



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**REMARKS BY H.E HON. WILLIAM SAMOEI RUTO,
PHD, CGH, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
KENYA AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE
DEFENCE FORCES DURING THE SIGNING OF THE
KENYA - EUROPEAN UNION ECONOMIC
PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

DECEMBER 18TH, 2023

STATE HOUSE, NAIROBI



**H.E Ursula Von der Leyen, President of the EU
Commission and your Delegation;**

Deputy President;

Prime Cabinet Secretary;

Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Private Sector representatives;

Good Morning;

1. I have the immense honour of welcoming you all to State House, Nairobi, for this very important event. More particularly, I take this opportunity to welcome our great friend as a people and nation, Her Excellency Ursula Von Der Leyen, President of the EU Commission, together with her entire delegation, who have travelled to Kenya to witness the signing of the Kenya-EU Economic Partnership Agreement.
2. This highly positive, historic and transformative development is the culmination of highly committed engagements anchored by long-standing cordial ties between Kenya and the 27 countries, which form the EU, both jointly and severally. The salient features of these ties include such shared values and common multilateral objectives, as a strong commitment to democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights, peace and security as well as combating climate change. Under these conditions, our trade, investment and people-to-people relations, have ensured that our ties have inevitably grown stronger and closer and flourished over time.



3. Our presence here has been made possible by years of consistent work towards the establishment of a permanent mechanism to underpin trade and investment and transform our mutually beneficial relations, broaden two-way trade, establish new investments and add value to the items currently being traded.
4. At the core of this arrangement is our aspiration to put real money into the pockets of ordinary people: farmers, craftsmen and artisans, fabricators, transporters, and various other kinds of workers who contribute to the manufacturing, inter-continental transport and last-mile delivery to the consumers of various products.
5. Today, therefore, is a great day for the hard-working hustlers who often make their contribution to job creation, innovation and value addition through micro-small and medium-sized enterprises and small businesses. I am talking about the unassuming lady in Kieni who rises every day without fail to tend to her little shamba of snow peas, which eventually cross seas and find their way to European dinner tables, or the many workers whose labour produces globally competitive bouquets of fresh flowers, or the mango and avocado growers, whose patient toil over the years have enabled us to deliver very high-quality fruits to Europe and the world.
6. It is the interests, aspirations, hopes and dreams of these and many others, that have inspired the exemplary dedication of our capable negotiating teams to remain determined to proceed beyond the Kenya-EU Strategic Dialogue, to the successful delivery of this Economic Partnership Agreement.



7. There is no doubt that trade in goods is very important for investors in our markets. However, trade in services is equally vital. As I commend the two negotiating teams, led by Ms Dora Correia for the EU, and Alfred K'Ombudo for Kenya, I encourage them to remain committed to negotiating a future agreement that will open up trade in services between the markets of Europe and Kenya, and enable various types of professionals, like engineers, doctors, nurses, environmental technicians, clinical technicians, accounting, the performing arts like music and theatre, as well as many other services, to serve a freer and bigger market.

8. This ceremony is important because we have successfully negotiated a framework for the delivery of the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda by connecting our hard-working workers and entrepreneurs with transformative opportunities in one of Kenya's biggest export markets, which accounts for 21.1% of our country's total exports, worth USD 1.4 billion.

9. The EU's 27-member, 16 trillion euro market, contributed 17% of the global GDP and is one of Kenya's biggest trading partners, whose exports to our market now amount to USD 2.1 billion. The variety of goods traded between the EU and Kenya underscores the potential of this bilateral trade framework to deliver trade and investments of volumes, diversity and promise we can only conclude that although today represents a moment of monumental promise, it is also the beginning of a historic partnership for historic transformation.



10. The EU is not just a giant, lucrative market, it is a premium market whose demand guarantees higher earnings for our products and will drive our export production to higher levels of competitiveness.
11. The EU is one of our country's largest development partnerships and I expect that with the signing of the economic partnership agreement, development cooperation will be significantly enhanced, especially in the areas of trade and investment with a special focus on Kenya's commitment to pursue a transition to a green economy.
12. With the signing of the agreement, therefore, we have a permanent arrangement to guarantee access to the European market for our enterprises. Kenyan exporters will now be able to make long-term plans based on predictable, duty-free and quota-free access to a premium export market.
13. The agreement also makes it possible, through guaranteed market access, to attract investments into innovation, capacity development and value addition in order to increase and diversify our exports into the European Union.
14. A good example of the great positive potential arising out of this agreement is the transformation of our leather value chain. We have the third-largest herd of livestock in Africa. The agreement has catalysed our interventions to increase the productivity and competitiveness of the sector by securing a large lucrative market for finished leather products, which include industrial boots, everyday footwear, bags, straps, car interiors and other accessories.



15. Consequently, Kenyan and European investors in the leather value chain are already benefiting from the opportunity to export to the EU. To meet the high standards required by the EU, our manufacturers have transformed their production through investment in modern equipment and processes.
16. Through this agreement, we are signalling to the world that Kenya is ready to manufacture and export high-value premium products to Europe and to the world at large. I trust that this ceremony will inaugurate the arrival of investments in other manufacturing areas including chemicals, pharmaceuticals, medical supplies and equipment.
17. There is no doubt that the agreement will promote a significant transformation of various value chains. We are committed to delivering our plan for the bottom-up economic transformation of Kenya through a considered value chain approach, which places emphasis on the cardinal issues of competitiveness and value propositions in each of our interventions. As shown above, the agreement goes far in facilitating our preferred delivery approach for Kenyans.
18. Further, the agreement will usher in an era of blended opportunities, with the EAC, COMESA and AFCFTA mechanisms supporting attractive investment potential.
19. In the agreement, Kenya and the EU have committed to advance their mutual trade, investment and economic operation objectives sustainably, through the implementation of a strong joint environmental conservation agenda. Through the agreement, therefore, Kenya has found a like-minded partner



equally committed to the transition into a green economy, and, towards that end, to pursue sustainable trade.

20. I am therefore proud to be here today, to witness this historic milestone in our journey of national economic transformation. It is clear now, more than ever before, that the future holds greater promise than was understood previously, and that agreements like this go a long way to define this promise.

Thank you.

God Bless you.

