



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY, HON. DR. WILLIAM
SAMOEI RUTO, C.G.H. PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF KENYA AND COMMANDER-IN-
CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCES DURING THE
STATE CONCERT OF THE KENYA MUSIC FESTIVAL**

AUGUST 16, 2024

STATE LODGE, ELDORET

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am delighted to welcome you all to this special state concert, hosted in the newest and 5th city of our great nation—Eldoret, the City of Champions. It is truly fitting that as we celebrate the conferring of city status on Eldoret, this new city also plays host to the National Music Festival. This great occasion is a testament to the limitless potential and talent that resides in our nation, Kenya— the natural land of champions.
2. The Kenya Music Festival has long been a fountain of creativity, nurturing the raw and potent talent found in our young and youthful learners. Over time, this festival has offered a platform for learners to showcase their boundless gifts in music, dance, and poetry. These talents—identified, meticulously shaped, and honed by the dedication of teachers, tutors, and lecturers—have played a transformative role in our society, building confidence and instilling pride in those who have graced the stage.
3. This year's theme, "**Talent Development for Growth of the Creative Economy,**" is both timely and aligned with our government's agenda.



4. We recognize the creative economy as a pillar of our national economic transformation, and the Kenya Music Festival is a vital component in this endeavour. From vocal and instrumental music to traditional and contemporary dances, and from scripting to public speaking, this festival has demonstrated its enduring legacy in developing a broad range of creative talents. The digitization of these performances, spearheaded by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, is already providing our students with new avenues for recognition and revenue generation as their content reaches not only local and regional but also global audiences online.
5. The festival's impact on the creative economy can neither be gainsaid nor overstated. It fosters local talent, promotes economic growth, preserves our cultural heritage, and builds a sustainable creative ecosystem. Moreover, it provides our learners with the opportunity for international exposure, preparing them to compete on the world stage.
6. The numbers involved in this year's festival speak volumes about the value we place on the creative and performing arts. Over 130,000 participants have taken to the stage, representing all levels of education, including special needs education.



This inclusivity is a hallmark of the festival, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to realize their full potential.

7. To further support the aspirations outlined in this year's theme, the festival has introduced categories that directly link participants to the performing arts industry. Notable among these is the "Pop Talent Show," which provides a space for students to compose and produce their own music using modern technology. With this experience, our students are well-positioned to become composers, performers, and recording artists, contributing to Kenya's vibrant music industry.
8. The festival also plays a crucial role in preserving our cultural heritage through the performance of traditional dances. We must promote these classes and document these dances to ensure they are preserved for future generations.
9. This year, we witnessed the first National Conference in Music, held alongside the competitions. We must position Kenya as a cultural and music tourism hub, both at the county and national levels. I also extend a warm welcome to the guest teams from Uganda and Tanzania who joined us this year, and I hope to see more international participation in the future.



10. The success of this festival would not be possible without the support of our partners. Your collaboration allows us to realize the government's mission of educating and creating a better world together for the future.

11. On the financing of Kenya Music Festival activities, I urge the leadership to propose sustainable measures and form stronger partnerships with the private sector. The festival must find alternative sources of income to ensure its sustainability and continued success.

12. Ladies and gentlemen, the creative arts—music, dance, and elocution—are not only sources of immense national pride but also of gainful employment. These industries support jobs in sound engineering, event management, costume design, and more. My government has made several initiatives to support these sectors, including strengthening copyright laws to protect artists' intellectual property and ensuring they receive fair compensation for their work. We are also working with county governments to establish and maintain cultural centres and performance venues, providing artists with the facilities they need to thrive.



13. The performances we have witnessed today are a testament to the dedication and hard work of our teachers, trainers, and students. The educational and entertainment value of these productions is immense, and I have been thoroughly impressed by what I have seen.
14. As we conclude, I wish to commend Uasin Gishu County for being a hospitable host and for the support provided by the county government and security agencies. For the teams proceeding to the international stage, I have a simple message for you: Like I reminded our triumphant athletes who have just returned from the Olympics in Paris, you are both our best and the world's finest; there is nothing that is beyond you—so go ahead and make your country proud. Go shine!
15. I wish you journey mercies. Get home safe.

Asanteni sana and God bless you all.

