

**RECEPTION HELD ON THE OCCASION OF THE PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS  
TO HIS EXCELLENCY DR. ALEXANDER VAN DER BELLEN, FEDERAL PRESIDENT OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA**

REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY AMB. MAURICE MAKOLOO

**20TH FEBRUARY 2024**

---

**Excellencies**

**Members of the Diplomatic Community in Vienna**

**Members of the UN and Other International Organizations in Vienna**

**Distinguished Guests**

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

**Karibuni Sana!**

1. Welcome to the Embassy and Permanent Mission of Kenya in Vienna. Moments like this remind me of this memorable quote from Things Fall Apart, by the renowned African Author, Chinua Achebe **"When we meet in a moonlit village, it is not the moon that brings us together, for each one of us can see it from his own compound. But we do so because it is good for kinsmen to be together"**. When kinsmen gather, they share. They share stories. Stories of their gains and pains. They share their hopes and plans. They break bread together. When kinsmen gather, they celebrate. They celebrate one another. They celebrate their triumphs. We gather as kinsmen this evening. May we share. And may we celebrate.
2. Today, I have the honour to host my first event as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Kenya in the Republic of Austria. The process leading to this evening has been humbling, uplifting, educative, and immensely inspiring.
3. It was indeed a great honour to be received by His Excellency President van der Bellen at the Hofburg, to convey the greetings and respects of his Kenyan counterpart, and to discuss briefly how our two friendly nations can advance our bilateral relations – and make meaningful contributions to address the challenges that face our world today.

**Before I say anything more, please allow me to first extend appreciation to those who made this day possible:**

4. Firstly, all honour and glory be to the Almighty God. Even the breath we enjoy at this very moment is a precious gift from Him.
5. In a special way, I wish to thank my President, His Excellency Dr. William Ruto, for appointing me as his representative in the beautiful country of Austria. It is my joy and honour to serve.
6. I wish to thank the Government of Austria, in particular, the kind-hearted and efficient officials from the Ministry of European and International Affairs. The ceremony this afternoon at the Hofburg Palace was conducted with the customary and renowned

Austrian elegance, class and efficiency! And it's that warm hospitality that I, together with my family, have enjoyed since we first landed at Vienna International Airport on the 31st of January this year.

7. I also wish to thank my colleague Ambassadors for the kind hospitality that you have extended to me since I first arrived. I have enjoyed forming new friendships and receiving your expert and professional guidance – on matters both personal and professional. I am immensely grateful.
8. In our presence, we have representatives from the business sector – including the Austrian Chamber of Commerce. I thank you for your attendance. It is my hope that in the course of my Tour of Duty, we will elevate the bilateral economic relations between our two nations to greater heights. Thank you for your sustained interest in working in and with Kenya.
9. Allow me to give special recognition to the Kenyan Diaspora in Austria – represented here today by a few leaders and colleagues. It is a distinct honour to serve you. It is my aim is to create plenty of additional opportunities for meaningful and impactful engagements with you and to nurture a partnership that serves and supports your stay here in Austria while also enabling you to contribute to the growth of our country, Kenya.
10. I know I have many more people to thank – but allow me to conclude this gratitude list by extending a note of sincere gratitude to the staff at the Embassy for their diligent efforts to make this day a success, their continued kindness to me and my family since we first arrived, and their continued dedication in the service of our nation. It is an honour to join this team.

### **Distinguished Guests**

#### **Ladies and Gentlemen:**

11. We live in a time of paradoxes. Our world is more interconnected than ever before - yet simultaneously more fragmented. While the world is generally richer now, the inequality gap between those who have and those who do not have has widened (whether within or between states). Technologies, such as AI, while offering immense solutions, come with the potential for grave harm. We find ourselves battling an existential climate crisis, and facing regional and internal conflicts in many parts of the world, including parts of Europe, the Middle East and Africa, among other challenges.
12. Vienna's status as a hub for international diplomacy, in addition to the City's unique combination of historical significance, cultural vibrancy, commitment to sustainability, and strategic geographical location, among other attributes, creates the perfect conditions to seek solutions to the challenges of our time through the time-tested approaches of multilateralism and international cooperation.
13. It is my hope, as I join this community, that we shall be able to continue safeguarding the cherished ethos of the "Vienna Spirit" and contributing towards rules-based multilateral solutions to the challenges that face the world.
14. In my discussions today with His Excellency President van der Bellen, we spoke of the importance of using our platforms in Vienna to contribute towards finding solutions to the current global challenges, including ways of ensuring meaningful climate action, more shared prosperity and promoting peace and security in our regions.

15. While acknowledging the challenges of our time, we also spoke of the many opportunities which our diplomatic engagements can unlock, including ways of expanding our trade relations, opportunities for advancing our cultural exchanges, and ways of utilizing technological advancement to make the world a better place for all of us. For where there is a will, there is a way.

### **Distinguished Guests**

#### **Ladies and Gentlemen:**

16. 30 years ago today, i.e. the year 1994, Kenya opened this Mission, here in Vienna. As we look back to those three decades, we celebrate the very strong foundation that our pioneers laid. We are grateful for the enormous work done over the years by our predecessors. As we embrace the gifts they have given us, we equally seize this moment to courageously strive to co-create an even better future as our own gift to future generations.
17. There is an African saying that **"If you want to know the end, look at the beginning"**. We have a chance to make today, this year, a new beginning- a powerful beginning!
18. I extend my hand in friendship to all of you and reassure you of my support, partnership and collaboration.
19. Thank you for your kind attention. God bless you. God bless Kenya.
20. And now please join me in welcoming our dear friends, our hosts in this country, from the Ministry of European and International Affairs to make some remarks.