



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY WILLIAM
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DEFENCE FORCES AND CHAIR OF THE
COMMITTEE OF AFRICAN HEADS OF STATE
AND GOVERNMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE AT
THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE AFRICA
YOUTH CLIMATE ASSEMBLY**

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NAIROBI, KENYA

- **Young people of Africa, good morning;**

1. The youth have often been told that they are the custodians of tomorrow, that they are the future and that they hold the future. I recognise that these sentiments have become clichés. However, I am here to say to you, the young people of Africa, that you have a crucial role to play today. I warmly welcome all of you to the African Youth Climate Assembly at Africa's Green City under the Sun, Nairobi, Kenya. Welcome Home!
2. Two months ago, under the Eiffel Tower, I called upon the youth of the world to join us in Nairobi to champion the global climate positive growth agenda. Witnessing brilliant young minds from across our youthful continent showcasing climate solutions that stand just an investment away from monumental scalability and impact, brings me immense joy.
3. Standing at the centre of this amphitheatre, at the iconic Kenyatta International Convention Centre, with Kenya nearly equidistant from the northern and southern parts of Africa, I know that I am positioned at the heart of Africa, representing the young people from every corner of our continent. This can only be testament to Africa emerging as the leader in driving the global shift towards climate action. I urge you, African youth, to take action. Let us initiate this transformative shift together!
4. Africa's youth is solution-oriented. You yearn for a vibrant economy powered by green jobs, and you possess a strong determination to scale up and maximise opportunities for climate solutions. With the convening of this Africa Youth Climate Assembly, you have fought your way to the table. I can only say, welcome - Karibuni sana!



5. Africa's future has the potential to shine brightly. As the world's youngest continent, we will comprise 25 per cent of the global workforce by 2050 and 40 per cent by 2100. This immense energy, power and entrepreneurial spirit can revolutionise not only our continent, but also the world.
6. Without Africa's entrepreneurial contributions, the world cannot achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Scientists agree that failing to do so would result in a disaster for life on Earth, humankind and civilisation as we know it.
7. Frankly, there's no need to tell Africa, particularly its youth, about the challenges of climate change. In a recent youth survey, 90 per cent of Kenya's young people indicated that they and their communities have been impacted by climate change. Climate change ranked among the top 3 most important issues for over 60 per cent of them. Across Egypt, Nigeria and Kenya, between 74 and 88 per cent of youth are somewhat or very concerned about climate change, and changing rain patterns, extreme weather events and the socio-economic repercussions. These were most frequently cited as the negative impacts of climate change.
8. So, why do I believe our future can be remarkably bright? After all, we must generate 30 million jobs each year to accommodate our rapidly growing youthful workforce – and that's a challenge even without the added complications of climate change.
9. My optimism emanates from the fact that Africa's youth is a pivotal part of the solution. Additionally, our untapped potential in renewable energy and natural resources is a key factor. These three elements – labour, energy and natural assets – are the driving forces behind the technical feasibility and commercial viability of the solutions we need for tomorrow.



10. These solutions will safeguard our natural carbon sinks, transition our consumption to be greener and decarbonised – not only in Africa, but also globally – and implement large-scale carbon removal.
11. Africa has the capacity to expand its economy and prosperity while avoiding worsening the climate situation and, in fact, offering climate-smart solutions—a Climate Positive Green Growth. Our youth can imagine that future. You signal that if climate action can enhance livelihoods and support families, you will stand behind and support it.
12. Over the next few days, African and global political leaders, investors, industry leaders, and scientific experts will explore how Africa can harness its potential to play a pivotal role in the global fight against climate change. We will also focus on how we can achieve equitable and sustainable prosperity for all, by seizing these opportunities.
13. To turn this vision into reality, Africa's youth is indispensable. I eagerly anticipate learning from you about the ongoing initiatives and innovations, as well as the support you require. As we engage with various stakeholders and decision-makers, it's crucial for us to understand what you need in order to shape and accelerate these opportunities.
14. Let us now work on accommodating your dreams—an economic future painted green and brimming with boundless potential for collective climate finance solutions. Your dreams of climate action are too vast to be contained; they command space, priority, financing and scaling up.
15. Your engagement paves the way and inspires us. We rely on your entrepreneurial spirit, your capacity to innovate and your courage to challenge us, your political leaders. Demand accountability from us, demand that we give priority to green



growth as a way of attracting investments, building skills, creating and supporting opportunities, and providing market access.

16. Above all, demand that we set our sights on the future – our future, your future.

**I thank you,
God Bless you,
God Bless Africa.**

