

Address by His Excellency Dr. William Samoei RUTO,  
President of the Republic of Kenya,  
at the Yokohama City Council Assembly Hall  
20<sup>th</sup> August 2025

Thank you very much.

Your Excellency Shibuya Takeshi, President of Yokohama City Council, Your Lordship Takeharu Yamanaka, Mayor of Yokohama, honorable members of the assembly, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen;

I express my deepest gratitude for the warm welcome and generosity extended to me and my delegation on this magnificent City of Yokohama, since my arrival here in Japan. It is also my profound honor to stand before this August assembly which represents one of the world's most dynamic urban centers.

Yokohama is not only a thriving industrial hub and magnet for foreign direct investment, but it is also an internationally recognized center of commerce, culture and innovation. Its reputation as a global city of the future is well and richly deserved.

Mr. President, honorable members, as a smart city Yokohama demonstrates how research, innovation and human ingenuity can transform societies and build resilience future-ready communities. This city embodies the promise that, with vision and sustained effort, meaningful and inclusive development is possible. Kenya greatly values the lessons and opportunities for collaboration that Yokohama represents.

Our theme today, people-to-people partnership for shared prosperity, captures the true spirit of international cooperation.

Ultimately, relationships between nations must serve the common good of their citizens. These ties are well cultivated through cultural exchanges, educational programs, sporting collaboration and knowledge sharing, and I'm happy that in our audience today are students from different parts of Yokohama. Such interactions breakdown stereotypes, deepen cultural understanding, bridge divides, prevent conflict and nurture trust.

When people meet, learn from each other and share experiences, they become formidable, credible ambassadors of peace, mutual understanding and prosperity. Already, vibrant partnership exists between Kenya and Yokohama. For example, the exchange program between Yokohama Commercial High School and Alliance High School in Kenya has fostered authentic cross-cultural and educational experiences for students in both countries. Such initiatives nurture friendships that last a lifetime. Kenya welcomes the expansion of similar programs in more schools, technical institutions and universities.

Sports is another powerful channel of connection between Kenya and Japan. Since the 1980s, our athletic ties have flourished. I pay tribute to Douglas Wakiihuri, the legendary Kenyan marathoner who blazed trails as the first Kenyan athlete to train and work in Japan. He's example inspires hundreds of other athletes to follow in his footsteps. Today, more than two hundred Kenyan athletes are engaged in Japanese sporting institutions, strengthening people-to-people ties and inspiring new generations. This is a remarkable story of shared sporting passion and excellence. I want to encourage Japanese sporting clubs in rugby, volleyball, football, another discipline to explore Kenya's pool of talent and expertise. I also invite our Japanese partners to participate in our school's drama and music festivals, which showcase a rich talent and

provide a unique opportunity for cultural exchange and talent development while forming a strong base for global understanding of cultures.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, Kenya is proud to have hosted TICAD 6 in 2016. The first TICAD ever convened outside Japan. That milestone affirmed Africa's growing role in shipping, its own development, agenda, and remains a towering reminder of our shared commitment to partnership. The TICAD process continues to strengthen Africa-Japan cooperation in investment, infrastructure, human capital and sustainable growth. Kenya and Japan enjoy our friendship that has flourished over six decades. During this time Japan has been a steady partner in our development journey. Japan's contribution is feasible across key sectors, infrastructure, agriculture, water, energy, health and human resource development. From geothermal power generation to the transformation of Mombasa port into a global maritime hub, Japan's support has been instrumental in position in Kenya as a strategy gateway into Africa.

With more than one hundred and twenty Japanese companies thriving in Kenya, our private sector collaboration is robust and expanding. These funds contribute to job creation, technology transfer and industrial growth, while serving as anchors of Kenya's economic transformation.

Later today, I will preside over the Kenya investment forum here in Yokohama. This event organized in partnership with the City of Yokohama will showcase Kenya's dynamic investment landscape and highlight priority sectors from infrastructure to renewable energy, all the way to agri-business and digital innovation. I urge the private sector in Yokohama to seize the boundless opportunities in Kenya. Our relationship must rise to a level high

enough that fully harnesses the opportunities that exists in both countries. Our export processing zones and special economic zones provide world class benchmarks for investors. Kenya is also home to one of Africa's most vibrant technological eco-system, widely known as the Silicon Savannah.

I particularly invite the Japanese private sector to seize the immense opportunities that Kenya presents as the gateway to Africa's growth. Our country boasts a large pool of well-educated, tech savvy, young people who are adequately equipped to work with a most advanced technologies to drive innovation across our continent and globally. I am pleased to note that many Japanese companies have already began recruiting Kenyan graduates for training and deployment in Japan. The government of Kenya is committed to formalizing labor mobility frameworks with Japan, enabling more Kenyans to contribute to Japan's economy while deepening the bonds of friendship between our two peoples.

Honorable members, Kenya's energy mix is already ninety percent green and renewable, giving investors access to reliable, competitively priced power with one of the lowest carbon footprints globally, an ideal platform to anchor industrial capacity. In addition, our agricultural sector offers high quality products produced through sustainable practices, ensuring minimal carbon footprint and alignment with global climate conscious supply chains. These advantages coupled with Kenya's dynamic market and regional connectivity make our country the most strategic destination for Japanese investment in Africa.

Excellencies, Kenya is the cradle of mankind and the custodian of humanity's earliest heritage. Magical Kenya offers breakthrough and breath-taking landscapes, iconic lions, wildlife and diverse

cultures. That is why I have always said that visitors to Kenya are not merely tourists, they are actually returning home. We warmly welcome more visitors from Japan to discover the magic of our country, the home of original wonder.

Kenya is equally proud to be the gateway to the East African Community, original block of eight nations with a population of three hundred million and a combined GDP of nearly three hundred and thirty billion US dollars. This integration has created a dynamic common market with simplified cross-border trade, a talented workforce and tremendous growth potential. With the alignment of the East African Community and the Africa continental featured area, investors gain access not only to East Africa but also to the entire continent. I therefore invite Japan and especially the business community here in Yokohama to expand engagement with the East African Community.

Just as the Yokohama is Japan's getaway to the world. Kenya is your gateway to East Africa and the wider African continent.

As I conclude, allow me to reiterate that humanity has always thrived through cooperation. In today's interconnected world our interdependence is more evident than ever, whether responding to pandemics, mitigating climate change, combating food insecurity or maintaining peace. Kenya is committed to working with Japan and the global community to confront these challenges together and to explore opportunities for our mutual benefits. Our shared values of democracy, freedom and the rule of law give us a solid foundation to pursue collective solutions for humanity.

Asante sana. I thank you. ありがとうございます。

Thank you very much.