



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY WILLIAM  
RUTO, C.G.H.; PhD; PRESIDENT AND  
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE KENYA DEFENCE  
FORCES, DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE SECOND  
KENYA URBAN SUPPORT PROGRAMME**

**MAY 7TH, 2024**

**STATE HOUSE, NAIROBI**

1. Last year, I participated at the Kenya Urban Forum in Naivasha, where we reflected on the need to develop adequate capacity to serve rapidly growing urban populations, by investing in the radical expansion of essential housing, water, energy, transport, sanitation and other infrastructure.
2. It has been clear for some time now that the future of humanity is urban, and this trend applies to us in Kenya, where urbanization has been steadily growing at an annual rate of 5% - from 8% of the population at independence in 1963 to 34% today. Projections indicate that this trend will continue, with urban populations expected to reach 50% by 2050.
3. It is equally evident that lack of coordination and planning has deprived us of the numerous benefits of urbanisation. Consequently, important economic drivers of development, as well as high living standards lead to the proliferation of insecure and unsustainable settlement patterns, which undermine dignity, security, safety and health, while also driving environmental degradation.
4. As a matter of national policy, we are committed to enhancing urban governance and management, with the aim of implementing effective development planning in a manner that promotes robust urban investment and the provision of inclusive, high-quality social infrastructure in all urban areas and cities throughout our country.
5. Urbanisation is both a fundamental driver and critical outcome of rapid economic growth. Kenya's under-urbanisation presents an opportunity to establish a solid foundation for urban development, thereby improving economic opportunities and living conditions for millions of our citizens.



Well-managed urbanisation is integral to our economic development agenda, aligning with Vision 2030 and the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals.

6. Our investments in infrastructure expansion, connectivity enhancement, overall accessibility, safety and security improvement, are informed by the fact that urban areas are the epicentres of our Bottom Up Economic Transformation Agenda. We must therefore be involved in designing and implementing the institutional architecture necessary to manage these vital investments.
7. Accordingly, the Kenya Urban Support Programme I has enabled us to establish foundational institutions that will drive our sustainable and inclusive urbanisation agenda. Primarily, these will be the 77 municipalities as well as 2 special municipalities across 45 counties. This is a substantial portion of the 300 urban areas identified in Kenya, 220 of which require development investment in order to achieve our urbanisation policy objectives.
8. I am therefore encouraged that Kenya Urban Support Programme I delivered the foundation from which we shall now proceed to actualise our ambition of wholistically achieving sustainable urban development by enhancing the resilience of infrastructure and services, engaging the private sector in urban planning and development and integrating refugee camps with host settlements.
9. We all agree that our urban development strategy requires sustainable financing, but this has not been forthcoming at the levels expected. It is crucial therefore that the World Bank's \$350 million (KSh46.5 billion) funding for the Second Kenya Urban Support Programme is utilised responsibly and optimised for maximum benefit.



Equally critical is for county governments to increase their source revenues and allocate a greater portion to urban development initiatives. For our part, the National Government is establishing the National Urban Development Fund to anchor the urban development agenda in a sustainable framework.

10. There is no doubt that climate change will continue to pose mounting challenges to our development and serious threats to human health and safety, especially in urban areas, where 60% of residents live in informal settlements. The ongoing flooding, owing to abnormally high rainfall, underscores the urgent need for us to address this issue with particular attention.
11. I am therefore delighted that the Second Kenya Urban Support Programme has a strong climate change mitigation and resilience component, which further demonstrates our commitment to build adaptable cities and communities that are resilient in the face of dynamic environmental risks. In particular, the focus on the most vulnerable, through Building Climate Resilience for the Urban Poor, is very commendable.
12. The synergy between the Kenya Urban Support Programme and the Bottom Up Economic Transformation Agenda is unmistakable. In particular, the programme's alignment with the affordable housing strategic pillar presents a unique opportunity to invest in urban infrastructure that supports the realization of the affordable housing objectives in order to deliver holistic, sustainable and inclusive urban development.
13. As we embark on implementing the second Kenya Urban Support Program, we must take advantage of both the achievements and lessons of its predecessor, the most salient of which is the



seamless coordination and effective partnership between the national and county governments. The State Department of Housing remains our focal point and must redouble its efforts to ensure the project's success.

14. With their tremendous contributions to the GDP, urban areas are significant economic engines and centres of technological development and innovation. The 5 largest of them alone account for over 70% of our total GDP. It follows that their governance and management matters fundamentally for national development. It is critical that county governments prioritize the establishment of full-fledged urban institutions with robust governance and management.
15. I take this opportunity to appreciate, with gratitude, the support of the World Bank, whose investment and leadership have done so much for the transformation of our centres of accelerated development. We do not take your partnership for granted.
16. It is also important for me to thank the participating county governments for their commitment, which has been demonstrated time and again over the course of this initiative. I look forward to witnessing a more urgent, focused and ambitious approach to this programme.

**The second phase of the Kenya Urban Support Programme is officially launched.**

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

