



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY HON. WILLIAM SAMOEI RUTO, PhD, C.G.H., PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCES, DURING THE OPENING SESSION OF 5TH MID-YEAR COORDINATION MEETING OF THE AFRICAN UNION**

**JULY 16TH, 2023**

**NAIROBI**

- **H.E. Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of Comoros and Chairperson of the African Union, Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,**
- **Your Excellency, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat: Chairperson of the African Union Commission,**
- **Your Excellency, Mr. Issoufou Mahamadou, Champion of the AfCFTA, and Former President of the Republic of Niger,**
- **Her Excellency Ms. Amina, Mohammed, Deputy Secretary General, United Nations,**
- **Heads of the Organs and Institutions of the African Union, Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms,**
- **Honourable Ministers,**
- **Hon. Anne Waiguru, Chairperson of the Council of Governors,**
- **Hon. Johnson Sakaja, Governor of Nairobi County,**
- **Honourable Members of Parliament,**



- **Excellencies,**
- **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. I am greatly delighted and highly privileged to have this opportunity of welcoming you all to Nairobi, and to the Republic of Kenya. The opportunity to host this Summit, and your visit to our country does a tremendous honour to the people of our nation.
2. I trust that you have experienced our famous hospitality and hope that you will find the time to sample the spectacular attractions and delightful charms that make a visit to Magical Kenya a memorable experience. On behalf of the government and the people of Kenya, I extend to you a warm welcome and invite you to feel at home with us. *Karibuni Kenya*; welcome home.
3. Excellencies, it is difficult to overstate the fundamental importance of this Summit and the momentous consequence of the transformative business we have assembled here to transact. You will recall that as a continental political community, we resolved unanimously to pursue the integration agenda with greater vigor and focus. This commitment was underscored by the decision to formulate a suitable framework to effectively coordinate the diverse efforts undertaken through our 8 regional economic communities and various mechanisms.
4. It is evident, from the variety of activity, enhanced efficacy and visibility of AU's agenda and the undeniable increase of the AU Commission's administrative capacity and overall



vigor of regional and Pan-African integration efforts, that the AU's commitment was earnest, accompanied by demonstrable political will and a focused and effective implementation strategy.

5. We are a busy continent that is going places; the young, clean, green continent of the future, and we are determined to lead our march into this future as a united, empowered contributor of sustainable solutions to global problems. We are reasoning together, generating effective solutions, implementing them, facing our challenges head on, making progress, and getting results. This is what has brought Africa's implementation leadership to Nairobi, and the sum total of the agenda of the **Fifth Mid-Year Coordination Meeting**.
6. For this, I want to celebrate all of you who are here today, not just for making time to be here, but also for the work you do every day in taking the **Pan African Unity** project forward. For this is what the integration agenda is all about, whether we are talking about regional economic communities or mechanisms, or the broader continental effort, the unity of African peoples is our primary goal.
7. I commend **His Excellency Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi**, president of the Arab Republic of Egypt, for successfully chairing the Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee, which has effectively steered AUDA NEPAD in its momentous breakthrough in achieving the agenda 2063 aspiration of consolidating regional and continental integration. I also thank **President El-Sisi** for successfully hosting the African COP, or the Implementation COP, the last conference of state parties to the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at**



**Sharm-El-Sheikh, Egypt**, in November last year. It was at this COP that Africa finally revealed to the world a new determination to project a clear, forceful, and unified voice, and claim its opportunity to contribute to resolving humanity's most serious existential threat: climate change.

8. I salute with gratitude **His Excellency Ali Bongo Ondimba**, president of the **Republic of Gabon** in his capacity as the **Chair of Economic Community of Central African States**, for the progress he has made in stewarding collaboration among regional economic communities under the **Inter-REC Cooperation Initiative**. As a result, the ECCAS and the **Economic Community of West African States** have made significant strides in strengthening maritime security cooperation.
9. I also appreciate the work being done by **His Excellency Ismail Omar Guelleh**, president of the **Republic of Djibouti**, who chairs the **InterGovernmental Authority on Development**, for his able leadership of IGAD's contribution to the process towards agreement on cessation of hostilities in Ethiopia.
10. Further I am cognizant of the animated activity and excellent work that has brought much progress in ongoing projects and initiatives being undertaken across many spheres, by the **Economic Community of West African States** under the able leadership of **His Excellency president Bola Ahmed Tinubu** of the **Federal Republic of Nigeria**, the **Common Market of the East and Southern Africa** led by **His Excellency Hakainde Hichilema**, president of the **Republic of Zambia**, **Southern Africa Development Community**, chaired by



**His Excellency President Felix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo** of the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, the **Community of the Sahel-Saharan States** under the stewardship of **His Excellency president of the Republic of Chad, Mahamat Idriss Deby**, the **Arabic Union of the Maghreb**, led by **His Excellency Mohammad Younis Mehnfi**, President of the **Presidency Council of the State of Libya** and the **East African Community**, under **His Excellency president Evariste Ndashimiye of Burundi**.

11. I must also recognise and praise the good work that the **AU Commission** continues to do under the leadership of its chair, **His Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat**. This summit has been made possible by his able stewardship.
12. These AU-REC success stories establish without any doubt that a lot of great work is being done all over our continent, and that in our time, African leadership is signaling urgency, focus, consistency, and determination to sustainably manage and solve prevailing challenges and develop robust instruments to anticipate and pre-empt future crises. With such commitment, we now have confidence to pursue sustainable development and shared prosperity and expect that **Agenda 2063** is now firmly on course.
13. The most compelling signal that African integration is unstoppable, and that it will open doors for unprecedented socioeconomic transformation, is the progress we have made in implementing the **Africa Continental Free Trade Area**. We must all be proud of this magnificent project, an historic achievement by and for ourselves, whose positive effects will reverberate throughout the



world for a long time to come. I am not exaggerating. Let us consider the bare facts of the matter.

14. This single mechanism has inaugurated the world's largest free-trade area. Under it, **54 countries** have agreed to create a single market with a population of **1.4 billion** and GDP of **USD 3.4 trillion**. The free trade area is projected to lift **30 million** people out of extreme poverty and boost incomes by **7%**, or **USD 450 billion** by **2035**. As I have had occasion to remark before elsewhere, this is the magnitude of what typical Pan-African collective action can achieve, and we are only getting started.
15. The progress we have made by collaborating with unprecedented firmness of purpose in different domains, including **peace and security, regional integration, investment, trade and development and climate change** is of tremendous and positively transformative significance for us collectively.
16. **Agenda 2063** is our blueprint to deliver the Pan-African vision of an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena. Therefore, it is more critical now than ever before, that we marshal our collective consciousness, will power, solidarity and unity, to fulfil our fundamental generational mandate of introducing Africa as a new global power, ready and able to provide leadership towards a new industrial age that shall simultaneously usher in an era of inclusive development, shared prosperity, and effective climate action.
17. We must therefore capitalize on the institutional reform momentum at the AU to pursue the complete development



- of effective capacity to deliver Pan-African transformation. To do this, self-reliance is essential, and a fit-for purpose institutional architecture is indispensable. At the moment, over 60% of our programmes budget is financed by overseas partners. The demands of our challenging time require an AU that can pursue multiple urgent and critical interventions using internally mobilized resources. The Pan-African movement has always been about sovereignty and agency, first and foremost. Chronic **dependence** on well-meaning partners is starkly inconsistent with this aspiration.
18. This is why we must make progress in exploring, developing, and implementing solutions like the **Kigali Decision** (AU Decision 605 of 2016).
  19. Similarly, it is time to free up the African Union from structural and organizational constraints including duplication and other inefficiencies, thereby facilitating it to be effective on a greater scale. As a starting point, defining the roles and functions of different organs and instruments more clearly, is now unavoidable. The coordination, administrative and implementation mandate of the **Commission**, the legislative and oversight function of a strong **Pan African Parliament**, and the political leadership, ownership, and broad policy direction of the **Council**, all need to be reflected more clearly through rational structural delineation.
  20. COP27 was a turning point of tremendous magnitude because it brought home to the peoples of Africa the imperative to reconfigure our model of engagement with global and multilateral frameworks in general, and the urgency of projecting a new place, role, and voice to define





Africa's contribution to global development and climate action.

21. As we reflect and deliberate upon president El-Sisi's account of his commendable use of COP27 to facilitate the emergence of a fresh Afro-centric perspective to climate change, it is vital that we resolve to do even better and go much farther at the forthcoming COP28 by taking on board a more robust position and proposing a transformed and inclusive global approach to tackling the climate crisis.
22. This is why it is important for us to pay special attention to the **Africa Climate Summit (ACS)**, which takes place here in **Nairobi** between **September 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>**. The Summit, coming after the **Paris Summit** where greater clarity emerged, will be a critical opportunity for us to accelerate global energy transition and deliver African solutions to the **COP28 in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates**.
23. When you return to Nairobi in September, therefore, our sole business will be to mobilize and converge around a common position and advocate for global alignment on a green growth agenda complemented by a transformative global climate finance compact. Your participation in this Summit must therefore anticipate your stronger participation at the ACS.
24. I take this opportunity to once more appreciate the indispensable contributions made by the AU Commission, and the leadership of its chairman **His Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat**, to all arrangements and the tremendous logistical undertaking required to prepare a successful summit. It is because of this partnership with the commission that we have made progress in laying ground



for an event that will give our continent a platform from which to launch its agenda into global discourse. I am confident that the Summit will be successful in achieving all its objectives.

**I thank you.**

