THIRTEENTH PARLIAMENT

THE SENATE

OFFICIAL REPORT



Fifth Session

Wednesday, 18th November, 2026
at 2.30 p.m. - Joint Sitting

PARLIAMENT OF KENYA

JOINT SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND THE SENATE

THE HANSARD

(Convened vide Gazette Notices No.17693 and No. 17694 of 13th November 2026)

Wednesday, 18th November 2026

(Parliament met at 2.30 p.m. in the National Assembly Chamber)

ARRIVAL OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT

(His Excellency President William Ruto entered the Chamber escorted by the Speaker of the National Assembly and the Speaker of the Senate)

(The Mace of the National Assembly and the Mace of the Senate were placed on the Table)

(The National Anthem and the East African Community Anthem were played)

PRAYERS

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

CONVENING OF JOINT SITTING FOR PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO PARLIAMENT

The Speaker of the Senate (Hon. Amason Kingi): Your Excellency, Hon. (Dr.) William Samoei Ruto, CGH., President of the Republic of Kenya and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces; the Rt. Hon. (Dr.) Moses Wetangula, EGH, MP, Speaker of the National Assembly; Hon. Members of Parliament, Article 132(1)(b) of the Constitution provides that the President shall address a Special Sitting of Parliament once every year and may address Parliament at any other time.

Article 132(1)(c) of the Constitution further provides that the President shall, among other things, once every year, report in an address to the nation all the measures taken and the progress achieved in the realisation of the national values referred to in Article 10 of our Constitution.

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In addition, Article 240(7) of the Constitution requires the President, in his capacity as the Chairperson of the National Security Council, to report to Parliament annually on the state of the security of Kenya.

In this regard, the Chief of Staff and Head of Public Service, vide a letter referenced EOP/CAB.26/4A Vol.8(115), dated 19th August, 2026, informed the Speakers of the Houses of Parliament of the intention of His Excellency the President to address Parliament.

Consequently, and upon consultation, the address to Parliament by His Excellency the President was scheduled for today, Wednesday, 18th November, 2026 vide a letter referenced NA/DLPS/IHOD/SOTNA/2026/029 dated 12th November, 2026.

Pursuant to Standing Order No.25(2) of the Senate Standing Orders, I notified Hon. Senators of the place, date and time of today's Special Sitting vide *Kenya Gazette* Notice No.17694, which was published in a special issue of the *Kenya Gazette* Notice on Friday, 13th November, 2026.

Further, pursuant to Standing Orders 22(2) of the National Assembly and 25(2) of the Senate, the Rt. Hon. Speakers of the Houses of Parliament notified all Members of Parliament and the general public of today's Special Sitting, vide notices placed in the daily newspapers on Saturday 14th November, 2026 and Monday 16th November, 2026.

Accordingly, Hon. Members, this Special Sitting is properly convened.

I thank you.

(Applause)

The Speaker of the National Assembly (Hon. (Dr.) Moses Wetang'ula): Your Excellency, Hon. (Dr.) William Samoei Ruto, CGH, President of the Republic of Kenya and Commander-in-Chief of Kenya Defence Forces; the Rt. Hon. Amason Jeffah Kingi, EGH, MP, Hon. Speaker of the Senate; the Hon. Chief Justice and President of the Supreme Court; Hon. Members of Parliament; Members of the Diplomatic Corps; distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Article 132(1)(b) of the Constitution requires the President to address the nation once every year and at any other time. Further, Article 132(1)(c) the Constitution requires the President to, once every year, report in an address to the nation, on measures taken and progress achieved in the realisation of our national values.

Additionally, Article 132(1)(c)(iii) of the Constitution provides that the President shall submit a report for debate to the National Assembly on the progress made in fulfilling the international obligations of the Republic. Further, Article 247 of the Constitution requires the President in his capacity as the Chairperson of the National Security Council to report to Parliament annually on the state of security of Kenya.

In this regard, Honourable Members, by way of message to the House, His Excellency the President conveyed his desire to address a Special Sitting of the Houses of Parliament today, Wednesday 18th November 2026. Therefore, pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 22 of the National Assembly Standing Orders, by Gazette Notice No. 17693, which was published in a special issue of the *Kenya Gazette* on Friday, 13th

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November 2026, and indeed as also notified to all Members and the general public in newspaper notifications published on 14th and 16th November, 2026, I gave notice of this special sitting of Parliament.

Accordingly, Honourable Members, this special sitting is properly convened.

(Applause)

Your Excellency, Hon. Members, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, it is in the custom of Parliament to recognise invited guests seated in our galleries. I therefore wish to recognise the following guests who are seated in the Speaker's Row-

(1) Her Excellency Rachel Ruto, the First Lady of the Republic of Kenya.

(2) His Excellency Hon. (Prof.) Kithure Kindiki, EGH, the Deputy President of the Republic of Kenya.

(3) Hon. Musalia Mudavadi, EGH, the Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs.

(Applause)

Your Excellency and Hon. Members, also present this afternoon are-

(4) Chief Justice and President of the Supreme Court, Hon. Lady Justice Martha Koome, EGH. She is accompanied by-

(i) Hon. Lady Justice Njoki Ndungu, CBS, Judge of the Supreme Court.

(ii) Hon. Justice Gatembu Kairu, CBS, President of the Court of Appeal;

(iii) Hon. Justice Eric Ogola, CBS, Principal Judge of the High Court;

(iv) Hon. Justice Oscar Angote, EBS, Principal Judge of the Environment and Land Court, and;

(v) Hon. Justice Monica Mbaru, MBS, Principal Judge of the Employment and Labour Relations Court.

We are also honoured to have in our midst former Speakers of the Senate, who are the Governor of Bungoma; the Hon. Kenneth Lusaka, EGH and the Hon. Ekwee Ethuro, EGH,

Also in the gallery, we have the Chairperson of the Council of Governors (CoG), who is also the Governor of Tharaka Nithi County, the Hon. Muthomi Njuk,i and the Governor of the Nairobi City County, the Hon. Johnson Sakaja.

I also accord special recognition to all Cabinet Secretaries present and particularly acknowledge five of them, who are former ranking Members of the Houses of Parliament. They are-

(1) The Hon. Aden Duale, EGH, former Leader of the Majority Party in the National Assembly;

(2) The Hon. John Mbadi, EGH,

(3) The Hon. Opiyo Wandayi, EGH, both are former leaders of the Minority Party in the National Assembly, and

(4) The Hon. Alice Wahome, EGH, former Member of Parliament for Kandara.

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(Applause)

I also acknowledge Principal Secretaries and members of the Diplomatic Corps, heads of constitutional commissions and independent offices and State corporations present.

You are all welcome to Parliament.

(Hon. Members consulted loudly)

Who?

Hon. Members: Ruku!

The Speaker of the National Assembly (Hon. (Dr.) Moses Wetangula): The writers of my speech forgot. If Hon. Ruku is in the gallery, will you be upstanding? If Hon. Joho is in the gallery, will you be upstanding? If Hon. Kabogo is in the gallery, he can be upstanding and of course, the Hon. (Prof) Kithure Kindiki, former Majority Leader of the Senate.

(Applause)

Hon. Members: Hon. Soipan!

The Speaker of the National Assembly (Hon. (Dr.) Moses Wetangula): I am aware that Soipan Tuya is out of the country. Kipchumba Murkomen is also out of the country. I would have acknowledged them.

The Attorney General is not a former Member of the House but I acknowledge her presence.

(Applause)

Your Excellency, I wish to make a special welcome to Parliament and mention the leadership of our disciplined forces, among them the Chief of the Kenya Defence Forces, General Charles Kahariri, and the respective Service Commanders, the Inspector General of Police and other leaders of our disciplined forces who are seated at the Speaker's Row. As Parliament, we continue to commend them for their selfless service to this nation.

Your Excellency, Hon. Members, I am also privileged to acknowledge the presence of the Government Chief Whip of---

(Loud consultations)

Order! I acknowledge the presence of the Government Chief Whip of the Republic of Uganda, the Hon. (Dr.) Jane Ruth Aceng Ocero, MP, who is seated in the Speaker's Row.

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(Applause)

(Sen. (Dr.) Oburu entered the Chamber accompanied by the Serjeant-at-Arms)

(*Applause)*

Hon. Members: Power!

(Hon. Members stood in their places)

The Speaker of the National Assembly (Hon. (Dr.) Moses Wetangula): Order, Members. You may now take your seats.

Allow me to make a special mention and acknowledgement of the entry of the "youth leader" of the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) party, who also doubles as the party leader and with whom we entered this Parliament for the first time in the 7th Parliament. He found me here after succeeding his late father with whom I served in this House.

(Applause)

(Hon. Members stood in honour of Sen. (Dr.) Oburu)

(Applause)

To all invited guests, *karibu Bunge*. Your Excellency, honourable Members, this 14th State of the Nation Address comes immediately after the just concluded 3rd Global Parliamentary Summit convened by the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations (UN) in collaboration with the Parliament of Kenya.

The Summit provided an important platform for dialogue and strengthened partnerships for addressing food insecurity and malnutrition. Participants conveyed their profound appreciation for your participation, the warm hospitality, the exceptional courtesies extended to them throughout their stay by the people and the Government of Kenya. We are expected to spur the implementation of the commitments and further strengthen international cooperation while inspiring sustained collective action towards the realisation of a world free from hunger and all forms of malnutrition.

In a special way, we want to thank His Excellency the President for having agreed to come and officially open that Summit. From all international participants and indeed, Parliament, we truly appreciate you for honouring us by gracing and participating in the Summit.

Your Excellency, Hon. Members, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, it is now my singular honour and privilege to invite His Excellency the President of the

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Republic of Kenya and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces to address the Special Sitting of the two Houses of Parliament.

Your Excellency, you are most welcome.

(Applause)

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

ANNUAL PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO PARLIAMENT

His Excellency the President (Hon. (Dr.) William Ruto): Thank you very much, honourable Members. You may take your seats.

(Hon. Members stood in their places)

(Applause)

You may take your seats. *Asante sana*

(Applause)

You may take your seats. Thank you.

The Speaker of the National Assembly, the Speaker of the Senate, honourable Members of Parliament and fellow citizens, for the fourth time, I stand before this House to discharge my constitutional duty to report on the state of our nation and to take stock of what we have collectively accomplished as Kenyans.

Let me say that I have never been prouder to be a Kenyan. I have never been prouder of the privilege of serving as President of this great Republic. Our nation is making a powerful comeback. Our economy is recovering its strength. Our infrastructure is expanding. Our education system is being revitalised. Healthcare is reaching more citizens and new opportunities are opening for our young people to work and prosper.

Above all, my greatest ambition, the dream of building a Kenya where every citizen counts, every community belongs and no Kenyan is left behind, is steadily taking shape. That Kenya, where opportunity is not determined by where you were born, who you know or how much you have, is coming to be. At the heart of this conviction is a simple belief, a principle that should unite us regardless of our differences - *Usawa*---

Hon. Members: *Ni sawa.*

His Excellency the President (Hon. (Dr.) William Ruto): This progress has not happened by chance. It is the result of deliberate choices, difficult decisions, sustained reforms and the extraordinary resilience and enterprise of the Kenyan people. It is the product of the Bottom-up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA). Bottom-up tells us where to begin, with the work, enterprise and aspirations of the ordinary Kenyan people.

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Our first world ambition sets the standard we must attain: A productive economy, dependable services and a dignified life. *Usawa* affirms who must share in that achievement; every county, every community, every citizen.

(Applause)

Together, these commitments define our national undertaking. Building prosperity from the household upwards, expanding our economy and extending opportunity across every corner of our republic.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, honourable Members, at independence in 1963, our founding generation declared war on ignorance, disease and poverty. They understood that political freedom would only find its fullest meaning when every Kenyan could access education, healthcare and the opportunity to build a better life.

(Applause)

Two years later, Sessional Paper No.10 on African Socialism and its Application for Planning in Kenya confronted the difficult question of how to allocate scarce resources against immense development needs. It prioritised investment in areas where immediate economic returns were expected to be greatest.

Fertile land attracted agricultural investment, existing roads attracted factories, established production centres strengthened the case for electricity and further infrastructure but communities without those advantages were caught in a vicious cycle. They needed investment to unlock their potential, yet they lacked the means to attract it.

(Applause)

Over time, this approach contributed to reinforcing existing inequalities. A child born near a tarmac road was more likely to find a school, a clinic and opportunity within reach. Another child born beyond the road's end faced longer journeys and fewer prospects.

The difference was never one of human worth, ability or ambition. Talent existed everywhere. Enterprise existed all over. Ambition was abundant across Kenya, but opportunity was not.

(Applause)

The loss occasioned was borne by the whole nation. A child denied education was potential lost not to a family, not to a community, but to a nation.

(Applause)

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A road not built was trade not undertaken. When one part of our republic was held back, our entire nation lost. Successive generations sought to change this reality. Under President Mwai Kibaki, Vision 2030 established the ambition of a newly industrialised middle-income country offering a high quality of life to all its citizens.

In 2010, Kenyans adopted a Constitution that met equity, inclusion and social justice, binding principles of governance and devolved power and resources to 47 counties yet, deep inequalities remained.

(Applause)

A smallholder farmer struggled to afford fertiliser. A *Jua Kali* artisan did not have equipment. *Mama mboga* could not obtain affordable credit. Uneducated young Kenyans searched, sometimes for years, for the first opportunity to earn a living. Kenyans sustained our economy through their labour, ingenuity and enterprise. What each one of us needed was the means to make that effort count.

In 2022, Kenyans entrusted this administration with the responsibility to remove the barriers that constrained them and expand their participation in the creation of national wealth. Through the Bottom-up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), we set out to stabilise the economy, raise agricultural productivity, expand affordable healthcare and housing, reform education, support small enterprises, create employment and build the infrastructure necessary for a more productive economy.

Our economic proposition was simple - reduce the cost for families and increase their income from what they do. More affordable food, healthcare, housing, education and transport would ease pressure on household expenditure. More productive farms, growing businesses and new employment opportunities would expand household earnings. Both were necessary then and both remain necessary today.

(Applause)

This undertaking is firmly grounded in our Constitution. Article 10 establishes equity, inclusion and social justice as national values. Article 43 guarantees economic and social rights, including healthcare, housing, food, water, education and social security. Article 201 requires fairness in the sharing of public resources and the benefits of development.

Today, I will account for the foundation we have laid in the lives of our people, how we are extending the benefits of development to every corner of our Republic. The greater prosperity we are preparing to build and the responsibility we must discharge to secure our collective future.

Honourable Members, fellow citizens, I begin with the question that matters most in the lives of millions of Kenyans; the cost of living. For a Kenyan, balancing the cost of food, rent, transport, school expenses and medical bills, economic progress, must mean something practical. It must mean that money goes further, that work earns more, that essential services become affordable and that the future offers greater certainty.

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We have never regarded the cost of living as a problem that can be solved by one intervention, one subsidy or one announcement. Its causes are interconnected and its solution must be comprehensive. Food becomes expensive when production costs are high and supply is inadequate. Healthcare becomes a burden when illness forces families to borrow or sell their property. Education becomes difficult when parents must pay for teachers and classrooms that should be publicly funded.

Transport costs rise when roads are poor or non-existent. Even where prices fall, life remains difficult for a citizen who has no income. That is why our interventions have addressed both sides of the household economy; what Kenyans spend and what Kenyans earn.

We have worked to lower the cost of essential goods and services, while increasing productivity, creating employment and expanding opportunities for enterprise. To sustain these gains, our first responsibility was to restore economic stability.

In 2022, our economy faced serious pressures including elevated inflation, a weakening currency, rising borrowing costs and concerns over our capacity to meet external debt obligations.

We confronted those challenges through extensive but necessary reforms. Despite global uncertainty and disruptions to international trade, our economy has been expanding. The Kenya shilling has remained broadly stable around Kshs129 to the dollar having recovered from nearly Kshs162.

Average commercial bank lending rates declined from 17.2 per cent in November 2024 to approximately 14.4 per cent in September this year. Inflation had reached 9.6 per cent in 2022 and averaged at 4.1 per cent in 2025. Although renewed food and energy pressures pushed inflation higher in October this year, the stability we have restored provides a stronger basis for confronting these challenges.

Our foreign exchange reserves increased from US$7.3 billion in 2022 to a peak of US$15.3 billion this year. We also honored the US$2 billion Eurobond obligation that fell due in June, 2024, protecting our country's financial standing and restoring confidence in our economy.

These achievements matter not because they make impressive financial statistics, but because a stable currency, managed inflation and more affordable credit helps businesses plan, farmers produce, investors create jobs and families protect their purchasing power.

Hon. Speakers, nowhere is the connection between production costs, household expenditure and income is more direct than in agriculture. Agriculture supports the livelihoods of millions of citizens directly and indirectly. Food accounts for a substantial share of household expenditure.

We, therefore, approached agricultural transformation from three directions; reducing the cost of production for farmers, increasing the supply of food for consumers and ensuring that farmers receive better returns for their work. We reduced the price of fertilizer, 50-kilogramme bag, from Kshs7,500 in 2022 to Kshs2,000 this year. We have distributed 38.5 million bags of subsidized fertilizer.

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We have registered nearly nine million farmers and expanded access to improved seeds, soil testing and extension services. Consider Laban, a maize farmer in Rongai, Nakuru County, through access to affordable fertilizer, improved seeds and better extension services, his harvest on five acres increased from 75 bags in 2022 to 125 last year. He nearly doubled his production without acquiring an extra acre of land.

The benefit begins before planting when the farmer spends less on inputs. It continues in harvest when greater productivity increases the earnings per acre of produce and increases the volume available for consumers, thereby reducing prices of commodities.

National maize production increased from 44 million bags in 2022 to 71 million bags last year, while imports declined from 9.9 million bags to 3.3 million bags. The national average price of two-kilogramme sifted *unga* declined from a high of Kshs230 in September 2022 to an average of Kshs152 in September this year.

Our determination to sustain increased production so that food becomes more affordable and farmers continue earning better is on course, but agricultural transformation is not only about maize, it is also about putting more money in the pockets of the millions of Kenyans who depend on tea, coffee, milk, sugarcane, livestock, fisheries and other agricultural enterprises.

In Bungoma, Rosemary Wepukhulu's coffee earnings rose from Kshs62,642 to Kshs226,836, more than three times what she previously earned from her crop. For a smallholder farmer, this is the difference between coffee being a modest source of income and it being a meaningful foundation for household prosperity. Across the coffee sector, average cherry prices have risen from Kshs69 up to Kshs130 per kilo, while national coffee export earnings have doubled from Kshs26 billion to Kshs52 billion this year.

Through reforms in governance, marketing and payment systems, we are ensuring that more of the value created by coffee reaches the farmer. The Cherry Advanced Revolving Fund has disbursed Kshs15.07 billion to 680,000 farmers, helping them meet immediate financial needs as they await payment. In tea, export earnings increased from Kshs163 billion in 2022 to Kshs187 billion in 2025. Improved factory governance, greater auction transparency and reforms to deductions translated to stronger sector performance and better returns for smallholder farmers.

In dairy, national milk production increased from 4.5 billion litres to 5.52 billion litres, while export earnings more than doubled to 11.2 billion litres. Average earnings increased from an average of Kshs32 per kilo to a high of Kshs60 per kilo last month. Subsidized fertilizer contributed significantly to increased silage production for our livestock farmers.

The recovery of our sugar industry is well underway. Between January and October this year, cane crushed increased by 57 per cent, while sugar production rose by 60 per cent. The industry is now projected to produce more than 900,000 tonnes by the end of this year, the highest annual production in Kenya's history. The true measure of this recovery is what it delivers to farmers. To fulfill our commitment that sugarcane farmers should share in the industry's improving fortunes, a bonus package of Kshs1.2

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billion will be paid to farmers this year and we are beginning the disbursement next week.

These payments will give practical meaning to our promise that reviving factories must restore livelihoods, put money in the pockets of our farmers, reward hard work and bring prosperity back to our sugar-growing communities.

For pastoral communities, livestock insurance is protecting household assets against drought. More than 245,000 pastoralists have accessed insurance and savings incentives under our Drive Programme, protecting 3.3 million animals.

In our blue economy, investment in landing sites, cold storage, markets and fishing equipment are helping communities preserve more of their catch and obtain better prices. In Lamu, for example, improved preservation equipment enabled members of the Shanga Ishakani Women Fishers Group to double their average octopus selling price.

(Applause)

We are also taking markets and processing closer to producers through modern market infrastructure and the County Aggregation and Industrial Parks (CAIPs).

The national Government has invested Kshs8.5 billion in 34 counties, with 15 parks complete and allocated additional resources for common user manufacturing equipment.

We are developing 600 modern markets across Kenya for US$57 billion to provide additional trading space, storage and cold rooms. I was last week inaugurating one of those markets in a place called Motonto in Kisii, and I could see what the traders had been expecting for many years. Last week, also in Kisii, I did inaugurate the first CAIP, complete with an investor who is going to invest Kshs1.2 billion to process avocado in Kisii County.

(Applause)

These investments will enable farmers to sell processed products rather than raw produce, reduce post-harvest losses, support local manufacturing and create employment within our counties.

From the maize farmer to the coffee grower, from the dairy cooperative to the fishing community, our approach has been consistent; lower production costs, increase productivity, improve market access and enable producers to retain more of the value they create.

(Applause)

The result we seek is equally clear; more affordable food for our consumers and a higher income for our producers. These are two sides of the same national undertaking, managing the cost of living.

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Hon. Members, just as high food prices strain households, a serious illness can wipe out years of savings and productive effort. For too many Kenyans and their families, falling ill has meant borrowing from friends, selling their livestock, disposing land or abandoning treatment all together.

A medical emergency could turn a family that was getting ahead into one struggling to survive. That is the burden we set out to lift through our healthcare reforms; to ensure that the cost of treatment is increasingly met through a system of shared health financing rather than falling entirely on individuals and families.

Today, 33.7 million Kenyans are registered with the Social Health Authority (SHA) compared with approximately eight million registered under the National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) in 2022, but the significance of this reform goes beyond numbers in registration. It lies in the treatment families can access and medical bills they no longer have to bear alone.

Across the country, 53,465 patients are receiving cancer treatment, while 24,468 are receiving dialysis. Additionally, 89 have already undergone kidney transplants, all under SHA. These are among the most expensive forms of medical care, often beyond the financial reach of ordinary households. Through SHA, covered treatment costs are being financed on behalf of citizens, reducing the amounts that families would otherwise have to raise from either their savings, seek or borrow from relatives, or obtain through sale of their assets.

(Applause)

The transition to SHA had initial challenges and we recognised the legitimate concerns of Kenyans. We have consistently addressed those concerns because health protection must be experienced by citizens in practise, as is promised in policy.

Our undertaking is to progressively and eventually remove the crushing burden of medical expenses from Kenyan households, protect family savings and ensure that illness does not become a sentence to poverty. This is how we are contributing significantly to reduction in the cost of healthcare and substantially dealing with the challenge of the cost of living.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, education is another major household expense and another area in which public investment must relieve the burden of Kenyans. When we assumed office, Kenya faced a teacher shortage estimated at 116,000. Parents in many schools were paying for teachers employed through boards of management, while also meeting additional demands for classrooms and learning facilities.

In four years, we have employed 100,000 teachers and are preparing to recruit another 20,000 next month. This investment improves the quality of education while progressively reducing the need for Kenyans to finance teaching.

(Applause)

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We have built 23,000 classrooms and are constructing and equipping 1,600 laboratories. These facilities expand access to learning and reduce pressure on communities to finance essential school infrastructure.

Our national education allocation has increased from Kshs521 billion in Financial Year 2022/2023 to Kshs784 billion this financial year. These resources must reach schools promptly and must be managed responsibly.

Parents should not be required to carry public obligations through unauthorised charges. The purpose is to make education accessible and affordable today, while preparing our children to earn better incomes tomorrow. Every child who remains in school to learn trains to acquire useful skills and enters productive employment, strengthens both the household and the nation.

Our investment in education has lifted a heavy burden on our parents and helped reduce financial obligations they have been undertaking. This goes a long way in dealing with the challenge of cost of living.

By Friday this week, we will have concluded national examinations for the largest cohort in our history, with 3.6 million learners sitting for the Kenya Primary School Education Assessment (KPSEA), the Kenya Junior School Education Assessment (KJSEA) and the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). For the first time in 65 years, examination papers were printed here in Kenya.

(Applause)

The examinations have been conducted in a calm and orderly atmosphere, free from anxiety, tension and intimidating security deployments of the past. In short, we have currently undertaken exams without the presence of a single policeman. This is how it should be. Examinations are a normal part of learning, not a security operation or a matter of life and death. Examinations should assess our children's progress, not instill fear about their future.

(Applause)

Hon. Members, the question I asked our Ministry officials is this; if we are printing currency in Kenya, why can we not print exams in Kenya? In this single undertaking, we have taken off close to Kshs1.5 billion that would have been wasted.

Hon. Members, housing presents a similar opportunity to reduce household burdens, while creating employment income on a national scale. For millions of Kenyans, rent consumes a substantial share of monthly earnings, while only conferring temporary shelter.

The Affordable Housing Programme (AHP) is opening a new pathway through which families can obtain decent homes and progressively build an asset for their ownership. Under social housing arrangements, households can begin the journey towards home ownership for as little as Kshs4,000 a month. A payment that previously

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secured only temporary occupation can, under this programme, contribute towards lasting ownership.

Across 47 counties, more than 313,000 homes are at various stages of construction, with some already completed. Over 1.37 million Kenyans have registered on *Boma Yangu* and more than 18,000 have been allocated homes.

In Mukuru, Rosina Mbithe has moved from an unsafe inadequate housing into a more secure home. In Machakos, Faith Mueni Kioko, a young woman living with disability, has obtained a home she once doubted she could own. Housing is not only about the family that receives the keys, it is also about the millions of Kenyans who earn an income building that home and factories which manufacture cement, steel, construction material and hinges.

The programme has generated more than 1.1 million employment opportunities. Engineers, architects, masons, plumbers, carpenters, electricians, welders, painters and transporters are earning from construction activities across Kenya.

In Bungoma, Moses Wasike, who once struggled to find regular work, now supervises more than 150 workers. Here in Mukuru, Diana Mwange has moved from irregular domestic employment into predictable earning as a painter.

We have also reserved more than Kshs61 billion in orders for *Jua Kali* artisans. In the past, it was difficult to have *Jua Kali* and a billion in the same sentence. These orders create business for workshops, support apprenticeships and expand local manufacturing.

In Eldoret, Fanuel Anyanga Temba secured sub-contracts worth Kshs30 million, expanded his workshop from three machines to 20 and increased his workforce to more than 25 young people. The housing programme, therefore, serves two purposes simultaneously: It creates more affordable, dignified and decent homes while expanding the number of Kenyans earning an income from the housing ecosystem. The employment opportunities created through affordable housing are part of our wider effort to enable more Kenyans to earn an income and improve their livelihoods.

Hon. Members, a family without income cannot overcome the cost of living through lower prices alone. The young person who has completed education but cannot find work, the artisan whose skills remain idle and the entrepreneur without capital all need an opportunity to earn. That is why job creation and enterprise development has been central to our economic transformation. We are creating opportunities through housing and infrastructure, agriculture and manufacturing, small enterprises, the digital economy and international labour mobility.

Through our digital economy programme, we are expanding connectivity, digital skills and access to online work. Members of Parliament (MPs) are active participants in the construction of ICT hubs across Kenya. Already, 350,000 Kenyans have secured work in the digital economy, earning incomes through opportunities that extend beyond their immediate communities and our national borders. Through international labour mobility, 707,000 Kenyans have secured jobs abroad, acquiring valuable experience, supporting their families and contributing to our economy through their remittances.

At home, the Hustler Fund is expanding access to credit for Kenyans previously excluded by collateral requirements and limited borrowing histories. More than seven

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million Kenyans have established credit records and are regular borrowers with cumulative borrowing of Kshs94 billion. Seven hundred thousand Kenyans are now established borrowers, with a limit as high as Kshs150,000 without any collateral.

For young Kenyans with skills and ideas but insufficient capital, the National Youth Opportunities Towards Advancement (NYOTA) Programme provides an opportunity to begin. More than 133,000 young entrepreneurs have received training, mentorship and Kshs50,000 each in start-up capital.

Javan Simiyu used his grant to acquire welding equipment and now earns more than Kshs30,000 a month. His story demonstrates the difference between possessing a skill and having the means to turn that skill into an income.

To expand opportunities for our entrepreneurs in NYOTA business support, we are working with partners to support another 200,000 beneficiaries; again, with training, mentorship and Kshs 50,000 each. We are going to do phase two of NYOTA business support but our ambition cannot end with startup grants. We must enable these young entrepreneurs to grow, secure markets, employ others and become sustainable businesses.

That is why we are now linking NYOTA beneficiaries to government procurement opportunities through the NYOTA and AGPO digital training programme. This is a free 10-week initiative that equips young entrepreneurs, women and persons living with disability with digital and business skills, awards proficiency certificates and facilitates business registration and AGPO certification. This intervention will enable 600,000 Kenyans to qualify for government contracts, grow their enterprises and have an income.

Honourable members, any Kenyan from anywhere in the republic can apply so long as they qualify under the AGPO programme by simply dialing **254#* and going into NYOTA AGPO. They will receive training, mentorship and certification. Their company will be registered. We are going to assist them finance the business they get and make sure they are paid so that their enterprises can grow. These are not interventions that are isolated, but part of one comprehensive undertaking.

Affordable fertiliser and increased production lowers farming costs and improves food supply, while better returns from coffee, tea, milk and sugarcane raises farmers' incomes. SHA relieves families of medical expenses, while more teachers and classrooms ease the burden on parents. Housing, digital jobs, overseas employment and support for small enterprises creates opportunities to earn, while better roads and digital services reduce the cost of doing business.

That is how we are addressing the cost of living, lowering households' expenses, increasing incomes and enabling more Kenyans to earn a living. Our task is far from complete but our purpose remains clear, to make everyday life more affordable and productive effort more rewarding. That is why we have also announced further measures to ease the burden on households, support businesses and put more money in the pockets of Kenyans.

These interventions include the proposal we have brought to this House to exempt workers earning Kshs 32,333 a month or less from paying Pay As You Earn (PAYE), remove stamp duty on land transactions valued at Ksh1 million and less and eliminate the

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25 per cent import duty on mobile phones. We have also approved the settlement of 28,726 verified pending bills amounting to Kshs27.8 billion, dating back to 2005 and covering claims of up to Kshs 50 million.

We have also approved the payment of Kshs18 billion owed to both public and private universities, and another Kshs16 billion owed to both public and private hospitals under the former National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF). These payments are undergoing the due process at the National Treasury for payment in the coming weeks. Together, these measures will increase incomes, make property ownership and digital access more affordable, restore cash flow to businesses, protect jobs and sustain livelihoods.

There is a second question by which our transformation must be judged. It is not enough that the economy grows, that incomes rise and that public services improve. We must ask: Who is benefiting? Where is development taking place? How is opportunity shared?

For too long, national development was concentrated in places that already possessed the infrastructure, institutions and markets necessary to attract further investment. Our responsibility is to change that pattern.

(Applause)

A Kenyan living in Mandera must have the same claim to national development as one living in Nairobi.

(Applause)

A child in Turkana must have the same opportunity to fulfil their potential as one in Eldoret.

(Applause)

A trader in Migori, a farmer in Taita Taveta and a young entrepreneur in Wajir must all have a fair chance to participate in our economy.

(Applause)

This is the practical meaning of equity. *Usawa ni sawa*.

(Applause)

Not that every part of Kenya has identical needs, but that every Kenyan deserves equal consideration, equal chance and a fair opportunity to advance. In the health sector, for example, under the former National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF), only 8 million Kenyans were registered. Today, under the SHA, that number is at 33.7 million. That is

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25.7 million Kenyans more brought into the national health financing system. Those are millions who previously were outside its protection, for whom illness could mean selling their land, exhausting their savings or sinking into debt.

Consider Veronica Wambui, a mother of three and a small-scale farmer from Gatundu, Kiambu County. When her kidneys failed, Veronica faced two battles, one for her life and another, the cost of staying alive. She needed dialysis twice a week to stay alive. Like any other mother, she had a family to care for, even as she fought her own health condition.

In May 2025, she underwent kidney transplant at the Kenyatta University Teaching, Referral and Research Hospital (KUTRRH). Veronica Wambui contributes Kshs840 a month to SHA, yet the cost of her investigations, transplant and medication exceeded Kshs966,000 excluding dialysis, but SHA covered the bill in full.

(Applause)

Just imagine what nearly a million shillings in medical expenses would mean for a small-scale farmer raising three children. For Veronica, pooled health financing means access to life-saving treatment without having to meet that enormous bill alone. For her family, it means that her illness did not have to consume the resources on which their livelihood depends.

Honourable Members, think about it. You and I, through our contributions, each according to our income, have helped Veronica get the treatment she needed.

(Applause)

This is a mother of three, a small-scale farmer, someone most of us have never met, yet in her hour of need, we were there for her.

In addition, today, 25.7 million more Kenyans, our brothers and sisters, are part of this same system; people we may never meet, families whose names we may never know, but when illness comes to their door, we would be there and they would not face it alone.

(Applause)

Is it not beautiful that we can help save the life of someone we have never met? Is it not beautiful that a mother can return to her children because we chose to look after one another? Honourable Members, is that not the least we owe to each other as Kenyans?

(Applause)

The same spirit of shared responsibility guides our housing programme. Today, Affordable Housing projects are being implemented across 47 counties. Hostels for students, our own children in our universities, Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Kenya Medical Training Colleges (KMTC) are being built, while

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modern markets are being developed throughout the country to bring better trading spaces closer to small enterprises.

Through the Housing Levy, you and I contribute, according to our earnings. A fellow Kenyan, perhaps, somebody we may never meet, can move from a life of squalor, leaking roofs, open sewers, and indignity into a decent home.

(Applause)

Think of a mother who no longer has to worry about rain pouring onto her children's bed; a father who can finally raise his family in a safe, dignified environment; and that another Kenyan's children can grow in conditions we would want for our own children. That is what equity in housing means. That is *usawa* in practise.

(Applause)

Our programme of 600 modern markets is especially important to traders who have worked for years in rain, dust and inadequate conditions. These facilities provide shelter, sanitation, storage, cold rooms and a more dignified environment in which to conduct business.

A modern market is not merely a building. It is an investment in people whose work sustains local economies, but whose needs have too often been overlooked and have no means of their own.

We are also constructing hostels with a capacity of 170,000 students across our universities, TVETs, and KMTCs are, providing our children with decent, safe, and dignified accommodation conducive to learning and freeing them, especially girls, from squalid living conditions and danger.

Equity also means opening economic opportunities for Kenyans who have historically been excluded from formal financial services. Through the Hustler Fund, we are widening access to affordable credit for small traders and entrepreneurs who have the ambition and capacity to build enterprises but lack the collateral and financial history, traditionally required by lenders.

The principle is simple: A Kenyan's opportunity to succeed should not depend solely on their existing economic circumstances or access to conventional banking.

Equally, our wider infrastructure programme reflects the same commitment. Roads are being constructed and rehabilitated in regions that have waited decades for dependable connections to markets, schools, hospitals and the wider national economy.

Take the 750-kilometre Northern Kenya Gateway Corridor, linking Isiolo, Wajir and Mandera. *Si mnajua?*

Hon. Members: Yes!

His Excellency the President (Hon. (Dr.) William Ruto): *Ile barabara ya kutoka Isiolo kwenda Modogashe.*

Hon. Members: Yes!

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His Excellency the President (Hon. (Dr.) William Ruto): *Iteremke iende Samatar.*

Hon. Members: Yes!

His Excellency the President (Hon. (Dr.) William Ruto): *Iteremke mpaka Wajir.*

Hon. Members: Yes!

His Excellency the President (Hon. (Dr.) William Ruto*): Iende Tarbaj.*

Hon. Members: Yes!

His Excellency the President (Hon. (Dr.) William Ruto): *Itoke Tarbaj, ipitie Kotulo.*

Hon. Members: Yes!

His Excellency the President (Hon. (Dr.) William Ruto): *Iende Kobo.*

Hon. Members: Yes!

His Excellency the President (Hon. (Dr.) William Ruto): Iende El-Wak.

Hon. Members: Yes!

His Excellency the President (Hon. (Dr.) William Ruto): *Iende Garre.*

Hon. Members: Yes!

His Excellency the President (Hon. (Dr.) William Ruto): *Iende Rhamu.*

Hon. Members: Yes!

His Excellency the President (Hon. (Dr.) William Ruto): *Ifike Mandera.*

Hon. Members: Yeess!

(Hon. Members stood in their place and applauded His Excellency the President)

His Excellency the President (Hon. (Dr.) William Ruto): When I first spoke about this road and named all the towns it would pass through, Kenyans had a field day. The jokes and parodies were everywhere. I saw some of them myself, and I must admit, they were hilarious.

However, honorouble Members, beyond the humour, there is something we must reflect on. In those towns live Kenyans like you and me; mothers raising children; traders trying to make a living and young people with dreams no different from those of your children and mine. Some have lived their entire lives without a single tarmacked road reaching their communities their entire lives. Just imagine. What many of us take for granted has remained a distant hope for other citizens. That is the inequality we are correcting. That is the *Usawa* they deserve.

Hon. Members, education remains one of the most powerful instruments for equalising opportunity. Through teacher recruitment, classroom construction and expanded student accommodation, we are addressing inequalities in access to quality education across the country. In higher education, we initially reformed funding to provide greater support to students from less privileged families. However, we recognised that even with this support, tuition and the associated costs still remained a barrier for many families. We have, therefore, gone further. Under the Tertiary Education, Placement and Funding Bill, 2026 now before this Parliament, we are

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proposing that going forward, no student admitted to our universities, TVET institutions or the KMTCs will miss class on account of inability of their parents to pay.

A child's future should be determined by their ability and effort, not their family's income or the county in which they were born. Talent is found everywhere and in every corner of Kenya. Opportunity must too be found everywhere. That is *Usawa.*

Through programmes targeting young people, women and persons with disabilities, we are working to remove barriers to skills, finance, enterprise and public procurement opportunities. Programmes such as NYOTA and AGPO are intended to ensure that groups historically excluded from economic opportunity have practical pathways to participate, compete and succeed.

We are applying the same approach in agriculture. Our interventions are reaching smallholder farmers, pastoralists and fishing communities in arid and semi-arid regions, alongside producers in our traditional agricultural heartlands.

However, equity is not only about services and economic opportunity. It is also about rights, recognition and belonging. We are, therefore, addressing historical injustices in land ownership and security of tenure.

Since August, 2022, nearly 1.8 million title deeds have been issued across the country, including more than 400,000 at the coast. In Taita Taveta, Kilifi and Lamu, community titles have secured land rights for families who waited generations for formal recognition of their ownership.

A title deed provides more than proof of ownership. It confers security, encourages investment, protects inheritance and gives families greater certainty about their future. For communities that have lived with unresolved land claims for decades, it is also an affirmation that their rights deserve the same protection as those of every other Kenyan.

Equally, citizenship must likewise be reflected in how government treats its people. That is why we ended discriminatory identification requirements in northern Kenya and other border counties. A Kenyan should never spend a lifetime proving that they belong. Citizenship must be verified with diligence. The process must be fair, lawful and free from discrimination. No Kenyan should face additional barriers to recognition or access to public services simply because of their name, community or place of origin.

Hon. Members, our Constitution recognises that equal opportunity also requires addressing the historical imbalance in the distribution of national resources. Article 174 establishes equitable sharing of national and local resources as one of the objects of devolution. Article 204 of our Constitution provides for the Equalisation Fund to support basic services in marginalised areas. Over the past four financial years, we have disbursed Ksh1.55 trillion in equitable share to county governments, with a further Ksh428 billion allocated this financial year.

Through the Equalisation Fund, Ksh16.8 billion has been appropriated this year for projects in marginalised areas. These resources are intended to improve access to essential services and infrastructure, including water, roads, healthcare and electricity so that communities previously left behind can progressively attain standards enjoyed elsewhere. We are, therefore, changing not only the scale of national development, but

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also its geography and its reach. That is the promise of Bottom-Up Funding expression in *Usawa ni Sawa*: a republic in which opportunity is not the privilege of a few regions, communities or families, but the rightful expectation of every Kenyan.

Fellow citizens, the foundation we have laid in economic stability, productive livelihoods and wider access to opportunity now gives us the ability to aim higher. We must move beyond stabilising the economy to transforming its productive capacity. Beyond creating individual opportunities to building an economy capable of sustaining millions of productive jobs; beyond extending existing services to attaining standards of infrastructure, education, health and prosperity comparable with the world's most advanced economies. That is the ambition of attaining first world standard of prosperity within this generation. We cannot achieve this ambition through ordinary expenditure alone. The infrastructure required to transform our economy demands substantial, sustained and carefully structured investment.

Our transformation programme is estimated to require up to Kshs5 trillion Kenya over the next 10 years. We must, therefore, mobilise long-term capital in ways that protect debt sustainability, safeguard public resources and avoid placing an unsustainable burden on taxpayers. An important foundation for this ambition is the growth of our national savings.

Article 43 of our Constitution guarantees every Kenyan the right to social security. To give practical effect to this right, we have mobilised the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) savings from employees matched by their employers. We have set out to secure dignified retirement, build a stronger savings culture and mobilise domestic resources for national development. Let me give you the numbers; since 2023, monthly NSSF contributions have increased six-fold.

Did you hear that? Let me repeat.

Since 2023, monthly NSSF contributions have increased six-fold from Kshs1.4 billion every month to over Kshs8.5 billion every month. The Fund's value has grown from Kshs288 billion in 2022 to Kshs850 billion this month, putting us on course to reach a trillion shillings by June next year. For the 2024/2025 Financial Year, members earned an interest of 17 per cent on their savings. Tell me where you would get a better deal on savings.

Through digitisation, the NSSF has reduced benefit processing time from 82 days to seven days, with a target of processing claims within 24 hours. Over the past three years, the Fund has paid Kshs40.1 billion to approximately 400 beneficiaries. Our ambition is to be a nation that saves more, invests more and creates more opportunities for her people. By investing workers' savings prudently and productively, we can secure their future while financing the infrastructure and enterprise that build a more productive economy.

In my State of the Nation Address last year, I proposed to this House the establishment of the National Infrastructure Fund (NIF). I commend this House for swiftly passing the enabling legislation, which I signed into law on 9th March, 2026, this year. The Fund has since been capitalised with Kshs340 billion, turning that commitment into a platform for financing our nation's transformation. Built from proceeds of

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divestiture of mature public assets, the NIF provides a framework for mobilising investment from pension funds, institutional investors, development finance institutions and other partners.

The purpose is to convert existing national assets and available investment capital into the next generation of productive infrastructure; that is roads, airports, railways, energy, water, irrigation and other strategic investments that expand the capacity of our economy. Alongside this, the Sovereign Wealth Fund will provide a framework for saving, investing and preserving national wealth for future generations. We must leave those who come after us productive assets, national savings and manageable obligations. These financing instruments must operate under transparent governance, rigorous project appraisal and clear accountability. Every investment must be justified by the economic and social value it creates.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, honorouble Members, our first priority is transport infrastructure. As I talk to this House, 7,000 kilometres of road are under construction, including projects that had stalled for years. Over the next decade, our ambition is to tarmac another 28,000 kilometres of road and dual 2,000 kilometres of highways. These are not merely engineering statistics or targets. Better roads reduce the cost of moving agricultural produce, transporting manufactured goods and accessing markets. They connect workers to employment, patients to hospitals and learners to educational institutions. We are constructing the more than 750 kilometres I talked to you earlier, all the way to Mandela, to widen trade and investment.

We are working towards completion of the 700 kilometre Mau-Mau roads and the Kenol-Marua dual carriageway. We are advancing the Lake Victoria Ring Road, connecting communities and economic centres across the lake region, from Busia to Siaya to Kisumu to Homa Bay and to Migori. We are prioritising the Rironi-Naivasha-Nakuru-Mau Summit Highway, the Kamandura-Mai-Mahiu-Naivasha Road. Listen to this: Arrangements are at an advanced stage for the dualing of Nairobi-Mombasa Highway. Other strategic corridors on course include Mau Summit, Kericho-Kisii to Isebania, Awendo-Kisumu and Kisumu to Busia and Mau Summit-Eldoret-Malaba.

We are also prioritising the dualing of the Bomas-Ongata-Rongai-Ngong current and Kitengela-Isinya roads. We will be launching the construction shortly of Pangani-Muthaiga-Ndumberi, Makutano-Embu-Chuka-Maua is on our plan and Marua-Nanyuki-Isiolo is also in the framework we are developing with our NIF, and Malindi-Mtwapa and Likoni-Ukunda-Msambweni-Lunga-Lunga roads. Construction of Nithi Bridge is on course. Together, these projects will ease the movement of people and goods, connect regional markets and strengthen our economy.

We are also advancing the extension of the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) from Naivasha through Narok, Bomet, Kisumu and onward to Bungoma and Malaba; alongside the modernization of the Port of Lamu and the Port of Mombasa.

At the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA), the ongoing Kshs154.2 billion development and modernization programme will expand passenger and operational capacity, strengthen our position as a regional aviation hub and support tourism, horticulture, logistics and international business.

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(Applause)

Hon. Members, roads, railways, ports and airports must function as one integrated transport network, reducing logistics costs, positioning Kenya as a preferred destination for production, trade and investment.

Our second priority is energy. No modern economy can prosper without reliable and affordable electricity. Factories require dependable power. Irrigation systems need energy. Digital enterprises depend on uninterrupted connectivity. Hospitals, schools and households all require electricity that is accessible, competitively priced and reliable. Using NIF, we are mobilizing investment towards an additional 10,000 megawatts of generation capacity, drawing on our geothermal, hydro, wind and solar resources.

This expansion must be matched by investment in transmission, substations and distribution so that additional generation translates into reliable supply for industry, businesses and households. The objective is not simply to generate more electricity. It is to make power more dependable, more affordable, lower production costs, attract investment and enable Kenyan enterprises to compete in regional and international markets.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, Sir, our third priority is water security and irrigation. We have demonstrated through agricultural reforms that Kenyan farmers can produce more when they have access to affordable inputs, better technology and dependable markets. However, our agricultural potential will remain constrained as long as production depends solely on rainfall. We must make water available for agriculture, industry and households throughout the year.

Our programme envisages at least 50 mega dams, 200 medium and small dams and thousands of water harvesting structures, supporting an ambition of at least 2.5 million acres under irrigation. Roads will connect producers to markets. Energy will power production. Water will secure agriculture and industry. Together, these investments will create the condition for a more productive, competitive and resilient economy.

The service economy presents significantly important opportunities for our country. Kenya possesses extraordinary natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, globally recognized sporting talent and a strategic position as a regional centre for business, diplomacy and international conferences. We must convert these advantages into more visitors, greater foreign exchange earnings, expanded investments and more employment for our people.

The Raila Odinga International Stadium at Talanta City, alongside the upgrading of Nyayo, Kasarani and other stadia across the country is part of our ambition to make Kenya a leading destination for international sporting events. Our preparation to co-host the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) 2027 with Uganda and Tanzania provides an

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opportunity to showcase our country, develop sporting talent and expand demand for hotels, transport, hospitality, entertainment and services.

The Bomas International Convention Complex will strengthen our capacity to host international conferences, exhibitions and major business events. Together with modern airports, improved roads, hospitality investment and our creative industry, these facilities will position Kenya as a premier destination for tourism, sports, culture and international business.

The value of these investments must be measured not only in visitor numbers but in the jobs they create, the businesses they support, the incomes they generate and the opportunities they open for our young people. We must ensure that the farmer supplying a hotel, the artisan producing cultural artifacts, the musician entertaining our visitors, the transporter moving guests and the young professional working in hospitality all participate in the value created by a growing service industry.

Hon. Speakers, Members of Parliament, the transformation I have described requires more than capital and infrastructure. It requires three indispensable enablers; strategic human capital development, a robust peace, stability and security architecture and unwavering integrity and fidelity to the national interest. These are not secondary considerations; they are the conditions that will determine the success of our national ambition.

Our greatest national resource and asset is not only the land beneath our feet or the infrastructure we construct. It is the knowledge, innovation, discipline and the productive capacity of the Kenyan people and the people. We cannot build a first world economy without preparing Kenyans to design, construct, operate, manage and continually improve the systems on which such an economy depends.

Our education reforms must, therefore, connect learning to skills required for a modern economy. Universities must produce knowledge and innovation. Technical institutions must prepare skilled professionals and artisans. Research institutions must develop solutions to the challenges facing agriculture, industry, health and public administration.

We are advancing reforms for tertiary education placement and financing to make access more equitable, support institutional sustainability and ensure that financial circumstances do not unnecessarily prevent deserving Kenyans from pursuing higher education.

(Applause)

This Parliament, as I said earlier, is considering the Tertiary Education Placement and Funding Bill, 2026. I urge this House to give the proposal the scrutiny and public participation necessary to establish a fair, sustainable and effective framework. Our ambition is to expand access to university education, strengthen technical, vocational education and training and increase opportunities through Kenya Medical Training Colleges (KMTCs) and other specialized institutions.

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This law will give every young Kenyan a realistic pathway to acquire the knowledge and develop the skill needed to participate productively in the economy we are building. The legislation provides a deliberate investment in research, science and technology. Our universities and research institutions will be at the forefront of improving agriculture, productivity, developing industrial technologies, strengthening healthcare and solving national development challenges.

Our ambition is to develop not only a workforce capable of filling existing jobs but a generation capable of creating new industries, developing new technologies and opening new frontiers of national prosperity.

Fellow citizens, the second indispensable enabler is a robust architecture of peace, stability and security. Investment does not thrive where lives are unsafe, property is insecure and economic activity can be disrupted without consequence. Families cannot build lasting prosperity in fear. Enterprises cannot create dependable employment where years of investment can be destroyed in a single incident.

The protection of life, property, constitutional rights and public order is, therefore, fundamental to our national transformation. We must confront the painful events of June, 2024 and subsequent protests with honesty, compassion and a clear determination to learn from them. Kenyans lost their lives. Others suffered serious injuries and lasting trauma. Families were devastated. Parliament was breached. Public institutions, including the Judiciary, were attacked. Businesses were looted and livelihoods destroyed. These events remind us that the stability on which economic progress depends cannot be taken for granted.

Our security agencies have a constitutional mandate to secure human life and property. This mandate is constitutional and lawful. In the discharge of this cardinal duty, respect for the authority of the police to act independently is also constitutional and lawful but we must also be unequivocal about the responsibility of the State.

Where security officers use unlawful force or exceed their authority, wrongdoing must be acknowledged and those responsible must be held accountable in accordance with the law. Article 37 of our Constitution guarantees the right of every person, peacefully and unarmed, to assemble, demonstrate, picket and present petitions to public authorities. We must always protect that right.

(Applause)

Kenyans must remain free to express disagreement and criticise their government. As an administration, we have taken the important step of acknowledging wrongdoing where it occurred and committed public resources towards redress for victims of protest-related violations, including those dating back to 2017. We have allocated Kshs2 billion for this purpose.

By July this year, the compensation panel had reported payments totalling Kshs1.2 billion to 1,476 verified beneficiaries, including families of those who lost their lives and survivors who sustained serious injuries. The beneficiaries comprise 1,036 civilian victims of protests and 356 police officers who were injured in the noble

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discharge of their duties. For both demonstrators and police, no compensation can restore a lost life or erase the suffering of a family.

However, acknowledging harm and providing lawful redress are important responsibilities for a State that respects its citizens. Equally, compensation does not replace accountability. Investigations must continue and prosecutions must follow for violations of the law wherever the evidence warrants.

(Applause)

We are now strengthening the systems through which public order is managed. This includes improved training, professional standards, officer welfare, appropriate equipment, clear operational command, de-escalation procedures and stronger oversight. Our goal is to have a professional security service capable of preventing violence, protecting life and property while safeguarding constitutional freedoms and maintaining public order.

The lesson of our experience is clear. Security and liberty are not opposing national objectives. They are complementary constitutional responsibilities and obligations. This is the stability we must protect: A Republic in which disagreement is lawful, public installations are secure, businesses are safe, investors have confidence and citizens can pursue their aspirations without fear.

Hon. Members, the third indispensable enabler of our national transformation is patriotism and integrity. Patriotism must be more than the pride we express in our flag, or the affection we profess for our country. It must be demonstrated on how we exercise public responsibility, protect national resources and place Kenya above tribe, clan, political affiliation or personal advantage.

(Applause)

Corruption increases the cost of doing business, discourages investments and denies honest citizens a fair opportunity to succeed. To combat corruption and eliminate pilferage, we have digitised government services and payments through the e-Citizen platform, eliminating middlemen, sealing loopholes and making public transactions transparent, accountable and traceable. Through the Electronic Government Procurement (e-GP), we are enhancing transparency in public procurement by making suppliers, prices and Government contracts open, traceable and accountable. The Conflict of Interest Act, 2025, which I commend this House for passing, will strengthen accountability, prevent abuse of public office for private gain and reinforce integrity in public service.

(Applause)

The implementation of the Treasury Single Account (TSA) will strengthen payroll controls and improve public financial management to safeguard taxpayers' money and ensure greater value for every shilling. We enacted the Government-owned enterprises

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law, making appointments to public boards more transparent and guided by competence, integrity and the capacity to deliver, not political patronage. I must commend this Parliament for passing this law where politicians like us can no longer sit on boards. Boards will no longer be political rewards to be distributed. They are positions of trust to serve.

(Loud consultations)

Hon. Members, for those entrusted with public office, patriotism demands a higher standard, to exercise authority fairly, protect public resources, act on audit findings and accept scrutiny as a duty of service. Our national transformation will endure only if Kenyans can trust that the institutions responsible for delivering it are competent, accountable and faithful to the national interest.

Mr. Speaker, hon. Members, fellow citizens, the transformation we are undertaking also demands a higher standard of national leadership and public debate. A country seeking to attain first world status deserves a serious contest of ideas about production, employment, education, healthcare, infrastructure and national opportunity.

Let us debate how to lower the cost of electricity, finance infrastructure, expand employment, improve healthcare and make education more accessible. Let us test proposals against evidence, commitments against resources and promises against results.

No community should be reduced to a voting bloc. No region should be asked to surrender its judgement to a personality. Every citizen is entitled to know what those seeking public responsibility propose, how they intend to deliver it and how progress will be measured.

(Applause)

That standard applies first to those of us entrusted with government. We must account for our commitments and our record. Those who offer alternatives must explain their proposals. All of us must respect the people's right to question, criticise and choose.

As Vision 2030 approaches the end of its horizon, we must also begin defining the next chapter of Kenya's development. In August 2026, we launched a national conversation on our country's future beyond 2030. I invite young people, workers, farmers, entrepreneurs, professionals, scholars, political leaders, religious leaders and communities across our 47 counties to participate. We must forge a national development charter that reflects our shared aspirations, identifies the investments required to achieve them and establishes commitments capable of enduring beyond electoral cycles.

Our political choices will differ, as they should in a democracy but our determination to build a prosperous, equitable and secure republic must remain a common national purpose.

Mr. Speaker, hon. Members, fellow citizens, four years ago, we began an undertaking to transform our economy from the bottom up, remove the barriers

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constraining millions of hardworking Kenyans and create the conditions for shared prosperity.

Today, I report a nation whose economic foundations are strong, whose productive capacity is expanding and whose opportunities are reaching more citizens and communities.

To those of us in leadership, let us bring to this national task the same discipline, sacrifice and determination that millions of Kenyans bring to their work every day. Let us honour effort with opportunity, public trust with integrity and national ambition with delivery. The foundation has been laid. The direction is clear. The opportunity before us is immense.

This generational assignment, this most important work of building a prosperous, equitable and united Kenya must go on uninterrupted. *Usawa ni Sawa. Mbele Pamoja*.

Hon. Members, I now have the pleasure to submit to Parliament the following three reports as required by the Constitution-

(i) Report on all measures taken and progress achieved in the realisation of national values;

(ii) Report on progress made in fulfilling the international obligations of the Republic; and,

(iii) Report on the state of security.

Now, therefore, I hand over the reports to the Speaker of the Senate and to the Speaker of the National Assembly.

(His Excellency the President, Dr. William Ruto, handed over the reports to the Speaker of the Senate and the Speaker of the National Assembly)

(Applause)

I thank you all. God bless you. God bless Kenya. *Asante Sana*.

(Loud consultations)

ADJOURNMENT

The Speaker of the Senate (Hon. Amason Kingi): Order, hon. Members.

Your Excellency the President, the Rt. Hon. Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Members and distinguished guests, please be upstanding.

(Loud consultations)

Order, hon. Members. We have come to the conclusion of the business of the day and it is now time to adjourn. The Senate stands adjourned until Thursday, 19th November, 2026 at 2.30 p.m. in the Senate Chamber.

I thank you.

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(Loud consultations)

The Speaker of the National Assembly (Hon. (Dr.) Moses Wetang'ula): Order, hon. Members.

Hon. Members, your Excellency, the President, the National Assembly now stands adjourned until Thursday, 19th November, 2026 at 2.30 p.m.

May I also take this opportunity to invite all hon. Members and our guests to a reception at the Parliament courtyard.

Equally, I also request all Members and our guests to remain standing in your places until the procession of His Excellency the President and the Speakers, including yours truly, leave the Chamber.

Hon. Members: *Usawa ni sawa, mbele pamoja.*

(Applause)

DEPARTURE OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT

(Members of Parliament stood in their places while His Excellency the President left the Chamber)

Parliament rose at 4.34 p.m.

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