBlackVoices** Fund. We welcome you to enjoy the magical delights, charming hospitality and natural beauty of Kenya as you witness for yourself what **YouTube** is doing for our **vibrant-creative and digital economy**, and contributing to our **bottom-up agenda for economic transformation**.

15. Apart from **#YouTubeBlackVoices** Fund, I appreciate with profound gratitude Google's support in enhancing the digital superhighway and creative economy pillar of our transformational agenda. In particular, I am grateful for your support for our plan to provide **25,000 free wi-fi hotspots** across the country, and the investment of USD **5 million** to enable 90 government institutions like hospitals, courts of law and technical and vocational training institutions install **local area networks**, and to connect



them to the **national fibre-optic backbone infrastructure.**

16. Google's giant footprints in our digital and ICT infrastructure development are impressive, and extend further to include **Grow with Google**, which provides free training resources to enable individuals develop necessary digital skills to succeed in the digital economy, **Hustle Academy** and the famous week-long boot camp for **small and medium-sized businesses**, under which more than 1000 graduated last year, with 1,500 currently being trained.
17. Additionally, flexible online training programmes which provide job-ready skills in high-growth career fields are being offered online. In this connection, we have provided 1,000 scholarships through the ICT Authority to support training in **digital marketing, e-commerce, data analytics, IT support, project management, user experience design and cybersecurity.**
18. This highly impactful partnership goes back all the way to 2018, when in collaboration with the First Lady (now, not then; and congratulations to her!), as patron of the **Google Impact Challenge**, Google.org provided



over **Ksh.12million** to support the training of local creatives under the **Creatives Garage**.

19. I look back on the journey we have travelled with Google with tremendous pride and satisfaction, grateful for the immense opportunities our partnership has unlocked for many creative Kenyans. Affirmed by these achievements, I also look forward to greater collaboration to catalyse the **Digital Superhighway and Creative Economy** pillar of our **bottom-up economic transformation agenda**.

20. The tremendous potential showcased by YouTube, and underscored by the impact of the **#YouTubeBlackVoices** Fund similarly encourage me in my firm conviction that Kenya, Africa and the world are about to see an unprecedented explosion of creativity and productivity, leading to exponential growth of wealth creation and deeper understanding among the people of the world. We are happy that the journey has begun and that we are part of it.

I declare the 2023 #YouTubeBlackVoices officially closed.

Thank you.

God bless you.

