



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. WILLIAM SAMOEI RUTO, PH.D., C.G.H., PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCES DURING PRESIDENT'S EMERGENCY PLAN FOR AIDS RELIEF (PEPFAR) 2023 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION IN KENYA**

**NOVEMBER 28TH, 2023**

**MAKTABA KUU BUILDING, NAIROBI**

## **Ambassador Meg Whitman;**

### **Distinguished Guests;**

1. There are many instances in the history of Kenya's bilateral and multilateral engagements where partnerships have achieved tremendous positive change in the form of policies, programmes and projects.
2. On the other hand, there have been fewer instances where such partnerships have translated into direct, personal, visible transformation in the lives and well-being of people in terms of ending suffering, reducing the number of deaths and prolonging the lives of millions of people who might otherwise have faced high risk of an agonizing early death.
3. Kenya's partnership with the United States of America, through the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is one of these very rare partnerships.
4. Until about 20 years ago, HIV-AIDS went through the households and communities of this nation in a deadly rampage that left behind many people dead, others suffering agonizing illness, thousands of orphaned children, with many also infected with HIV, and vast socioeconomic devastation.
5. The intolerable stigma that haunted infected and affected persons and their families was a huge barrier to access in terms of essential medical and social services, from public, private as well as within the civil society. Those affected confronted their troubles by themselves, abandoned, neglected, or wholly forgotten.



6. This country lost millions of people this way, and for a while, it looked like the HIV-AIDS problem would wipe out much of our productive population, robbing the economy of workers and families of breadwinners.
7. The government faced serious resource constraints in its efforts to pull back people from the edge of graves, families from the brink of ruin, communities from the cusp of disintegration and the economy from the verge of collapse. Serious support was urgently needed in order to raise the level of necessary intervention on an effective scale.
8. This support came in the form of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, which committed more than US dollars 110 billion to the fight against HIV-AIDS in more than 50 countries globally. As a consequence, over 25 million lives have been saved and many more HIV infections prevented.
9. In Kenya, PEPFAR has channeled over US dollars 6.5 billion since 2004, with the latest allocation being US dollars 346,250,000 for FY 2023/24 and US dollars 327, 917,500 for FY 2024/25. As a result, there has been a 68.5% reduction in new HIV infection and 53% reduction in HIV-related mortality, accompanied by tremendous improvement in the quality of life of persons living with HIV.
10. The number of people living with HIV is 1.4 million, of whom 1.3 million receive anti-retroviral therapy (ART) from more than 3,000 health facilities across the country. This number includes over 48,000 children as well as 55,000 breastfeeding mothers on HIV treatment.



11. For millions of Kenyans, therefore, infection has not only ceased to be an agonizing death sentence, people actually remain productive, living as normal members of the community free of stigma and enjoying a high quality of life. The transformation that we could only hope for two decades ago, has become a living reality for many households.
12. This was made possible principally through the partnership driven by the government of Kenya and PEPFAR, which continues to extend support directly, and also indirectly through the Global Fund. PEPFAR contributes nearly 60% of ART commodities and also provides facilitation for various associated programmes.
13. HIV-related commodities are estimated to cost between Ksh 27 to 30 billion annually and, owing to a decline in donor support, the funding gap now stands at US dollars 11.75 million. The government is committed to progressively increasing domestic funding in order to sustain the gains made so far in partnership with PEPFAR.
14. Over the past two years, we have increased our financial injection into the HIV commodity pipeline by Ksh 1 billion to prevent supply disruption.



15. Additionally, we are committed to end AIDS in children by 2027 as part of our commitment under the Global Alliance. *Wakati ni Sasa: The Time is Now*, to take a strong stand and make up for lost ground for the sake of Kenya's children.
16. Further, the universal healthcare coverage pillar of the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda offers us a significant opportunity to effectively address the domestic financing gap in our country with respect to HIV. I call on all stakeholders to embrace this opportunity and make their contribution to a transformed and sustainable national HIV response.
17. Today, we are able to look into the future with confidence because we stand on the firm foundation laid in collaboration with PEPFAR over the past 20 years. We are highly grateful to the US government for this partnership that has changed the fortunes of our nation. Such a strong show of solidarity is highly appreciated and we do not take the friendship and support of for granted. Today, therefore, is a day to celebrate our historic achievements under a truly transformative partnership.
18. Thank you very much PEPFAR, and congratulations on many wonderful achievements. On behalf of the people and government of Kenya, I convey a heartfelt thank you.

**Thank you.**

**God Bless you.**

