



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY HON. DR.  
WILLIAM SAMOEI RUTO, C.G.H., PRESIDENT AND  
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE  
FORCES DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF  
BUILDINGS AT THE REGIONAL CENTRE FOR  
MAPPING RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT**

**NOVEMBER 17TH, 2023**

**KASARANI, NAIROBI**

## **Distinguished Guests;**

### **Good Afternoon;**

1. I am delighted to return here to inaugurate two buildings whose development is remarkable. The speed with which the work of constructing and completing the administration and residential hostel buildings of the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development, is the pace of development and service delivery I look forward to working with in implementing programmes and executing projects under the Bottom-up Economic Transformation Agenda.
2. This centre represents three fundamental imperatives of economic transformation that deserve our attention and serious consideration. First, is the need, for purposes of sound development planning and effective strategy, to have full command of the nation's wealth, including its natural resource endowments.
3. Secondly, this centre showcases the role of ICTs in national economic transformation. The strategic foundations of its mission and vision are organised around the provision of geo-information for environmental and resource management, which are essential for sustainable development anywhere.
4. Thirdly, as an intergovernmental organisation sponsored by 20 regional states, this centre demonstrates the possibilities of regional integration in action and points us towards the tremendous promise of transformation through effective integration and collaboration across regional borders.
5. Over time, the centre has experienced rapid growth in demand for its services and a commensurate broadening of the scope of its work. The steady expansion of its training function



compounded the challenge of providing adequate infrastructural capacity to support optimal operations.

6. Through shared commitment, this challenge has now been addressed through the development of a modern office complex and, subsequently, a residential hostel to accommodate over 800 people. I am encouraged to note that the developments were fully financed through self-generated revenues, which in itself is a pointer to the prudent management of resources and good governance in the centre. Keep it up.
7. With the challenge of infrastructure now out of the way, the centre can now carry on its core business of providing cutting-edge geospatial information, tools and services to member states.
8. In addition, the centre now has a fully accredited technical and vocational education and training unit offering courses that have proved popular locally and regionally. They include new diploma and certificate courses in surveying, photogrammetry, remote sensing, GIS (geographic information systems) and cartography, as well as IT, which have already benefited over 400 students. With the current student population of more than 1,000 and rising regional demand, the expansion and upgrading of critical facilities is a timely intervention aimed at sustaining the centre's capacity to perform its important functions.
9. Under the Bottom-up Economic Transformation Agenda, we have undertaken to establish an enhanced framework of collaboration between government and tertiary institutions in order to formulate defined pathways for Kenya to enhance its technological and innovative capacity to globally competitive levels through appropriate collaborations.
10. Kenya has benefitted immensely from the centre's services and tools. In 2021, more than 400 staff from the Ministry of Lands



were trained here in GIS, while others from the state department of arid and semi-arid lands were taught to deploy GIS in controlling desertification. Additionally, Ministry of Agriculture officers from more than 30 counties have been trained on crop suitability based on specific agroecological characteristics.

11. This centre has also implemented a partnership with Kenya Airways and other air transport sector players to introduce new drone technology and facilitated training in their use. At the same time, it continues to partner with over 32 counties in implementing spatial development plans in conformity with constitutional requirements.
12. The tools, services and training offered at the centre are essential for such extremely important functions as disaster preparedness, environmental conservation, urban planning and infrastructure development, which are indispensable for economic growth and the prudent utilisation of resources.
13. The contribution of this centre to national and regional self-reliance in a highly strategic domain is not to be underestimated. As we continue to confront complex and interconnected challenges with the potential to overwhelm systems, the need for data-driven solutions based on accurate geospatial intelligence cannot be over-emphasised.
14. Bearing in mind that many challenges in terms of environmental degradation, food security and disaster management have a transnational dimension, collaboration and sharing of information and other resources is important. The significance of this centre for regional growth and security is clearly well-established.
15. Going forward, therefore, it is important that this centre sustains its momentum along the path of consolidating its global leadership in the development and application of geospatial



technology. This way, member states and our continent at large will benefit from stronger capacities to manage climate change, agriculture and food systems, urban planning, disaster management as well as conservation.

16. In Kenya, geospatial information has made us extraordinarily effective in the conservation of biodiversity through the monitoring of deforestation and tracking wildfires as well as studying those ecosystems that are deemed essential for the preservation of our natural heritage.
17. In agriculture, it has improved crop yield predictions and helped farmers to make better decisions and optimise land use. Geospatial information is also improving the living conditions of citizens by facilitating urban planning and infrastructure development, while the centre's early warning systems, flood monitoring and wildlife prediction have safeguarded communities by improving the management of water-related disasters. The hazard maps developed by the centre, which cover 14 counties, are useful in educating the public on the risks of natural hazards and for mitigating natural disasters.
18. Because of the work undertaken by this centre, our nation and our region, work from a strong position in the race for economic transformation. We must build on this to move forward and stay ahead.
19. I encourage the dedicated professionals who serve this centre in various capacities to carry on with exemplary work and produce even more disruptive and globally competitive innovations. Continue to face the future with confidence and empower your students, our youth and the promise of our nations and Africa, to realise their highest potential. This is how we all benefit from your work.



20. I now declare the office block and hostels of the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development Officially opened.

**Thank you.**

**May God bless you.**

