



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY WILLIAM SAMOEI
RUTO, CGH; PHD; PRESIDENT AND COMMANDER-
IN-CHIEF OF THE KENYA DEFENCE FORCES, AT
THE HIGH-LEVEL EVENT ON CLIMATE FINANCE
FOR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY**

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ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA



Excellences, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. Let me appreciate the AU Commission and FAO for organising this important event.
2. I am sure this topic is close to all our hearts. Like many of you, I am a farmer and I, therefore, understand first-hand the challenges the sector faces.
3. The agriculture sector accounts for 35 per cent of Africa's GDP and employs more people than any other sector. At the same time, the sector is highly sensitive to temperature changes and extreme weather events.
4. Due to the effects of climate change, agricultural yields are under great pressure, and farmers, pastoralists and people dependent on agriculture are among the most vulnerable to climate change impacts.
5. Yet extreme weather events are not relenting. January 2024 was said to be the warmest January on record, and it was the eighth record-breaking month in a row.
6. The last 12 months (between Feb 2023 – Jan 2024) were the first time when global temperatures were more than 1.5C above the pre-industrial baseline. Last year broke many records, including being the hottest year.
7. The failure to limit temperature rises to 1.5°C in line with the Paris Agreement is having devastating consequences for societies and ecosystems. It also means that resources required to cope and respond will continue to rise exponentially into trillions of dollars.



8. For Africa, as the climate impact worsens and becomes more expensive to deal with, priority must be on adaptation to protect our communities from severe weather events given the lowest level of emissions accounting for less than 4%.
9. The crucial question is how to urgently unlock the capital needed for climate adaptation.
10. Finance for adaptation lags considerably behind that for mitigation, and progress on adaptation financing is slowing as climate impact rises as confirmed by the 2023 UNEP Adaptation Gap report.
11. The report estimates that developing countries will need between \$215 billion and \$387 billion a year for adaptation during this decade.
12. The gap in climate finance is compounded by the debt crisis facing many African countries. Consequently, a significant portion of government revenue is allocated to debt servicing rather than critical climate action. Moreover, the current global financial system often results in a net outflow from developing to developed nations, exacerbating the challenges of sustainable development and climate resilience.
13. In the past few weeks, we have seen European farmers using their tractors to block roads in protest. In some countries, protesters are calling for more action on climate adaptation, asking for measures to prevent farmland damage by flooding and other forms of extreme weather.



14. In other cases, farmers are calling for fuel subsidies and for fertiliser and pesticide restrictions to be reconsidered.
15. While the issues the farmers are protesting against may be varied, it is evident that climate adaptation and protection against the impacts of extreme weather events are rapidly rising on the agenda.
16. This is despite the massive EU's common agricultural policy and the farming subsidy upon which the EU food security rests, and which accounts for a significant percentage of the EU budget.
17. Still, the EU had to backtrack on plans to halve pesticide use and some targets for agricultural emissions of methane and other greenhouse gases because of the central importance of the sector.
18. Therein lies a good lesson for us in Africa. We should do everything to prioritise agriculture and food security. There is an urgent need to direct our investments into adaptation, especially in attaining food sovereignty.
19. Last year, as you all know, through the Africa Climate Summit, we made a significant shift in the continent's climate narrative and made commitments of being part of the solution to the climate challenge. In the Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change and Call to Action that was adopted at the end of the Summit, the continent made commitments to "redouble our efforts to boost agricultural yields through sustainable agricultural practices, to enhance food security while minimizing negative environmental impacts".



20. The African position is aligned with the breakthrough agreements reached in Dubai last year under the UAE Consensus outcome and the Emirates Framework for Global Climate Resilience which focuses on giving priority to adaptation to enhance global resilience and reduce global vulnerability by 2030.
21. The targets agreed in Dubai on food, water, infrastructure and other commitments under the Nairobi Declaration require us to work closely to develop or update the necessary policies and regulations, and to foster collaboration regionally and internationally
22. Thankfully, resilient and regenerative agricultural practices do exist on the continent and are often aligned with traditional practices in African countries. But the scale of production is the challenge that needs to be addressed. The agricultural value added per farmworker in sub-Saharan Africa was \$1,526 in 2019, in stark contrast with that of a US farmworker which exceeded \$100,000 and \$60,000 in the UK.
23. Poor infrastructure adds 30 to 40 per cent to the costs of goods traded among African countries. Nearly 40% of food grown in sub-Saharan Africa perishes before it reaches consumers, underscoring the need for improved supply chains and cold storage facilities. At the same time, we spend a staggering \$78 billion on food imports each year.
24. We know what needs to be done. Africa has 60 percent of the world's uncultivated arable land.



25. And we have the potential to become a global agricultural powerhouse and a net exporter of food. Africa's food and agriculture market could increase from \$280 billion a year in 2023 to \$1 trillion by 2030 according to AfDB.
26. Through the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), each of us committed to a minimum of 10 percent of our government expenditure toward agriculture. And some progress has been made, even compared to global trends. For instance, investment in agrifood tech saw a 44 percent decline globally from 2021 to 2022. But in Africa, it has grown substantially in recent years, from US\$185 million in 2020 to US\$640 million in 2022. However, this investment represents less than 1 percent of the total amount spent on imported food.
27. The path for Africa's agricultural sector is clear and compelling. To harness the full potential of this sector, a dual approach is necessary. On one hand, there is a need to overcome financing and structural obstacles to production and focus on large-scale agrifood projects that are able to attract private sector investors and offer climate-safe economic opportunities.
28. On the other hand, we need a regulatory environment that supports and nurtures the growth of a substantially expanded agricultural sector. This shift towards large-scale agriculture must be balanced with the interests and contributions of small-scale farmers, who are the backbone of Africa's agricultural landscape.
29. With the right strategies and commitments, and finance at scale, Africa should be self-sufficient in feeding itself with locally produced food while also playing a significant role in global food security.



30. There is little time left and the challenges are significant, so I hope our discussions today will yield innovative approaches and new collaborations.

Thank You.

