

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony for President William Ruto of Kenya
May 23, 2024

President Biden. Good morning.

Audience members. Good morning.

President Biden. Hold the rain off.

President Ruto, Mrs. Ruto, and your three lovely daughters, who are here to my left—*[laughter]*—nice—welcome. Welcome, welcome, welcome. And to all the distinguished guests.

On behalf of myself and Jill, Vice President, the Second Gentleman, and the American people, it's an honor to welcome you to the White House to celebrate 60 years—60 years of partnership between Kenya and the United States.

At the stroke of midnight—*[applause]*. That's worth applause. At the stroke of midnight on December 12, 1963, the world changed. Many Americans and many people around the world watched with great hope and great anticipation as hundreds of thousands of Kenyans came together, raised a new flag, declared their freedom, and gave life to a new nation. Ladies and gentlemen, that new democracy—that new democracy—is endearing and enduring.

It was a moment that forever connected our two nations. For while we may have been divided by distance, we're united by the same democratic values. I saw this during my first trip to Kenya as a young Senator at the height of the cold war and watched our governments stand as one and prevail against communism.

I saw it when I returned years later as Vice President and spoke to students committed to upholding the principles of transparency, justice, and accountability that lie at the heart of our democracies. And I see it every day as President, as our two proud democracies continue to draw from the power of the people and the strength of our diversity to write the next chapter in our partnership.

Together, the United States and Kenya are working to deliver on the challenges that matter most to our people's lives: health security, economic security, cybersecurity, and climate security.

Mr. President, your bold leadership on this front has been important and significantly impactful. Ninety percent of Kenya's electricity comes from clean energy. Ninety percent. *[Applause]* That's worth an applause. Over 1 million homes are powered by wind energy alone. That's worth applause too. *[Applause]*

An historic Africa Green Industrialization Initiative, which you launched last year, is poised to create similar results in so many other nations, particularly in the continent. Across the region, Kenya and America are driving a race to the top with investments that we have and high standards for workers, technology, and environment.

And we're working to ensure debt doesn't leave these critical investments and crucial investments out of reach for low- and middle-income countries.

Around the world, Kenya and America are also standing united against the terror of ISIS and al-Shabaab perpetrate in East Africa—that they continue to perpetrate in East Africa; the aggression that Russia is inflicting on Ukraine; the violence that has toppled too many democracies across both our regions.

And today, as we begin the next decade of our partnership, we've launched a new initiative to bring our countries, companies, and communities closer together, because the past is our proof that we are stronger and the world is safer when Kenya and the United States work together.

Let me close with this. We stand at an inflection point in history, where the decisions we make now will determine the course of our future for decades to come.

Today I'm as optimistic and hopeful as I was those years ago when Kenya patriots raised that new flag high in that midnight sky, because Kenya and the United States stand together, committed to each other, committed to our people, and committed to building a better world—one of greater opportunity, dignity, security, and liberty for all Americans, for all Kenyans.

God bless our partnership, and may God bless our troops.

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

White House aide. Distinguished guests, the President of the Republic of Kenya.

President Ruto. Thank you.

President Joe Biden, Dr. Jill Biden, Madam Vice President, distinguished ladies and gentlemen: *Jambo.*

Audience members. *Jambo.*

President Ruto. Let me take this opportunity, in a very special way, to bring you warm greetings from the people, the Government of Kenya, and your brothers and sisters across the African Continent.

I want to thank President Biden for extending an invitation to me to undertake this state visit, a sign of friendship and partnership and collaboration between two countries that share common values: values of freedom, democracy, rule of law, equality, and inclusivity.

We are very proud democratic nation. And today, as we celebrate our past, we are optimistic about our future. That I—by undertaking this state visit, we will have the opportunity to discuss and to have a conversation about building global partnership and leadership around the issues that pose challenges regionally, globally, and in countries like Kenya and many others: challenges of climate change, challenges of insecurity, challenges around debt distress.

And today, we have an occasion to build synergies, to build partnerships that will not only solve our current problems but also to build a future that is much more promising, much more prosperous—a fairer, a freer, a healthier, and a much more prosperous future.

I am confident—[*applause*]. I am confident, Mr. President, that a partnership between the United States of America and Kenya will give us the solutions that the world so seriously needs.

And we will be discussing a range of issues, from peace and security in our region, recognizing the heavy lifting Kenya is doing in supporting peace and security efforts in the Horn of Africa, in the Great Lakes region. And I want to say, Mr. President, we value the support, the friendship, and the collaboration the United States has given Kenya and our region to make sure that we undertake our responsibilities in securing our region.

Mr. President, we will also be having the opportunity to discuss the investment opportunities, trade; and hopefully, we will be able to persuade the United States to renew the African Growth and Opportunities Act that gives Africa the opportunity for access to markets so that we can create more jobs, we can create more wealth, and we can spread prosperity across our continent.

And hopefully, also, we will conclude on our strategic partnership on—our strategic trade and investment partnership that will give us the opportunity in Kenya to work with companies in the United States and to build greater synergy around our continent on matters to do with trade investment, especially as we put together the Africa Continental Free Trade Area and twin it with the United States, as we discussed at the Africa Leaders Summit last year, giving us an opportunity to build greater partnership between the continent of Africa and the United States.

Mr. President, I know that our menu of discussion is broad and wide. And I am confident that, under your leadership, we will be able to build a freer, a healthier, and a much more prosperous Kenya, United States, and for people around the world.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:22 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, where President Ruto was accorded a formal welcome with full military honors. In his remarks, he referred to President Ruto's daughters June, Stephanie, and Cullie; and Douglas C. Emhoff, husband of Vice President Kamala D. Harris. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Kenya, President Ruto.

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Names: Biden, Jill T.; Emhoff, Douglas C.; Harris, Kamala D.; Ruto, Cullie; Ruto, June; Ruto, Rachel; Ruto, Stephanie; Ruto, William.

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