

**Visit of President Ruto, Republic of Kenya  
Dinner at the German Parliament  
Berlin 27 March 2023**

**Welcome by Dr Uschi Eid,  
President of the German Africa Foundation**

Mr. President,  
Ministers,  
Members of Parliament,  
State Secretaries,  
Mr. Ambassador,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear guests,

I would like to welcome you wholeheartedly to this evening.

It is an honour, Mr. President, to welcome you tonight at the German Parliament.

A special thanks goes to the chair of the parliamentary committee on development cooperation, MP Dr Christoph Hoffmann, the patron of this dinner, and His Excellency Ambassador Tom Amolo of the Republic of Kenya for their support in organizing this dinner.

The presence of

- so many members of parliament of different parties and
- state secretaries of different ministries

proves: Kenya is a very special and important political partner and friend to Germany.

2023 marks a significant year in this partnership: 60 years ago, Kenya became independent, and Germany was the first country to officially recognize Kenya's independence on 12th December 1962. Consequently, 60 years of independence equal 60 years of German-Kenyan friendship that are being celebrated this year.

Throughout,

these relations have been defined by strong amicable feelings and solid economic relations, strengthened by mutual visits like President Arap Moi in Bonn 1989, Chancellor Schröder 2004 and Chancellor Merkel 2011 in Nairobi, President Kenyatta in Berlin 2016, Federal President Steinmeier in Nairobi 2020.

Not to forget – in all modesty – my own various visits in Kenya during my active political time as G8 Africa Representative of then-Chancellor Schröder and as chair of the former Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation of the UN Secretary General.

Kenya has been known here in Germany as an anchor of democracy and stability in a volatile region as well as a regional economic powerhouse.

And not to forget, Kenyan people are very friendly, open, and welcoming.

It is thus not by chance, that German-Kenyan relations are intensifying,

- as can be seen from the fact that you, Mr President, are here today, visiting Berlin within the first 7 months of your presidency
- as well as from the fact that Chancellor Scholz, too, is going to visit Nairobi in a few weeks.

With the new Climate and Development Partnership, agreed upon last year, a new dimension has been added to our relation, namely the shared concern about the future of our planet.

And let me at this point commemorate my personal friend, the late Prof Wangari Maathai, the Kenyan ecological pioneer, Peace Nobel Laureate and Awardee of the renowned German Petra Kelly Prize.

May I add, Mr. Ambassador:  
together with your predecessor we planted a tree in memory of her in front of the Heinrich Böll Foundation here in Berlin-Mitte.

As Kenya is becoming more and more an important actor not only in Africa, but on the international stage, Germany is very glad to have your country, Mr. President, as a core strategic partner for Germany.

Kenya, if I may say so, has proven that it is not just a frontrunner at international marathons.

It is also a frontrunner in digital innovation with its flourishing scene of start-ups.

It is a frontrunner in internet connectivity, providing mobile-based internet solutions also in rural areas.

It is a frontrunner in the usage of green energy, producing more than 80% of its energy through renewable resources, making Germany with its share of 45% look old.

I believe it is these areas, where Germany can learn a lot from your country, Mr President.

The most important reason for Kenya's significance as a core strategic international partner is its pivotal role in conflict resolution - not just in the region and on the African continent, but beyond.

Friends and partners of African countries are grateful, that

- through your government's and
- your very personal efforts, Mr President,

a peace deal was reached between the warring factions in Ethiopia, where ethnic politics has led to endangering the existence of the state.

A helping hand from your side to overcome the ethnic based constitution in Ethiopia could help to stabilize peace in the region.

Kenya is also spearheading attempts to end the decade-long conflict in Eastern Congo, both with military personnel as well as through diplomatic efforts.  
The suffering people in the region need peace more than anything else. Germany is appreciating your efforts in this regard.

Due to your commendable personal efforts, Mr President, Eritrea is re-joining the regional bloc IGAD, thus reopening diplomatic channels to an isolated regime.

May be in the middle run, you, Mr. President, can convince the Eritrean President to implement the constitution, decided upon in 1997, (when I was living in Eritrea) and, as a first step, to release his former friends and ministers, who have been in prison for more than 20 years.

Looking beyond the continent, on the international stage, Kenya just concluded its very successful two-year term at the UN Security Council.

In particular, I would like to mention the major headlines the speech of Permanent Representative Ambassador Martin Kimani made ahead of Russia's neo-colonial invasion of Ukraine in February 2022

His speech inspired people and nations and made clear that state sovereignty and territorial integrity are key principles of the African Union based on the Charter of the Organization of African Unity.

These principles have ensured peace on the continent and should be an example for the world to follow.

The German Africa Foundation honoured Ambassador Kimani for his speech in December 2022 with the Honorary Award of our foundation.

In her laudatory speech the State Minister of Foreign Affairs Katja Keul stressed very clearly how much the German government values the partnership with Kenya for global peace and security.

Moreover, the German Africa Award of our Foundation

- the most prestigious prize of its kind here in Germany -

has been awarded a record 4 times to a Kenyan national, lastly in 2019 to IT pioneer Juliana Rotich. She received the award from then-Chancellor Angela Merkel, showcasing once more the leading role Kenya is playing on the continent. The other awardees were Prof Peter Anyang Nyong'o in 1995, John Githongo in 2004 and Abdikadir Hussein Mohamed in 2011 – just to make the list complete.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I do not want to conclude without paying tribute to the many victims in the south eastern African region caused by tropical cyclone Freddy during the past few days and to the many people suffering from hunger due to food insecurity, for example in East Africa, including Northern Kenya, caused by severe drought and the disruption of supply chains due to the Russian war.

Let me conclude by saying that with view to the vast global challenges such as

- biodiversity and climate change,
- food security
- peace
- the rule of law and personal freedom,

a future-oriented strategic partnership between our two countries is not simply of mutual benefit, it is a necessity.

The basis for the success of such a strategic partnership is not just mere words and initiatives, it's

- mutual understanding and trust,
- discussing shared and conflicting interests,
- and designing relations for mutual benefit.

I hope we will be able to have many fruitful exchanges tonight that nurture our friendship.

I wish everyone a nice evening and fruitful discussions.

Mr President, may I invite you - the floor is yours.