



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

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C.G.H. PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA
AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE
FORCES DURING THE 61ST JAMHURI DAY
CELEBRATION**

DECEMBER 12, 2024

UHURU GARDENS, NAIROBI

1. It is with immense pride that I join you in celebrating the 61st anniversary of our nation's birth. At this pivotal moment, we reflect on the value of our sovereignty and celebrate the enduring legacy of those whose patriotic efforts took down the bastions of imperialism. Their sacrifice set our Republic on the path of liberty, unity, peace, enterprise, and democracy.
2. Today, we affirm - by reflecting on what we have accomplished since raising the flag of our nation - that by staying true to our national identity, we have remained consistent through seasons of abundance and scarcity. We assert our essential collective character, defined by the values and principles that inspired our forefathers to struggle and sacrifice, persist and persevere, endeavour and endure until oppression gave way to freedom, exclusion gave way to unity, and marginalisation gave way to equality.
3. We remember that our nation was born from the painful sacrifice and the tireless, often lonely, and gruelling efforts of men and women driven by the conviction that their sweat, tears and blood were a worthy price to pay for ushering millions of their brothers and sisters from the dark, cold night of imperial brutality into the warm daylight of freedom.
4. Before 1963, our people were compelled to work hard to enrich colonial settlers. After 1963, our people laboured by choice to provide for their families and build our nation. Before 1963, education, health and personal security were privileges reserved for the colonial elite. After 1963, they became the right of all citizens. Before 1963, African people existed to be seen and not to be heard. After 1963, we reclaimed our inalienable sovereignty to its fullest extent.



5. The year 1963, therefore, marked Kenya's profound moment of historical change, yet it also represents an equally fundamental moment of essential and defining continuity. Our circumstances changed forever, and our horizon was illuminated by the forces of possibility - the dawn of opportunity shining brightly. Yet our values, hard work, unity, and determination remained constant. We applied these same principles to building our nation after liberation.
6. There is an important point worth emphasising: In our time, our generation must never focus so much on the present that we forget where we were only six decades ago. We must not ignore the fact that our freedom, democracy, and development were achieved through the contributions of millions of determined patriots, nor should we underestimate the time and patience it took for these small, progressive efforts to accumulate into an unstoppable momentum towards freedom and nation-building.
7. It may have been easy to despise individual freedom fighters as they ventured into a forest of uncertainty and to underestimate their ambition to free Kenya from colonialism. Yet that is precisely how we gained our independence. Courage and hard work, determination and patience, and the confidence that we are not alone are always what it takes to make meaningful strides as a nation.
8. Today, I want to encourage my fellow citizens to keep this perspective in mind. As we aspire for more and better, we must not give way to despair, pessimism, or scepticism when faced with challenges but instead forge our path forward with courage, hope, determination, and ambition.



9. I declare my unwavering faith in the ability of our people to interrogate policies and hold the government accountable. This is the essence of democratic freedom - a civic duty for citizens, a responsibility for leaders, and a necessary imperative for our success and progress.
10. We have experienced a particularly challenging time as a people, largely owing to dynamics beyond our control, resulting in a high cost of living, greater difficulty in finding employment, and fewer opportunities for entrepreneurs. Consequently, there was widespread anxiety about the economic stability of our nation, demanding urgent and appropriate interventions and effective solutions.
11. The Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda was inspired by our determination to confront these fundamental challenges directly and with ambition. Our aim was, first, to lay the foundation for robust economic activity to generate millions of opportunities at the bottom of the economic ladder each year and drive substantive, inclusive and sustainable growth. Our key priorities were to reduce the cost of living, stimulate enterprise, boost productivity, create jobs, foster a conducive environment for institutional and infrastructural development, and promote investments in manufacturing, industrialisation, and export competitiveness.
12. As a starting point, it was critical for us to tighten our belts and make significant sacrifices to reset our public finances on a sustainable path, enabling intensified investments in the strategic pillars of our plan and the cross-cutting enablers of rapid transformation. I acknowledge the work we have done and the milestones achieved in creating the necessary conditions for progress in every value chain that supports the pillars of our plan.



13. There is a time to resist and a time to accept; a time to deny and a time to admit; a time to doubt and a time to believe. In the face of undeniable evidence, scepticism must give way to confidence, and we must reject the deceptive embrace of disinformation and fake news. The results and positive impact of our collective pursuit of fundamental economic change can no longer be wished away.
14. Ladies and gentlemen, financial inclusion is now a reality for millions of Kenyans. The Hustler Fund is marking its second anniversary on a highly successful note, having empowered Kenyans by lending a total of KSh60 billion so far, liberating millions from predatory lenders and precarious financial situations, enabling them to meet their needs, fund their hustles, and build their credit scores.
15. Our ongoing conversation with borrowers focuses on concerns related to the short borrowing duration, modest loan amounts, and the time required to increase borrowing limits. In response to this feedback, the Fund has designed a new product, the Bridge Loan, to help Kenyans with good credit scores transition from personal loans to enhanced facilities offering larger loan amounts with longer repayment periods. This will enable Kenyans to pursue bigger opportunities and better investments.
16. Ladies and gentlemen, not only have we registered successive historic gains against the shame of hunger for 3 seasons, but we are also firmly on the path towards surplus production. This impressive rise in productivity has multiplied the incomes of farmers in the maize, tea, sugar, coffee and dairy value chains.



17. There is no doubt that this agricultural transformation is the direct result of our strategic decision to shift public resources from consumption subsidies to supporting productivity. Food is now more accessible to households than before and, as I stated in the State of the Nation Address, our country now boasts substantial national food stocks: 95 million 50kg bags of maize, 9 million bags of beans, 10 million bags of wheat, and 2 million bags of rice. Step by step, we are building a food-secure Kenya where every family can afford and access a meal.
18. Farmers have brought more land under cultivation and produced much more per acre than before, thanks to the timely availability of subsidised inputs and extension services. Agro-industries have more raw materials, and value addition is on the rise. The agro-industrial sector is also creating more jobs each year as we gear up to compete in various export markets driven by expanding intra-African trade, opportunities in the European Union and United Kingdom markets, and our growing competitiveness in global markets.
19. Ladies and gentlemen, the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda prioritises digital transformation as a cornerstone of inclusive economic growth. This is why we are undertaking an ambitious expansion of our national digital infrastructure by deploying a fibre optic network to connect over 74,000 public institutions and establish 25,000 public Wi-Fi hotspots because digital transformation is a critical enabler in creating opportunities across all sectors. We intend to use this infrastructure to extend Internet connectivity to 8.5 million homes and businesses and eliminate the digital divide which undermines technological inclusivity in homes, schools, villages and counties.



20. I take this opportunity to affirm the significant progress already made, which is accelerating due to the digitisation of government services. Through the e-Citizen portal, we have digitised 20,855 government services, streamlining public service delivery, enhancing transparency and efficiency, eliminating opportunities for corruption, and increasing the visibility and mobilisation of public revenues. The transformative power of this single initiative to improve citizen experience with public services and enhance the government's ability to manage public resources effectively highlights the immense value of digital transformation.
21. Additionally, our digital transformation strategy is making significant contributions to skills development and job creation. For example, Ajira Digital and Jitume Digital are advancing our vision to equip 20 million citizens with ICT skills, fostering entrepreneurship and enhancing inclusive digital literacy. In other words, an additional 20 million Kenyans are being prepared for high productivity in the digital economy. We have also adopted the integration of creative industry courses into technical and vocational colleges as a reliable mechanism to build a skilled workforce.
22. These robust measures form the foundation of our strategy to promote the emergence of a fully-fledged digital economy, leveraging Kenya's position as a regional hub for software development and digital exports. These initiatives are supported by key interventions, such as the establishment of institutional and incentive frameworks to promote investments, foster collaborations, and encourage the transfer of digital technologies, with a particular focus on AI and blockchain. Through these efforts, we are empowering local digital innovators and tech entrepreneurs to drive economic diversification and resilience.



23. Ladies and gentlemen, the discourse around universal healthcare remains lively, with concerns being raised about eligibility for coverage, the capability of the facilities to deliver services, and the alignment of contributions with benefits.
24. Under Taifa Care, our inclusive, universal, efficient, and transparent healthcare service model, we are implementing a transition on an unprecedented scale. We have successfully transitioned 5.6 million citizens from the National Health Insurance Fund and registered 11 million Kenyans under the Social Health Insurance Fund. This means that, in just two months, 11 million Kenyans who previously lacked access to healthcare services are now registered, with the registration process going on full steam in every part of Kenya.
25. I commend Kirinyaga, Nyeri, Bomet, Embu, and Lamu, the five leading counties so far in Taifa care registration. At the same time, I encourage the people of Marsabit, Garissa, Mandera, West Pokot, and Turkana counties to mobilise, register, and take advantage of the benefits of this transformative programme.
26. Taifa Care ensures healthcare access for all registered citizens without discrimination of any kind. The program has accurately determined the cost of each healthcare service and product, ring-fenced resources for equipment and facility improvements, and leveraged digital technology to radically enhance the management, coordination, and delivery of healthcare, promoting efficiency, transparency, inclusivity, and sustainability. No public service delivery project of this scale and ambition has ever been undertaken in the history of our country. We are confident that we will quickly surpass the 16.5 million citizens so far registered and provide all Kenyans with high-quality healthcare that is efficient, effective, affordable and sustainable.



27. Having said this, I wish to ask you this important question: Have you registered? Those who have registered often find that many of the issues, concerns, fears and questions are fully addressed to their satisfaction. I therefore encourage every Kenyan to register and enjoy the fundamental constitutional right to healthcare.
28. Ladies and gentlemen, after two and a quarter years, the decent, durable, dignified, and affordable houses we promised Kenyans are finally here. Since September this year, 1,200 affordable housing units have been completed. Additionally, the State Department of Housing has advertised 4,888 units available for sale to the public through the Boma Yangu platform. Our goal to increase the number of mortgages from 30,000 to one million has now shifted gears. Our delivery pipeline for affordable housing now has a total of 124,000 units at various stages of development across Kenya, while a total of 840,000 planned projects over the next four years are projected to create 1 million jobs.
29. Ladies and gentlemen, despite the multiple challenges and crises we have had to grapple with, we have succeeded in keeping our commitments, taking steady steps towards our aspirations and moving our nation closer to its destiny. Work is underway across the country, and opportunities are opening up for many citizens, especially the youth. Over the past 2 years, the number of employment opportunities has increased with new jobs for teachers, agriculture sector workers, healthcare professionals, building and construction, seafarers and outside Kenya under our labour mobility programme.
30. The affordable housing strategic pillar of the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda has so far created 200,000 jobs and thousands of indirect opportunities across the building and construction value chain. The universal healthcare coverage



pillar has engaged 107,000 community health promoters, alongside other healthcare professionals employed to support our vision of a functional national healthcare system. In addition, jobs will be created in healthcare innovation, service delivery, and ICT support for the digital health system, unlocking opportunities nationwide. Furthermore, we have recruited 56,000 teachers to address the chronic teacher shortage and moved the national teacher-to-student ratio closer to the United Nations recommendation of 1 teacher for every 40 learners. This December, we are hiring an additional 20,000 teachers, while our rejuvenated micro, small, and medium enterprises have created 840,000 jobs this year.

31. To address the urgent need to create opportunities for the hundreds of thousands of young men and women entering the labour market annually, we have expanded the employment opportunity spectrum and implemented strategies to secure jobs abroad to facilitate mobility and placement of suitably qualified Kenyans. Since September 2022, more than 243,000 Kenyans have secured international job opportunities in the healthcare, agriculture, and construction sectors, among others, and in the last two months alone, 12,000 have secured jobs abroad. So far, we have completed bilateral labour frameworks with seven countries, while agreements with two more countries are awaiting signature. Additionally, agreements with 13 other countries are at various stages of negotiations, and we project to connect up to 2 million Kenyans with jobs abroad once completed.
32. Our Digital Superhighway and creative economy programme, which involves laying 100,000 km of last-mile fibre-optic infrastructure and establishing digital hubs nationwide, is designed to create digital jobs at the grassroots. To date, 690,000 citizens have been trained in digital skills through the Ajira and Jitume programmes in various learning institutions,



TVETs, and Constituency Innovation Hubs, out of which 180,000 youth have already been linked to online job opportunities, well on track to creating one million jobs through this programme.

33. Our Special Economic Zones and Export Processing Zones are boosting investment, manufacturing, and exports, creating jobs and increasing national wealth. In the past two years, we have licensed over 80 companies within these zones, creating 14,000 jobs. The six Export Processing Zones flagship projects in Busia, Kirinyaga, Murang'a, Eldoret, Kwale, and Nakuru, now being developed, are set to generate 30,000 more jobs. Additionally, the ongoing operationalisation of Dongo Kundu and Naivasha special economic zones will create 26,000 jobs, facilitating private special economic zone investments and supporting county and public special economic zone operations.
34. At the same time, our youth are actively contributing to climate action, urban neighbourhood improvement, and landscape restoration through the Kenya Urban Resilience or ClimateWorX program. Recognising the urgency, scale, and importance of these efforts, ClimateWorX is designed to be ambitious. So far, 21,560 Kenyans have been engaged in Nairobi, with nearly half - 48% - being women, reflecting a strong commitment to gender parity. The programme will soon be expanded nationwide to engage 200,000 young men and women in critical infrastructure and environmental projects within our towns and communities. This initiative not only offers opportunities but also empowers youth to strengthen the foundations of urban living and tackle climate change.
35. We are also investing in local content creation to enhance the quality and competitiveness of Kenyan creative products for export while facilitating the development of digital platforms to distribute Kenyan creativity to global audiences. I am confident



that we are firmly on course to transform opportunities for our creative industry.

36. I salute the actors in our creative spaces whose work brings life to our cities, streets and screens, yet their achievements are overshadowed by injustice. Musicians, who are the heartbeat and soul of our culture, have long been denied their rightful earnings. It is unacceptable that an artist earns as little as 10,000 shillings a year while those tasked with collecting their royalties pocket millions monthly. This injustice must end. The Kenya Copyright Board, in conjunction with industry players and E-Citizen, must establish a transparent, real-time system for royalty collection and distribution to rightful owners and beneficiaries.
37. As we champion this cause, Kenya is also preparing for global leadership by bidding to host the 2026 World Creative Economy Conference, signalling our commitment to celebrate our talent and showcase our vibrant culture to the world. Hosting this conference will be a bold declaration of Kenya's leadership in the creative economy.
38. Our committed interventions are creating jobs and opportunities, and this is only the beginning. We are building on the foundation we have laid to create more jobs going forward. The essence of the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda is to enhance our capacity for incremental achievement and thus accelerate our progress in delivering our commitments for the benefit of all Kenyans.
39. What I wish to emphasise on this Jamhuri Day is that regardless of how difficult circumstances get, and despite obstacles, resistance and anxiety, it remains the mandate of leadership to keep true to their word and the duty of government to deliver. We have every intention of fulfilling our commitments and are at



the point where the first projects are successfully entering maturity.

40. The deliberate and intentional effort to develop effective strategies for creating employment opportunities within our broader economic transformation agenda is bearing fruit. From the current numbers, it is clear that employment opportunities, whether domestic, international, or online, will increase significantly in the coming days. We are determined to build a labour market capable of absorbing as many job seekers as possible, cognisant of the output of our education and training institutions, which produce talented, skilled, and motivated young people. By doing the hard work and heavy lifting now, we are laying the foundation for citizens to seize opportunities in the future.

41. As we do this, let us reflect on the lessons of history and rise above our political differences to deliver for Kenya. Those who came before us overcame far more turbulent divisions to score a historic victory whose everlasting legacy benefits us today and will endure for posterity. As they fought hard to reclaim our sovereignty, the enemies of our freedom deployed state-of-the-art technologies of the time, the radio and the airplane, to disseminate disinformation and propaganda. This was meant to discourage, trick and deceive people that freedom fighters had been defeated and that their leaders had been captured and neutralised. Our heroes and heroines were not deterred and, inspired by the righteousness of their cause and the transformational moment they were in, soldiered on courageously. On 12th December, therefore, every Kenyan witnessed their vindication as our majestic flag rose and, collectively, we reclaimed our proud Jamhuri. Jamhuri Day is also a moment for Kenyans to expose the fake news aimed at



discrediting our ambition, sabotaging our hope and seeking to dampen our resolve.

42. I have no doubt that the national economic transformation agenda will succeed and deliver for the people of Kenya. I have no problem with discourse, criticism and alternative proposals. In fact, I welcome them and listen to feedback in order to learn, improve and become better. At the same time, I see clearly that a lot of what passes for facts are falsehoods and that most opposition is based on inaccurate representations and outright disinformation. We are at the stage in social development when digital technologies have immense capacity to amplify disinformation, magnify fake news and distort facts beyond all recognition. If we give in to these emerging negative trends, we shall pay with our freedom, democracy and development.
43. I therefore urge all Kenyans to participate fully in our democratic discourse, even as we work hard in nation-building. At all times, let us endeavour to engage on the basis of truth. Failure to do so will take us down the path of negativity, tear us away from the values we cherish and turn us into a people estranged from unity who sabotage development, undermine democracy and destroy our Republic in the pursuit of political expediency.
44. When we say that the cost of basic food commodities has come down, it is a fact. When we say that inflation has gone down, it is a fact. When we say that our farmers are producing more and better, it is a fact, and when we say that Kenyans who have registered for Taifa Care are receiving better services than before, it is a fact. We encourage everyone, including our critics, to engage on the basis of facts and the truth. If some of us persist in the culture of reckless negativity, for how long will cynics mobilise Kenyans to deny facts that they can touch, feel and see? What will they say in a few weeks' time when we begin



to give keys to the new owners of affordable housing units? What will they say of the thousands of plumbers, electricians, teachers, health workers, building and construction workers, digital workers and many more who are already at work, including the 300 young men and women who were flagged off by my deputy yesterday to work abroad?

45. I am confident in the future of our nation and the capacity of our national transformation agenda to deliver because I appreciate the strategies we have put in place, the work underway and the people's motivation to make their contribution. I count myself as one of many millions of Kenyans who want the best for our nation and all its people and are committed to putting in the effort required to make our dreams come true. We are driven by strong hope and unwavering optimism, as well as an unflinching desire to reach for a better tomorrow. It is confidence based on understanding, hope built on truth and optimism that stands on facts.

46. We must do all we can to maintain the essential character of our Republic as an open and free democratic society. This implies that we must also do all we can to ensure that our political competition and rivalry never degenerate into a contest to assault democracy, oppose development and demoralise the people. We must remember that whatever else sets us apart, we are united by a desire to achieve the best for Kenya and its people. With this in mind, we must promote inclusion and broaden our platform for collective engagement to allow articulation of diverse viewpoints and the expression of fresh, new and bold approaches. To be transformational, we must be ready to transform ourselves and our strategies on a continuous basis.



47. I will continue to reach out to Kenyans of all walks of life, regardless of their ideological persuasion, to maximise the cross-pollination of the flower of our Republic and guarantee robust seeds for future seasons. You must never underestimate your power as citizens and your ability to create positive change individually and all of us collectively. Over time, we have made gradual and steady changes to many of the economic development strategies in order to take on board feedback from the people. In fact, the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda has in-built mechanisms to improve on the basis of this feedback because we recognise that, as leaders, every day of work is a day of learning from the people and that every good idea must always give way to a better one. Listening, therefore, is a primary component of effective leadership, and national transformation is a collective enterprise of all citizens.
48. I am grateful to distinguished patriots who have demonstrated outstanding leadership across the political aisle for the spirit of goodwill in which we have engaged to address critical national issues, including resolving the inclusivity challenge by formulating a broad-based government. I also appreciate the good wishes, encouragement and support from leaders with whom I continue to discuss matters of importance to our nation. I am persuaded that together, we can achieve much more and much sooner for Kenya and that the future of our dreams is now within sight.
49. I readily concede that we are yet to reach the destination of our aspirations because we have not yet delivered fully on all our commitments. Having said that, it is also a fact that we are no longer where we were a year, let alone 2 years ago. We have moved beyond pledges and commitments and are now making progress with our implementation strategies.



There is now sufficient evidence of an undeniable character that together, the people of Kenya are hard at work to achieve their shared vision of a nation transformed.

50. Our ability to feed the people and keep them healthy, to empower them and connect them with opportunities, to keep them safe and protect their freedom, is improving by leaps and bounds. When we all unite, inspired by a shared aspiration, to undertake nation-building, we shall make our nation great, and our collective legacy will inspire present and future generations.

**Thank you,
God bless you,
God bless Kenya!**

