



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY WILLIAM
RUTO, C.G.H., PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC
OF KENYA AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF
THE DEFENCE FORCES DURING A VISIT TO
THE KENYA RED CROSS**

APRIL 20TH, 2023

SOUTH C, NAIROBI COUNTY

**The Governor Of Kenya Red Cross Society,
Members Of The Kenya Red Cross-National Executive
Committee,
Acting Secretary-General,
Members,
Staff And Volunteers,**

Good morning,

1. I am grateful for this opportunity to engage once more with the Kenya Red Cross community.
2. This is a very significant opportunity for me because I pledged, when I was installed as the patron of the Society, that my role would extend much farther than merely bearing the title. I am interested in understanding the dynamic challenges faced by the Kenya Red Cross in its statutory role and, in particular, the manner in which the government and I can strengthen it.
3. I am here today because I appreciate the movement's critical role since the earliest years of our Republic. I share your commitment to effective humanitarian intervention and give my undertaking to support the Kenya Red Cross Society to be even more effective.
4. The Society's humanitarian leadership, especially in disaster risk management, is nothing short of excellent. This has been demonstrated time and again during various tragedies and crises where human life was in danger or there was risk of human suffering. On such occasions, the Society, through its nationwide network of thousands of volunteers, has risen to the occasion and served as a beacon of hope and an emblem of relief and recovery.
5. Most recently, during the dreadful season of fear and uncertainty as the Covid-19 pandemic ravaged the world, the Kenya Red Cross mobilised consistently to ensure that much needed help reached vulnerable people affected by the lockdowns and the disruption of vital supply chains. As a result, many lives were saved.



6. As an auxiliary to government, the Kenya Red Cross has been tremendous and its contribution excellent. The numbers used to evaluate and describe these contributions are quite impressive, but they hardly do justice to the magnitude of your social impact on a national scale.
7. For instance, the Kenya Red Cross has significantly strengthened community health systems by investing in capacity building through the training of 88,403 community health promoters on universal health coverage and Covid-19. This was done in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and also directly by facilitating community health service delivery through 7,049 promoters in 29 counties.
8. In 18 counties, the Society has supported capacity building to enhance community epidemic preparedness, detection and response. At the same time, it has mobilised two million people to receive the cholera vaccine.
9. To support social protection, the Kenya Red Cross has helped in the provision of cash transfers of more than KSh1 billion, enabling vulnerable households affected by drought to meet urgent food and nutritional needs.
10. In youth empowerment and livelihood enhancement, the Kenya Red Cross has supported 4,500 young people to enrol in vocational training and equipped 1,640 with start-up kits to enable them get to set up their own enterprises.
11. It is clear from these impressive statistics that in diligently performing its role, the Kenya Red Cross Society has not only complemented the government most capably, it has also made a major contribution to the foundations of our resilience as a nation.
12. We live in an increasingly precarious era where resilience, along with mitigation and adaptation, has evolved as the primary response to the impacts of climate change. The Kenya Red Cross has demonstrated that these responses are feasible with appropriate mobilisation and commitment.



13. This morning, we reflected, consulted and deliberated extensively over a broad range of issues of concern with which our communities continue to struggle. We reflected specifically on the looming humanitarian catastrophe arising from extensive environmental destruction and climate change.
14. I am delighted with our emphatic consensus that the state of the environment contributes significantly to the well-being of our nation's communities. Changing ecological patterns can exert severe impacts on communities and climate change is a major driver of devastating natural disasters.
15. As we enhance our preparedness and overall capacity to respond effectively to these disasters, the government is explicitly committed to collaborating with all stakeholders in rolling back climate change, principally through the restoration of our national forest cover. The ongoing efforts of the Kenya Red Cross Society to plant more than five million trees over the next five years is very good news. This initiative supports the government's target to plant 15 billion trees over the next 10 years.
16. I commend these efforts most and welcome other organisations to join the project with more initiatives throughout the country.
17. During our reflections, we agreed that there is great need and a huge opportunity for the Kenya Red Cross, in conjunction with the government, to support local communities in adapting to the impact of climate change. We will, therefore, advocate and provide support for communities to access global funds dedicated to climate adaptation in terms of the agreed COP 27 framework on loss and damage.
18. More than 5.1 million people have been affected by drought and the Kenya Red Cross continues to perform an admirably responsive and effective service to them. Although the rainy season has commenced, many households in the most severely affected areas remain in a critical situation. It will take at least a year for these



communities to start embarking on the journey to recovery. I hope the Society will continue to play its noble role beyond the emergency response phase into post-drought recovery and the building of long-term community resilience.

19. Globally, climate change has increased the frequency and magnitude of extreme climate occurrences. This has placed Kenya on a climate disaster pendulum, which swings between drought and flooding, necessitating a new disaster management framework, which focuses on a preventative approach.
20. Such an approach must leverage the progress made in climate science, which has made actionable data more reliable, enabling us to predict, prepare and respond to disasters much more effectively and way before they actually happen. The government is committed to deploying better and predictable analysis in designing humanitarian responses to emergencies. It is highly encouraging that the Kenya Red Cross has invested early-warning and early-action systems to prepare communities for effective disaster response. These complementary commitments signify our collective readiness for a national multi-agency Drought and Floods Early Action Protocols which, I have been informed, has been taken through simulation sessions.
21. I must emphasise that protecting, supporting and mobilising to the rescue of populations in times of need remains a cardinal accountability of the government at all times. This includes providing the necessary resources for humanitarian and development operations as well as the coordination of external support. To perform this critical function properly, the government is committed to linking national development planning with national disaster risk management.
22. In recognition of the need to strengthen the capacity of local institutions, the government and the Kenya Red Cross jointly reiterate the call to urgently re-configure international humanitarian financing mechanisms in favour of national



institutions and local capacity in line with the localisation agenda adopted at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2015.

23. I call on our partners, donors and other stakeholders to join the government in supporting the Kenya Red Cross to undertake its auxiliary role in connection with humanitarian matters. Enabling the Society to perform its role in full enhances Kenya's standing as a good and kind neighbour in our region that continues to struggle with the unfortunate profile of a troubled neighbourhood.
24. I thank the Kenya Red Cross community in its entirety for the warm reception, engaging deliberations and worthwhile reflections during our conversations as I toured this impressive organisation. On behalf of the citizens and their government, I thank you for the selfless service you continue to perform for our nation. In particular, I must especially appreciate Kenya Red Cross volunteers in their thousands for their courageous service and noble sacrifices.

Thank you.
God bless you.

