

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY HON. UHURU KENYATTA, C.G.H.,
PRESIDENT AND COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCES
OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA ON 5TH NORTHERN CORRIDOR
INTEGRATION SUMMIT AT SAFARI PARK HOTEL, NAIROBI ON 2ND
MAY, 2014**

Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,
Heads of Delegation Present,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by thanking you for honouring my invitation to this important Summit. It is a pleasure for me to welcome you all to Nairobi and in particular to this Forum. We highly appreciate your presence as it bolsters our bonds. Karibuni Nairobi!

Let me also commend the Ministers and senior officials who have been meeting during the last two days, for their diligence in preparing for the Summit. We look forward to reflecting on your report, and to advancing the work you have done.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our region still faces a significant infrastructure deficit challenge: we must, therefore, continue to construct the infrastructure we need to raise our economies to the path of higher growth. In the near term, we will need to expand, upgrade and rehabilitate the transport network throughout our entire region to open wider economic opportunities for our peoples.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since our first Summit in Entebbe last year, we have made remarkable progress in the priority areas we identified as crucial to our engagement. This builds on the longer history of the summits, which have seen a successive expansion of the scope of our cooperation – animated, as always, by our long-term aim of full integration. Allow me to mention some of our signal achievements so far.

As you know, our region remains beset by serious deficiencies in energy production. We chose to deal with that difficulty by investing in several generation and transmission projects, particularly in the production of geothermal power, in the construction of oil pipelines, in power interconnection and in the construction of an oil refinery. There is progress to report: the Memorandum on Geothermal Energy was signed in February this year, while the electricity inter-connections between our countries are on track for completion by April next year.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We long ago recognised that we would need to build our people's skills if we were to achieve our ambitions. It is, therefore, my pleasure to remind you that, at our last summit, we resolved to identify priority skills needed in the Integration Projects, through a regional skills audit for each sector. We also agreed to consider allocating funds for capacity building for various institutions across the region; the aim was to rehabilitate and upgrade their facilities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

These measures will enliven the training programmes we must have, if we are to meet the demand for skilled men and women that will follow the expansion of our infrastructure.

I wish also to recall our resolution to cooperate in the development of our commodities exchange. To hasten the integration of Commodities Exchange in the region, we agreed to establish a Joint Technical Committee at the regional level. I look forward to hearing from our Ministers on the advances they have made in this task.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the Fourth Summit in Kampala this year, we launched the East African Tourist Visa and agreed to permit the use of each other's identity documents for travel within the region. These two initiatives have been rolled out successfully; a real evidence of the region's desire for deeper integration. The advent of the single tourist visa eased the travels of our visitors, and effectively turned the participating countries into a single tourist destination.

Our acceptance of ID cards for travel across our borders substantially eases our peoples' travels, opening new opportunities for cross-border trade, as well as integration at the level that matters most - between citizens. In the same spirit, we also set out to operationalize the One-stop Border Post Concept and to budget for e-visa, e-identity card and e-border management systems. I am informed that work on these matters continues at the experts' level.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Congestion at our ports and diverse barriers along the main transport corridors have long hindered the movement of our goods. Since our first Summit, considerable improvements in the movement of cargo along the Northern Corridor have been realised. Containers from Mombasa once took 18 days to reach Kampala; that has now been reduced to 4 days. Equally worth noting is that the journey from Mombasa to Kigali now takes six (6) days in contrast to 22 days not long ago.

But this is not all about our achievements: I note with satisfaction that multiple customs declarations for fuel have since dropped by 90%. These

are great achievements; but to sustain them, we also agreed to remove all technical and non-tariff barriers to trade. Today's Summit should therefore aim to build on these achievements by agreeing on new measures to remove the obstacles that remain.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our achievements so far are threatened by the insecurity and terrorism that has recently caused so much concern in our region. We, the Heads of States, signed the Mutual Defence Pact and the Mutual Peace and Security Cooperation Pact during the last Summit.

These pacts expressed our common commitment to take the fight to those who prefer violence and theft instead of honest toiling to earn prosperity and freedom. Allow me now to encourage the partner states to hasten the full enactment of these agreements.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen, Let me now touch on other infrastructure programmes we are working on.

Some time ago, we set ourselves the goal of developing a standard gauge railway system by March 2018. For my part, I can report that work on the Mombasa-Nairobi section was launched in November last year.

Full construction is expected to begin in July this year, and the line from Mombasa to Malaba is on schedule for completion by March 2018. The LAPSET project, which we all expect to multiply the opportunities for trade and interaction between our nations, continues to make steady progress.

We also agreed to establish seamless operations across our air space - whether in the management of our air traffic, or in the use and sharing of the information and resources held in trust by our institutions. These plans are backed by, and depend on, our commitment to partner in the development of an ICT infrastructure-related concept.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen, In conclusion, I wish to note that these projects and initiatives are extraordinarily ambitious. But we have no choice if we desire to fully exploit the potential of our region. We agreed to undertake those initiatives confident that we are equal to the task. It remains only to rededicate ourselves to completing what we have begun.

Thank you. God bless you all, and may He bless and lead East Africa.