



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**PRESS STATEMENT BY H.E. WILLIAM RUTO,
P.h.D., C.G.H. PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC
OF KENYA AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF
THE DEFENCE FORCES, DURING A STATE VISIT
BY H.E. SERGIO MATTARELLA, PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF ITALY**

STATE HOUSE, NAIROBI

14th MARCH 2023

**Your Excellency President Sergio Mattarella,
Ambassadors,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Officials,
Members of the Media,
Good afternoon,**

1. I take this opportunity to appreciate and express deep gratitude to His Excellency Sergio Mattarella, the President of the Italian Republic, who has honoured us by making this long-awaited State Visit to Kenya. It has been a tremendous privilege to receive you, Your Excellency and your delegation.
2. We have just concluded a highly successful bilateral engagement in which we held productive discussions and agreed to consolidate and advance the good relations between our countries.
3. Our two countries established diplomatic relations in 1964 and Italy has since been a valued partner to Kenya in political, economic, social, defence and security cooperation. In our deliberations, the President and I agreed to deepen and expand this relationship, for the benefit of the people of our countries.
4. Our meeting provided us with the opportunity to discuss, at great length, modalities of enhancing trade and investment between Kenya and Italy. I am delighted to announce that President Mattarella and I witnessed the signing of **2 agreements, 2 MOUs** and **a joint declaration**, to provide a framework for advancement of bilateral cooperation in different fields.

5. We have signed an MOU through which our two countries shall cooperate in the field of Health, towards the realisation of Universal Health Coverage and improved pharmaceutical production.
6. We have also signed an MOU on bilateral consultations that will establish and set guidelines for the conduct of political consultations at the respective ministries of foreign affairs.
7. We have further committed, in good faith, to re-establish cooperation on the construction of Arror, Kimwarer and Itare dams and other water and sanitation projects, which are critical to our agenda on food security and climate action.
8. The Government of Italy has also committed to advance **KSh14 billion (100 million euros)** in grants and soft loans covering projects in agriculture, development of MSMEs, housing and urban settlement, health, the digital super highway and creative economy. This will be done through the **Kenya-Italy Multi-Annual Five-Year Cooperation Strategy** on sustainable development.
9. We further agreed to cooperate in enhancing our **informal settlement redevelopment program**, which our two countries recently launched, to facilitate security of land tenure in informal settlements in Kilifi, Siaya and Ngong municipalities. Further, this is an opportunity to appreciate Italy for the **Debt for Development Programme**, which has provided tremendous support in the water, health, education and urban development sectors.

10. Our two countries, at political and technical levels, agreed to remove non-tariff barriers and promote greater trade and increased investment, including negotiating avoidance of a double-taxation agreement, which will usher in significantly higher levels of foreign direct investments in various sectors, by Italian companies.
11. We also exchanged views and shared ideas about emerging opportunities to improve the balance of trade between our nations, including cooperation in agro-industrial, ICT and bio-fuel projects, among others.
12. Kenya is highly encouraged by the great interest shown by Italian investors in the Konza Technopolis, where a number have already set up businesses. With this visit, we are confident that even more investors will take up the myriad opportunities in the project.
13. Kenya and Italy are in agreement that climate change and other environmental challenges must be addressed within the context of sustainable development. As a result, our meeting provided us with an opportunity to explore the possibility of a stronger collective voice in pursuit of common regional and global priorities, especially through increased support for green sustainable energy policies. Kenya will use this understanding to seek partnerships and investments with Italian firms.
14. For Kenya and the world, especially countries in the Global South, to successfully surmount the global crises of climate emergency, biodiversity loss and pollution, and achieve green industrialization based on renewables, more and better financing is indispensable.

15. We have therefore initiated the overdue conversation about the need to re-imagine and reform the international financial system, to make it responsive, climate sensitive, and fit for purpose.
16. In consideration of the need to articulate the opportunities and pursue greater progress in the green agenda for Kenya and Africa, I have informed President Mattarella that I am convening a Climate Action Summit in Nairobi, from 4th to 6th September this year, to which Your Excellency, I invite you once again.
17. I have also assured the President, of Kenya's strong position as a regional hub for investment, commerce and services, and the most attractive gateway to the East African, Comesa and Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement markets. I, therefore, encourage Italian businesses to take full advantage of our position to grow their local, regional and continental footprints.
18. In our meeting, President Mattarella and I also had the opportunity to discuss issues of regional and international significance. We pledged to work together in securing a peaceful future for parts of our respective continents affected by conflict and instability. Kenya appreciates Italy's pledge to support our efforts to restore regional peace, security and stability.
19. Additionally, we agreed to collaborate bilaterally, at the United Nations and other multilateral forums, on the basis of the convergence of values, principles and positions, to promote peace and security, trade, health, climate action and the elimination of hunger and malnutrition.

20. Our meeting also considered the initiation of bilateral cooperation in such vital sectors as the arts, culture, science and technology. In this connection, President Mattarella will visit the **Luigi Broglio Space Centre in Malindi**, which is funded by the Italian government. Further, we agreed that our bilateral cooperation should enhance mutual benefit of the centre's outputs in scientific and technological research, for sustainable development in Kenya.
21. On this highly successful visit, President Mattarella and I re-affirmed the strong bonds of friendship and solidarity that hold our nations and peoples together. This State Visit is a clear demonstration of the commitment we share to enhance bilateral ties through continuous dialogue and sustained exchange of knowledge.
22. Once again, I thank you, President Mattarella, for the honour of your visit, and for the fruitful deliberations and productive engagements we have undertaken today. You have made tremendous contribution to the historic project of growing the bilateral ties between Kenya and Italy and in driving our national socio-economic transformation agenda.

Thank you
God Bless you.