



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. WILLIAM SAMOEI RUTO, PhD, CGH, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES, DURING THE FLAG-OFF OF THE WRC SAFARI RALLY

MARCH 28TH, 2024

KICC, NAIROBI



**Mr. Rodrigo Rocha, The FIA Vice-president for Sports – Africa,
Esteemed rally drivers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. I am proud to officiate at the official launch of the 71st anniversary edition of the World Rallying Championship Safari Rally, which is yet another opportunity for our country to host the world's toughest motorsport contest and underscore the depth of our heritage in this sport. This iconic showpiece has quickly risen to its full potential as a present and future global elite sporting event.
2. In particular, the return of the Safari Rally to Kenya in 2019 after nearly two decades, reminds us of the special Easter message, of the possibility of radical revival of our fortunes, the spectacular return of Kenya to the global motorsport stage, and the gift of the opportunity to showcase to the world the unique scenic beauty and touristic diversity of our nation.
3. The Safari Rally's global impact cannot be overstated. Through the years, it has remained in the lead as the WRC broadcasts in over **150 countries** around the world. Last year, it attracted an encouraging viewership of **80 million**, and this year, we expect it to do even better and **reach 100 million**.
4. Along with the universal excitement with which the rally is charged, we must recognize the other beneficial economic effects that accrue as a consequence of events of this magnitude. The surge in the number of visitors to the country and to the venues intensifies media coverage of our country's attractiveness, and the global attention generated by the WRC provides a definite and major boost to our economy, boosting incomes for local businesses, increasing direct and indirect jobs, and attracting local and foreign investment in tourism, catering and accommodation infrastructure, facilities and services, thereby injecting billions of shillings into the economy, in keeping with the strategic vision set out in the **bottom-up economic transformation agenda**.



5. For the people of Kenya, the WRC Safari Rally is a truly special Easter holiday gift for families and other groups to bond over a thrilling spectacle. For millions of people across the globe, the rally is a captivating showpiece where human skill and endurance, together with the epitome of rugged automotive technology are put to the test on the daunting terrain of Naivasha's glorious landscape.
6. The prestige of this event arises from the rich history of the Safari Rally, the raw beauty of its setting, the competition's incomparably challenging course, and our capacity to organise world-class sporting shows that affirm to the world our profile as a sporting powerhouse with prowess that extends beyond athletics. Kenya's position as a top destination for motorsports is placed beyond debate by the Safari Rally: you simply cannot find a Rally as tough, compelling, beautiful and rewarding, as the Safari Rally.
7. I take this opportunity to express deep gratitude to the International Automobile Federation for its decision to reinstate Kenya to the World Rallying Championship calendar, making the Safari Rally one of 13 events spanning Europe, the Americas, Africa, and Asia. For our part, we have done our utmost to deliver yet another exhilarating edition of the Safari Rally after a successful event last year.
8. We are therefore thoroughly prepared to receive rally enthusiasts from around the world, greet them with the epic contest of high-speed racing, and treat them to the warmth, hospitality and generosity of the Kenyan people.
9. I encourage all Kenyans to come out in large numbers and support our teams and celebrate Easter in style. Let us join together in welcoming all our visitors to Magical Kenya, the beautiful country of humanity's first home. To all our visitors from near and far: **welcome home!**
10. **The 2024 WRC Safari Rally is officially launched.**

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

