



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**REMARKS BY H.E. HON. WILLIAM SAMOEI RUTO,  
PhD, C.G.H. PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
KENYA AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE  
DEFENCE FORCES DURING THE COMMISSIONING  
CEREMONY OF MV UHURU II**

**OCTOBER 9TH, 2023**

**KENYA SHIPYARDS LIMITED, KISUMU COUNTY**

## Good Afternoon

1. This is a salient milestone in our historic journey of national transformation. The event, by itself, is extraordinary and the venue is significant in a couple of critical ways.
2. The commissioning of **MV Uhuru II** is another encouraging achievement which demonstrates the rapid maturation of our national shipbuilding industry and highlights its dynamic capacity to undertake different important assignments and deliver various types of vessels for diverse markets.
3. In May, I presided over the rededication of **KNS Shupavu**, the first naval ship to undergo a mid-life refit in Kenya, which proved the capacity of **Kenya Shipyards** to undertake complex engineering tasks requiring specialized scientific and technological expertise.
4. Today, we are commissioning a wholly newly-built merchant marine vessel, once again demonstrating the ability of the **Kenya Shipyards** to build, repair and maintain ships for local and regional operators.
5. The work of building **MV Uhuru II** and upgrading the Kisumu Shipyard has been undertaken by Kenyan professionals in a project which provided many young people with practical shipbuilding skills through apprenticeship and on-the-job training, and was completed within **24 months**, and well within



its budget. For these remarkable feats, I commend the entire **Kenya Shipyards** team for once again exhibiting admirable professionalism and the highest standards in their work.

6. I am proud to note that the **Kenya Shipyards** is quickly emerging as a leader in high-quality shipbuilding for our local and regional needs. Consequently, the **Kenya Shipyards** have been contracted to repair and maintain ships for government ministries, departments and agencies, including the **Kenya Coast Guard Services, the Kenya Ports Authority, the Kenya Maritime Authority, the Kenya Marine Fisheries Research Institute** and private operators in the **Indian Ocean** coast as well as **Lake Victoria**.
7. There is no doubt, therefore, that the **Kenya Shipyards** is emerging as a centre of shipbuilding and maritime excellence and is poised to become Kenya's strategic anchor in the development of our **Blue Economy**.
8. This event is therefore important as a critical component of the national agenda to catalyse the growth of the **Blue Economy** by channelling technology as well as local and foreign direct investment into a diverse industrial ecosystem with distinct clusters assembled around shipbuilding. To the extent that our **bottom-up economic transformation agenda** recognizes the **Blue Economy** as a vital component of a sustainable



national economic growth strategy, shipbuilding occupies an essential place in national development.

9. The place where this event takes place is also highly important. We can all agree today that the Nyanza region is going to play a leading role in the bottom-up economic transformation agenda, not only because it typifies our national potential as a country, but also because it is endowed with the capacity to make unique contributions to growth and development.
10. The region is an undisputed leader in the production of crops like cotton, rice, oil seed, sorghum, sweet potato and its famous crop: sugar cane. We have invested in mechanization and extension services, together with the revival of irrigation projects, and are collaborating with county governments to support farmers through the provision of subsidized inputs.
11. This is why we are confident that an economic renaissance, powered by agro-industrial revival is underway in the region. This will certainly lead to a renewed vibrancy of our ancient lakeside market (*Kesumo, Osumo*) where the communities of our region gathered to conduct barter exchange of highly needed commodities.
12. Kisumu has not just been a centre of activity for local communities, it has served as a key regional port city which drives and is driven by activity within



Lake Victoria, the heartbeat of our East African region. Lake Victoria plays a primary role in our region's blue economy in terms of **fisheries** and, the provision of vital **transportation** links between Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, keeping our regional community cohesive.

13. Through its shipbuilding, maintenance and operations capacity, the Kisumu Shipyards is set to provide indispensable support for the regional economic take-off of the Lake Victoria basin by facilitating fisheries and maritime transport. By driving the regional economy around Lake Victoria, the Shipyards will therefore contribute to regional integration and the economic transformation of East Africa.
14. I encourage all county governments within the Lake Victoria basin to identify and develop economic opportunities directly and indirectly arising from the shipyard's activities. As we go forward, I encourage the National Treasury and the Kenya Shipyards to explore a **public-private partnership** model that will expand the shipyard's capital base and enhance its capacity to undertake larger commercial ventures to make a stronger contribution to national revenues, job creation, skills and technology transfer.
15. Technology and skills transfer are critical for the development of competitive capacity in such complex technical fields as shipping. The Kenya Shipyards has benefited immensely from the technical support



made possible by its collaboration with **Damen Gorinchem** during the construction of **MV Uhuru II**. The success of this project, and the standard of the vessel we are about to commission, is an excellent testament of the technology transfer and capacity building made possible by the collaboration.

16. As the MV Uhuru II sails the waters of Lake Victoria, it will be a symbol of our region's collective dream of a brighter future made possible through partnership and collaboration, a reminder that our journey towards economic transformation will require consistency and high standards and proof that we can deliver above expectations.

**17. I wish MV Uhuru II, its captain and crew, Fair Winds and Following Seas, as they do their part to keep the engine of our regional economy running.**

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

