



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. WILLIAM
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REPUBLIC OF KENYA AND COMMANDER-IN-
CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCES, TO THE EU
PARLIAMENT**

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**Madam President,
[Vice-Presidents],
Members of the European Parliament,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

1. I am deeply honoured to stand before you today in this esteemed chamber. Your invitation to address this assembly, symbolizing the unity and diversity of Europe, is a privilege I hold in high regard. I extend my heartfelt thanks to all of you, the distinguished representatives of 450 million citizens across the 27 Member States. Madam President, I am particularly grateful for your gracious welcome, which reflects the spirit of solidarity and cooperation that this assembly embodies.
2. This eminent institution plays a critical role in shaping policies and decisions that affect not only Europe but also its partners around the world, including Kenya. Let me express my sincere gratitude for your support in imminent conclusion of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between Kenya and the European Union. This is a major leap forward in our trade and economic relationship. The EU remains one of our most important trading allies, accounting for more than a fifth of Kenya's global exports.
3. I must emphasise the impact of this agreement extends far beyond trade statistics. It opens a world of opportunities, facilitating not only the exchange of goods but also ideas and innovations. It is a bridge between peoples, cultures and continents.



4. These are difficult times. We find ourselves amidst a formidable storm of challenges, each not only complex in its way, but also deeply interconnected. New and renewed international conflict and wars, as witnessed most recently in Ukraine, Israel, and Gaza, the Sahel, the Sudan, Somalia, DRC creating widespread human suffering and deepening divisions in a period where global collaboration and unity are of paramount importance. Democracy is under pressure in many parts of the world and, multilateral institutions, once the hope for international solidarity, are struggling to maintain broad-based acceptance, relevance and effectiveness.
5. At the same time, progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals is unravelling. Rising interest rates and looming debt distress make it much harder for countries to address their own socio-economic challenges. High cost of living, fiscal strain, and migration are weakening international solidarity. And, most existentially, the world, as UN Secretary-General reminded us recently, is literally on fire – “the era of global boiling”, emphasizing the severe and escalating impacts of climate change.
6. The escalating severity of climate change is particularly acute and poignant in Africa, a continent that, despite its minimal contribution to global emissions, finds itself at the forefront of environmental vulnerability.
7. In Africa, with less buffers to address climate change challenges, we feel the impact more directly and acutely. Consider, for example, the significant influence of high inflation rates on voting behaviours in your regions; now imagine the impact of a year-on-year food price inflation exceeding 10 per cent in sub-Saharan African countries, where food makes up over a third of household expenses.



8. These challenges are not isolated; they are interconnected layers of a complex historical, economic, and environmental narrative that the continent endures. Africa still carries the scars of colonialism which remain visible in the economic and institutional dependencies that continue to hinder progress and perpetuate social and political fragility. Acknowledging these issues is important but focusing solely on them risks obscuring the broader horizon.
9. The adversarial North versus South dynamic has not served us well, denying us the opportunity to leverage each other's strengths. Similarly, the East versus West divide is untenable and counterproductive, working against the interests of all of us. Climate change has introduced a new dimension into this complex equation. While it poses an existential threat, climate change has also emerged as a levelling force, equalizing us all in the face of a shared global challenge, transcending all divides North-South, East-West, developed and developing.
10. Collectively, therefore, we have the means to make progress. Advanced technology, robust financial systems, and dynamic markets, alongside pioneering advantages in various sectors, are key assets of the global North. Historically, the global South has played a vital role in supporting the North's industrialization by providing raw materials.
11. Now, as we navigate a new era of global interdependence, this needs to evolve into a reciprocal relationship. A shift towards a more balanced and equitable global partnership, with the deliberate transfer of technologies and intentional flow of capital to the global South. And this also means a seat at the table to look for solutions that work for all of us, in a spirit of cooperation and mutual understanding.



12. Thus, it is essential to reassess long-standing assumptions, rethink perceived barriers, and question default decisions. We need to be bold and strategic and take the decisive step toward the structural shift required to fulfil the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and keep global warming at 1.5°C degrees.
13. This was precisely the premise of the inaugural Africa Climate Summit that I hosted in Nairobi in September. The Summit provided a platform not just to discuss the challenges we face but to view them through the lens of solutions and opportunities.
14. Therefore, I am hopeful because there exists a real opportunity. An opportunity to reach sustainable, equitable prosperity for all of humanity. An opportunity for the European Union to accelerate its race to net zero, decarbonise its industry, and build the economy of the future. And an opportunity for Africa to provide security and stability for all Africans while taking its rightful place in the 21st-century economy.
15. The Africa Climate Summit culminated in the Nairobi Declaration which sets out the vision and a pathway for Africa to be a vital part of the global solution to the existential climate challenge we face. The Declaration captures the consensus of the African government leaders for Climate Positive Growth.
16. We have the world's biggest untapped renewable energy potential, the youngest and fastest-growing workforce, and relevant natural resources and assets. 60% of the world's best solar potential is in Africa, as well as over 60% of the remaining unused arable land in the world. These assets create an inherent ability for Africa to produce green-from-the-start cost-



competitive products and services and to provide some of the highest-quality carbon removal services in the world.

17. When it comes to green economy, our reality is markedly different from the EU's. Over 600 million Africans are deprived of access to energy, a fundamental prerequisite for dignified living and the provision of basic yet vital services like health and education. Adding to this is the fact that almost 1.0 billion lack access to clean cooking. While the global narrative often emphasizes energy transition, for most of Africa, it is about energy growth and expansion.
18. It follows that how Africa takes on this challenge will matter a great deal both regionally and globally. It will matter whether Africa can transform into a green powerhouse that helps the world decarbonize. Equally important is the focus on providing education and opportunities to the youth of Africa. By investing in the education and skill development of our young population, Africa can create a vibrant, self-sustaining economy that offers its youth compelling reasons to build their futures at home. This approach underpinned by structured migration can alleviate the pressure on regions like Europe, which increasingly rely on economic migrants to maintain their standards of living.
19. Adopting this agenda is not just a choice but a necessity. The alternative, which neglects Africa's development and industrialization, and fails to invest in the younger generation, is not a viable option.
20. Allow me to illustrate with a few tangible examples of how our strategies and interests converge.



- In Kenya for example, we already have a 92% green grid. Our challenge is not how to get that to 100%. Rather our challenge is how to grow it from its current size of just 3 GW, less than 25% of the Paris Metropolitan area, for a country with 5 times as many people. We want to grow our grid to 100GW by 2050 so it can power green industrialisation – and create prosperity through green growth.
- In June this year, this very Parliament adopted legislation to create the enabling environment for the domestic production of 10 million tonnes of green hydrogen by 2030 and import of the same amount, in order to green the EU industry. African countries are recognised as potential producers of this green hydrogen – and we welcome the collaboration. Kenya for example is developing a plant to produce green fertiliser, which will reduce our import dependency.
- Another EU-relevant example is bauxite. Africa currently mines 25% of the world's bauxite – yet exports almost all of it as raw material. If Africa's renewable energy potential were deployed to smelt currently mined bauxite into aluminium, we could save millions of tonnes of CO2 equivalent and generate hundreds of thousands of jobs. And aluminium is just one example of many: green steel is another one, not to mention Africa's significant global deposits of critical minerals – or our potential to produce sustainable fuels. By tapping into these resources and employing green technologies, Africa can contribute significantly to global decarbonization efforts while boosting its own economic development, creating a win-win scenario for both the continent and the world. While Africa as a source of raw materials and market for finished products



contributed to Europe's industrialization, there has been tremendous growth in technology and capital. It is the turn of Europe to deploy these technologies and capital to now unlock the huge green Energy resources to Drive green industrialisation using the natural resource endowments in the continent, global green products and services, create jobs, and at the same time decarbonise Europe and global growth.

21. Indeed, I could devote much more time to unfolding the vast richness of our continent. Yet, the path to realizing Africa's full potential is paved with significant challenges. Let's consider some sobering facts: In the last two decades, global investments in renewable energy soared to an impressive three trillion USD. But only a fraction of this - 60 billion USD or only 2%, found its way to Africa, despite our enormous potential and urgent energy needs.
22. A critical obstacle in this journey is the prohibitively high cost of capital. Private investors are demanding high premiums, in great part based on perceived risks. Consequently, we are burdened with borrowing costs at least five times higher than those of advanced economies, creating a vicious cycle of debt. This disparity not only hinders our progress but also makes any meaningful development financing unattainable.
23. This situation is indefensible, both morally and economically. And changing it is possible, but it requires our collective will and resourcefulness. Above all, it requires new forms of cooperation that are based on mutually beneficial strategies.
24. Europe has been an ally and partner to Africa for many years, encompassing a broad spectrum of initiatives that are very important for our continent. From economic cooperation that



fosters trade and investment to the vital steps taken in energy and climate change through initiatives like the Africa-EU Energy Partnership, we are making very steady progress.

25. Our collective efforts in peace and security, notably supported by the African Peace Facility, have been influential in promoting stability across the continent. In education and research, programs like Erasmus+ have opened new horizons for our youth, while joint efforts in healthcare have underscored the importance of robust health systems. We are working together on migration management, focusing on issues such as combating human trafficking and addressing the root causes of irregular migration. Initiatives such as the Global Gateway have the possibility to open new avenues for cooperation.
26. But we can and must do more. Above all, we must remain alert to the risk of conflict, as tensions and disagreements can escalate rapidly, with far-reaching and costly consequences. The conflict in the heart of Europe, something unimaginable in the 21st century, underscores this reality. In the face of such challenges, the role of Kenya as a stable democracy and an anchor state for peace and security in the region becomes increasingly significant. As the African Union Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) is concluding, Kenya as a frontline state will continue our support and collaboration with the government in Somalia in the fight against terrorism. This ongoing commitment is crucial for maintaining regional stability and we count on the EU's bilateral support to our efforts in this regard.
27. In another part of the world, the situation in Haiti highlights the global nature of security challenges. Grounded in United Nations resolutions, Multinational Security Support mission will need some 5,000 men and women to address the challenge posed by armed gangs, estimated to be around 9,000.



Currently, about eight countries, including Kenya, are willing to contribute their forces to Haiti, but there is a clear need for assurance of international support. The support from the EU will be instrumental in bolstering the initiative and providing the necessary resources and legitimacy.

Madam President, Members of the Parliament;

28. Fostering long-term peace and stability goes hand in hand with building sustainable economic foundations. And Africa is mapping out the road for green industrialisation and prosperity so that it can play its rightful role in shaping a better future for all. In this endeavour, the partnership between Europe and Africa must embody a reciprocal relationship, grounded in shared objectives and cooperative efforts. This synergy has the power to drive transformative results for both continents. Concrete, actionable steps are the key to realizing this mutually beneficial vision.
29. Firstly, Africa's journey to become a green industrial powerhouse needs the right type and amount of capital, especially in renewable energy and infrastructure. Such investment could catapult Africa to a future where energy access is universal by 2030, simultaneously slashing emissions from energy generation by some 80%.
30. Secondly, there is a necessary complement to capital: market access. In fact, one of the biggest contributions the EU can make to both addressing poverty in Africa and achieving global climate goals is through its demand for green products and services, including for carbon credits. Africa wants to compete. Crucially, we are not asking for further exemptions or a lower bar – but with high requirements on quality and integrity.



31. Thirdly, the EU has a golden opportunity to leverage high-quality African carbon credits, that conserve and expand natural carbon sinks, reduce emissions and remove atmospheric carbon. These days, not a week goes by without an exposé about bad carbon credits – often African. And whilst issues exist in the market, it is important to not lose sight of one of the core drivers: at the current price of 50 cents to a few dollars per tonne in the voluntary market, it is simply impossible to generate quality credits.
32. In the Nairobi Declaration, we committed to leaning forward in increasing the bar on quality and integrity on carbon and other relevant effects of these projects. It will be that much easier to do so, with the prospect of market access. In Kenya, the draft Carbon Markets Regulations is in advanced stage of finalization.
33. Fourthly, aligning European concessional and multilateral capital with Africa's climate agenda is also an economic agenda. It is about phasing down climate-incompatible funding to shift them toward climate action, unlock much more concessional finance and lower risks. Here, I invite the European Investment Bank to play a bigger role in Kenya and on the continent with its expertise and resources.
34. Fifthly, African economies are constrained by a lack of appropriate and sufficient finance and investment. As African countries, we pay 5 times as much for our debt as we would pay if the Multilateral Development Banks were appropriately capitalised. Those seeking investments for private projects face high costs of capital and unhelpfully short tenors, driven by both real and perceived risk factors. We face a chokehold in a vicious cycle: as countries, our ability to invest consistently and strategically in basic infrastructure, social services, and skills development is severely hampered. And lack of that investment



contributes to the high-risk premiums – and makes it harder for private projects to become viable and attractive.

35. There is a very long list of proposals to reform the International Financial Architecture. We support these – and more. And we are in good company: for example, the implementation of the Capital Adequacy Framework Review of the MDBs has broad support across G7 and G20. Yet our path to action is too slow. I call on all of us to accelerate and expand these measures – such as with the tax working group we are launching with France at COP28, which starts next week.
36. Lastly, Europe's experience in workforce development and reskilling offers invaluable insights. By learning from Europe's successful models in education and vocational training, we can build capacity and equip our youth with the competencies required in an evolving global economy.

Members of the Parliament;

37. Europe is a significant investor and trade partner in Africa, a relationship that has been fruitful over the years. Our collaborative efforts have helped generate millions of jobs and enhance livelihoods across the continent. This partnership is not only a cornerstone of our past and present but is also crucial for our future. I extend a warm invitation to European companies, institutions, and organizations to explore the many opportunities our continent has to offer. Join us in a collaborative endeavour to unearth and develop solutions that leverage our respective strengths, drive innovation and benefit not only Africa but also contribute to global progress.
38. Because our story does not stop with our two continents, this is a global story. The demands of our time are great and full of



uncertainty. Addressing these effectively hinges on a robust commitment to multilateralism and international cooperation. However, it is increasingly clear that the institutions and structures established in the 20th century are not fit for purpose. We must ensure they are equipped to address contemporary challenges and pave the way for inclusion, equality and prosperity.

39. This calls for a fundamental redefinition of international cooperation. We must move beyond arrangements that perpetuate cycles of indebtedness and dependence. Our aim should be to bring about real, additional financing that does not merely escalate debt burdens or facilitate the extraction of profits. Cooperation that does not lock in developing countries in fossil fuel dependency, but allows them to advance alongside the rest of the world in the transition to sustainable energy. Genuine partnerships that prioritize people and their well-being, on a livable planet.
40. In today's interconnected world, where the fortunes of all nations are tightly woven together, a new era of cooperation and collective action is necessary for a prosperous and peaceful world. In the face of threats that transcend borders and oceans, it is essential to adopt a clear-sighted and unified approach to confront climate change, combat poverty, and tackle conflicts.

Madam President, Members of the European Parliament

41. The annals of history are replete with instances where collective action has achieved what no single nation could accomplish alone. We are acutely aware that our decisions and actions will significantly shape the 21st century. Years from now, future generations will reflect on this era, scrutinising the choices we make in this moment.



42. Let it be said of us that we were visionaries, not just preoccupied with the present, but deeply invested in the future. Let our legacy be one of foresight, collaboration, and solidarity. Let us be guided by a deep commitment to ensuring a prosperous, equitable and sustainable world for those who will follow in our footsteps.

I thank you.

