



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. WILLIAM
SAMOEI RUTO, CGH, PRESIDENT AND
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE KENYA DEFENCE
FORCES, DURING THE PASSING OUT PARADE OF
INSPECTOR CADETS AND FORESTER TRAINEES
AT THE FOREST LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY**

OCTOBER 28, 2024

GILGIL, NAKURU COUNTY

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I join you today to celebrate the passing-out of 102 inspector cadets and 465 forester trainees because this is a huge milestone in Kenya's journey towards a greener and more resilient future. I congratulate you on your achievements and the commitment you have shown to the conservation and protection of our nation's natural resources. Your work will contribute to our collective endeavour to build a prosperous nation and leave an inspiring legacy to future generations. Every tree planted and forest preserved symbolises our vision of a vibrant and ecologically secure Kenya.
2. Your graduation is not just a matter of personal achievement or career development, but it is integral to our broader national policy to make Kenya clean, green, sustainable and prosperous. The Constitution sets out our commitment to ecological integrity and environmental protection. We have an obligation to maintain at least 15% of national forest cover and to ensure that the environment is respected, protected and enhanced for the benefit of present and future generations.
3. As part of the global community, Kenya is a leader in environmental sustainability, biodiversity conservation, and climate action. Since our early days as a republic, we have actively collaborated with international partners to develop frameworks for ecological sustainability and climate change mitigation. This is why we host the global headquarters of the United Nations Environmental Programme, UNEP, in Gigiri, Nairobi. It is also why we have been at the forefront of developing multilateral and regional policies and strategies to enable our countries to combat environmental degradation and climate change.



4. In 2023, we hosted the inaugural Africa Climate Summit, which set out a bold and ambitious Pan-African agenda to advocate effective action at every level, sector and in every country in our continent and throughout the world.
5. Forest conservation, afforestation and tree planting campaigns are longstanding Kenyan traditions going back many decades. In 2023, we launched a national program to restore degraded landscapes and ecosystems, strengthening our institutional framework to combat deforestation. This includes a national campaign to plant 15 billion trees by 2032, aiming to raise our forest cover to over 30%.
6. This is the context in which you must understand the significance of this function and appreciate the role of the graduating officers as well as their colleagues who are already in the Forest Protection Service. They are the guardians of the nation and the earth's lifeline. Their work enables us to achieve sustainability and prevail against daunting global and local environmental challenges. Forests purify air, sustain biodiversity and support livelihoods.
7. It is, therefore, essential that we develop capacity, including adequate numbers of trained professionals, to overcome the threats of deforestation, illegal logging and climate change, which diminish forests and the Earth's ability to sustain life.
8. I wish to emphasise that protecting our environment not only benefits us but also empowers our generation to discharge its debt to future generations.



9. Forests stabilise water cycles, support agriculture, preserve biodiversity, and facilitate timber production, herbal medicine, and honey production, thereby generating thousands of jobs and strengthening community resilience. They create employment opportunities through timber and non-timber products, as well as through forest management. Additionally, carbon credits offer new revenue streams, enabling Kenya to reinvest in conservation.
10. Eco-tourism strengthens these efforts by showcasing our natural beauty and celebrating conservation. As we face an increasingly challenging future, we must embrace innovation to seize opportunities and accelerate our growth. Innovation is essential to forest conservation. Tools like the JazaMiti app engage Kenyans in tree planting, while satellite and drone technology assist the Kenya Forest Service in forest monitoring, illegal logging prevention, and fire control. Technological innovations in forestry can also expand economic opportunities. I encourage graduates to explore these possibilities in their work.
11. For our part, we shall continue to develop and refine institutional frameworks, beginning by amending the Forest Conservation and Management Act (2016) to make sure that all stakeholders in conservation and climate action have robust, consistent and effective support to pursue innovation, collaboration and ambitious action to turn forests and forest protection into vehicles of sustainable transformation.
12. Conservation unites communities by fostering a shared sense of responsibility and pride in safeguarding our heritage. Across Kenya, communities are restoring degraded lands, protecting water sources, and reforesting landscapes. Initiatives in the Aberdare Range and Mau Forest Complex demonstrate the power of local action in driving accountability and long-term success.



13. Kenya is, and aspires to remain, compelling proof that economic progress and sustainable forestry are not only feasible but also essential, complementary commitments and that conservation, climate action, and economic transformation must be pursued and achieved in tandem.
14. There is no doubt that this function is a monumental event for our nation's development. It is a commitment on your part that you are going to make significant contributions to our proud legacy of conservation and sustainability and that we have to strengthen our partnership to give our forests, humanity and the Earth - our common home - a chance. You have chosen to work in an important field, and I encourage you to grow in it and develop exemplary careers by performing your duties with integrity, professionalism, discipline and patriotism.
15. I congratulate you once again and wish you success as you embark on your careers. May you learn, grow, and achieve feats that will make you and your families proud for years to come. Let us be bold in our aim to transform Kenya's future through all we do. Together, let us plant, protect, and preserve our forests, demonstrating our commitment to building a greener and more resilient Kenya.

Thank you
God bless you
God bless Kenya.

