



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. WILLIAM SAMOEI RUTO, C.G.H. THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA AND THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCES DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE AMAZON WEB SERVICES (AWS) DEVELOPMENT CENTRE**

**OCTOBER 4TH, 2023**

**KOFISI, WESTLANDS, NAIROBI**

## **Distinguished Guests,**

### **Good Morning;**

1. This launch of the Amazon Web Services (AWS) Development Centre is an important event for several reasons. First, Amazon has chosen Kenya as the base from which to extend its global and African footprint, which affirms our country as an attractive global investment destination, recognizes our progress in consolidating Kenya's global and continental leadership in the field of information and communication technology and endorses our national digital transformation agenda.
2. The second reason is that Amazon clearly recognizes the opportunities that abound at the intersection of our Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda and its fundamental enabler, technology in general, and digital information and communication technology in particular.
3. Thirdly, this event makes it clear that Amazon has a strong interest in bringing opportunities for job creation and skills development in highly productive and competitive emerging fields, within the reach of Kenyans and, in fact, right here in Kenya.
4. Kenya has emerged as one of the most exciting frontiers of global tech competitiveness, with high revolutionary potential across all sectors. It makes tremendous sense for a leading player in the global technology space to secure its presence in the market by significantly enhancing its visibility and vigour.



5. At the same time, I must recognize as a starting point that this move by Amazon will make Kenya the second African hub from which its teams will be developing solutions for partners throughout the world, and from where it will support all its customers spread across the globe. The centre will, therefore, necessarily entail the creation of numerous new, highly skilled job opportunities in various critical areas, including software development, cloud support, telecommunications and software engineering.
6. Africa is rapidly emerging as a tremendous single market of over 1.4 billion people and the next frontier of global industrial revolution. With a median age of 19, and with their education, skills and enterprising spirit, young Africans are prepared to power unprecedented global growth which, with the right investments – like Amazon’s- will take advantage of our continent’s other natural advantages like natural resource wealth and green energy potential, to lead the world in greening opportunity, growth and prosperity, and thus guarantee a sustainable future for humanity.
7. It is therefore a good idea to be here in Africa as this new era of global transformation unfolds. Even better, it is brilliant to be in Kenya, the geostrategic gateway to East Africa, Horn of Africa, Great Lakes and Central African region as well as the continent at large, in order to optimize your footprint. Kenya is also the gateway of 6 global fibre-optic lines and has taken off as the vibrant pioneering epicenter of African research and development, technology and innovation: the Silicon Savannah.
8. Earlier this year, during the American Chamber of Commerce event in Nairobi, I made a strong win-win case for American firms to choose Kenya in their own best strategic and business interests, and in the interest of our Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda, citing the policy and institutional



arrangements that we have laid down to make it possible, easy and advantageous to choose Kenya. I reiterated this message a few day ago when I joined the Kenya Investment Roadshow in the Silicon Valley, San Francisco.

9. I also held discussions with AWS executives in New York at the Kenya Mission to the United Nations, where we agreed on sustaining the development of a conducive business environment for them to expand their investment in Kenya.
10. I reaffirm my commitment to follow through with the undertakings I gave, and to go further and take measures necessary to ensure that the policy framework on which the digital technology ecosystem stands, is a tide that lifts all boats; local as well as international.
11. In our engagement, the urgent imperative to create employment and training opportunities in Kenya through this investment emerged as the foremost shared priority, in line with the Digital Superhighway and Creative Economy pillar of our Plan.
12. Accordingly, the potential is immense. Amazon Web Services is not just about mere presence in the regional market; it is intentional about bolstering its corporate citizenship credentials through its support for a robust framework to anchor optimal interactions between government, clients, start-ups and other partners.
13. For example, through its infrastructures, first, AWS Edge Location and then AWS Local Zones and later, AWS Outposts, Amazon has ensured that users, both in metropolitan areas as well as those farther afield, experience connectivity with maximum efficiency and minimum delay.



14. This commitment to the infrastructures of connectivity has proved critical not only because Amazon is undertaking transformational interventions in the fields of health, education and training as well as digital jobs and self-employment opportunities, but it is also committed to do so inclusively.
15. By collaborating with various government ministries, AWS has been able to deliver unique and game-changing solutions in various sectors. For example, with the ministries of ICT and Health, it developed and hosted a cloud-based data application, the Centre for Epidemiological Modeling and Analysis (CEMA), which used data to contain the spread of COVID-19 in Kenya.
16. Together with universities and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions, AWS has been able to implement free, ready-to-teach, cloud computing curriculums to enable students prepare for recognized AWS certification and jobs that are in demand throughout the industry.
17. Similarly, the AWS Re-Start, a 12-week program to prepare unemployed or underemployed people for careers in cloud computing, has partnered with Ajira, Emobilis and Get-Innotized to empower hundreds of young people across the country, including those living in the refugee camps of Dadaab and Kakuma.
18. In the field of Health, I must recognize the unique and transformative pathways made possible by AWS. Huron, an Amazon client, has piloted its health application locally by leveraging AWS cloud credits, in order to provide text-based follow-up support for cancer patients by connecting oncologists at the Jaramogi Oginga Odinga Teaching and Referral Hospital, in a partnership with the county government



of Kisumu that now serves over 5,000 patients. This partnership is exemplary and truly transformative.

19. Throughout Kenya, in every sector, community and level of government, the transformative potential of digital technology has been experienced by ordinary people, thanks to the possibilities unlocked through the AWS in developing solutions and bringing opportunities closer.
20. This is the promise we wish to nurture here and share throughout our continent, because research, development and innovation, as well as digital technology, hold the key to the future of African socioeconomic transformation.
21. The most salient feature of true digital transformation is that it is inclusive. We are committed to ensuring that no one—not a single person—is left behind in our march towards Kenya’s digital future. Our decision to digitise all government services is informed by the need to make them easily accessible at minimum or no cost to all Kenyans who have a cellphone. This is why we are also rolling out 100,000 kilometres of last-mile fibre-optic connectivity, establishing digital hubs in every ward and providing free Wi-Fi connectivity at every local centre throughout Kenya.
22. It is also why we are promoting the local assembly of a smartphone which, with collaboration and strategic partnerships powered by transformative facilities like the AWS Development Centre, will be powered by locally developed, responsive, efficient and effective applications and other softwares.
23. The case for a green industrial revolution powered by African potential is much stronger today, because of the promise of digital transformation and the opportunities that come with it. As the gateway to the continent and the home



of the Silicon Savannah, Kenya stands in a position of digital leadership, firmly anchored on the infrastructure provided by such visionary enterprises as Amazon Web Services.

24. Today, with the launch of this Development Centre, we take another major step into a future that is rapidly and positively transforming every day. It is time to be part of that transformation.

The Amazon Web Services Development Centre is now officially launched.

**Thank you.**  
**God Bless you.**

