



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. HON. WILLIAM RUTO, PHD.,
CGH., PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA
AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE
FORCES DURING THE CONCLUSION OF THE
KENYA-EUROPEAN UNION ECONOMIC
PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (EPA)
NEGOTIATIONS**

JUNE 19TH, 2023

STATE HOUSE, NAIROBI



- **Mr. Valdis Dombrovskis, European Commission Executive Vice-President and European Union Trade Commissioner,**
- **Cabinet Secretaries and Principal Secretaries,**
- **Ambassador Henriette Geiger,**
- **Ambassador of the European Union to Kenya,**
- **Other Ambassadors representing European Union member States,**
- **The private sector,**

Distinguished Guests,

1. We are honoured to have this opportunity to host you, Your Excellency, Valdis Dombrovskis and your delegation in our capital and our country. I take this opportunity, on behalf of the people of Kenya to extend a warm welcome to you and say: "***Karibu Nairobi, Karibu Kenya!***"
2. It has been brought to my attention that this is your first ever visit to Kenya, and indeed to the African Continent. I have also been informed you have already found time to visit the Nairobi National Park, a horticulture exporter to the EU and some flower farms. Please feel at home, and freely enjoy Kenya's legendary hospitality, the warmth and friendliness of our people, and the diverse and delightful attractions that make up Magical Kenya.
3. I wish to point out that having a **national wildlife park** on one side on our modern, cosmopolitan capital, and



a **closed canopy forest** to the other side demonstrates our fundamental attribute as Kenyans: the ability to blend diverse elements and generate sustainable complementarity.

4. The government and the people of Kenya acknowledge with great appreciation the cordial relations that exist between Kenya and the European Union (EU), out of which a long-standing and fruitful partnership has emerged and grown to cover several areas of mutual interest, including trade, investment and development cooperation, as well as a strong bond of friendship between our people.
5. We are here today to mark a very important milestone in our remarkable partnership: the conclusion of the negotiation of the **EU-Kenya Economic Partnership Agreement**. I recall when we last met in Brussels in March 29th this year, we tasked the Chief Negotiators to expedite the outstanding aspects of the process with the view of reaching a conclusion by the summer. I am therefore greatly pleased that this has been accomplished, and thank EU's Director Trade for Africa and Kenya's Principal Secretary for Trade together with their technical teams for this achievement.
6. Today's milestone also represents a giant step forward for the East African Community Partner States, as it builds on the provisions of the Economic Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the East African Community Partner States, whose negotiation was concluded in 2014. It further develops on the decision of the **21st Ordinary Summit of the East African Community Heads of States Summit** on 27th February 2021. The EU-Kenya Agreement will therefore retain potential to evolve as an intrinsic feature, insofar as it shall remain open to accession by EAC Partner States, in line with



the decision of the **Summit**, which recognized the need to permit some Partner States to move forward and commence engagements with the EU with a view to starting the **EU-EAC-EPA** implementation under the principle of variable geometry.

7. This achievement also represents a fundamental deliverable under the **EU-Kenya Strategic Dialogue**, our mechanism for advancing our common strategic interests in trade, investment, peace and security in the region, and the transition to green energy and the digital economy. It signals our long-term commitment to ensure that farmers—including those in the flower, coffee, tea, fish, peas, and the edible fruits and nuts sectors—are assured of a predictable market.
8. Although the EU is already Kenya's largest export destination, accounting for 21.1% of Kenya's total exports, the Agreement we have negotiated provides significant opportunities to enhance this performance. It assures a stable market for industrialists, mostly in the European Union, that deal in machinery and mechanical appliances, pharmaceutical products, chemicals, electrical machinery, beverages and other processed products.
9. Additionally, the Agreement will grant Kenyan products immediate duty-free-quota-free entry into the EU from the day it comes into effect. And in recognition of our varied stage of progress along the development journey, products from the European Union will progressively receive duty reductions over a period of 25 years.
10. Beyond trade, the Agreement is also designed to stimulate investment and manufacturing. Consequently, Kenya is prepared to strengthen its manufacturing sector in order to enhance our exports to the EU globally. We are finally ready



to take our place as a global player in export-led manufacturing and services. I encourage European companies that import goods from Kenya, to invest in value addition here and export finished, value added products out of Kenya.

11. A further achievement of the negotiated agreement is that it anchors Kenya as the natural Hub for European companies seeking markets in the **EAC, COMESA, SADC and the African Continental Free Trade Area**. By locating your investment in Kenya, you will gain market access to the rest of the African continent. I am pleased that we are doing this at a time when we are also advancing the implementation of the **Global Gateway Africa-Europe Investment Package**, which was announced at the 6th EU-AU Summit in February 2022. It will promote trade and investment, accompanied by trade-related development cooperation, thereby further deepening the economic ties between the EU and Kenya while, boosting sustainable economic growth and job creation. It will also provide new opportunities for Kenyan and European businesses, including **Micro-, Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises**.
12. Even though the negotiations are now concluded, it is important to note that the Chief Negotiators will now lead their teams in finalizing the text and proceed to initiate the procedures that culminate in ratification and eventual entry into force of the Agreement. I call upon them to move with speed so that this Agreement can be implemented next year.
13. The EU – Kenya Economic Partnership Agreement also anchors a framework which enables us to direct our strategic focus towards tackling climate change, and further commits the parties to take active measures to promote



sustainable trade. I look forward to deepening the partnership between Kenya and the European Union in signaling to the world that trade and investment must not imperil the planet and can, rather, save it.

14. The Agreement will facilitate the achievement of Kenya's ambition to transition to the green economy. We will deepen trade and trade-related policy measures that will create a supportive business ecosystem for Kenyan firms to participate in sustainable global value chains.
15. In addition, Kenya now has further impetus to tap into sustainable global value chains, invest in competitiveness for the sustainable manufacture of high value products, accelerate technology acquisition as well as innovation for product development, widen the opportunities available in green finance and investment, and strengthen our framework for export trade, including recalibrating our foreign trade and commercial service sector to align it with emerging export opportunities.
16. Under our bottom-up agenda for economic transformation, we are committed to increase our manufacturing share of GDP and to also lift our export to GDP ratio. This is the purpose of our flagship projects, the **County Aggregation and Industrial Parks (CAIPs)**, to be established in all our 47 counties to maximize output through aggregation and value addition. I welcome members of the European Union, through our development partners program, to consider adopting a County Aggregation and Industrial Park and promote a seamless supply of commodities through this initiative.
17. To facilitate the uptake of opportunities made available under the new agreement, the government remains committed to the continuous implementation of the



business climate reforms agenda and to sustain our position as a continental leader in institutional evolution.

18. For instance, you are aware of the steps we have taken to automate over 5,000 government services to make it much easier for citizens to access government services, and for investors and entrepreneurs to do business.
19. I therefore wish to call upon you to work with us to sustain our partnership and collaborate in proactively translating the opportunities unlocked by this agreement into tangible outcomes that actualise sustainable development.
20. As I conclude, I wish to reiterate the commitment of the Government of Kenya to continue collaborating with the European Union and the private sector as well as we walk this journey toward building stronger partnerships.

Thank you.

