



**Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier
on the occasion of the state banquet hosted by Uhuru
Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya
in Nairobi, Kenya
on 24 September 2020**

Jambo! What a pleasure to be back in Kenya again after five years! It is a particular honour for me today to be the first German President to be in your beautiful country on a state visit, here in Nairobi. After almost six decades of good and amicable relations between our two countries, the time really is ripe for a visit at this level by Germany. However, Haraka haraka haina baraka! Good things take time, as we say in Germany.

President Kenyatta, thank you very much for inviting me here today. Africa is a continent of the future, and Kenya an important and significant African partner for Germany and Europe. I am looking forward to continuing the exchange we had over the course of the day, which took place in a spirit of trust. And I'm looking forward to experiencing the particular beauty and vibrancy of your country, which attracts many compatriots from Germany each year.

The world has become smaller over the past six decades. Human curiosity and inventiveness have brought our countries and continents ever closer together. They have opened up vast opportunities, but are also confronting us with new challenges and problems. Today we are realising more clearly than ever that developments and events on one continent do not leave the people on the neighbouring continent unaffected. We are talking about our opportunities, our challenges, it is our common future that is at stake. I am saying this to emphasise why Kenya will continue to gain in clout and importance as a partner for Germany in East Africa.

Kenya is one of the strongest economies in East Africa. It is an important economic partner for Germany and a close partner in development cooperation. Yet Kenya is also a country that has an impact far beyond its own borders as a member of such important

African organisations as COMESA, the EAC and numerous major UN agencies. It is a hub of regional and international cooperation.

Germany values the important role Kenya is playing in promoting the stability of the entire East African region, particularly in neighbouring Somalia. We appreciate Kenya's intensive efforts to preserve the cohesion between Christians and Muslims in the region and to root out the seeds of hatred that the Al-Shabaab militia are attempting to sow with their brutal attacks.

Kenya is focusing on fostering understanding. Kenya is focusing on promoting good neighbourliness, focusing on principles that are becoming ever more important and precious. Preserving social cohesion presents major challenges to a country as diverse as yours. With the Building Bridges Initiative, you, Mr President, are pursuing a path of national reconciliation and dialogue. I sincerely hope that you succeed in this endeavour!

It is with great respect that we in Germany are observing Kenya's willingness to take in a large number of refugees from neighbouring countries and provide them with prospects for the future. We intend to continue to support your efforts to look after these people and give them access to education.

President Kenyatta, distinguished guests, we are the first generation to live in an age in which humanity is able to irreversibly change the living conditions on the planet. Only the concept of a global order offers the opportunity to formulate persuasive answers to the challenges of this Anthropocene. Africa and Europe need one another if they are to work together as part of the international community to find these answers. In Africa, the impact of climate change is already clearly tangible. But Europe, too, is increasingly feeling its effects. Whether they take the form of drought and flooding, failed harvests or plagues of locusts, these kinds of natural disasters are becoming more frequent. And international cooperation on preventing and dealing with such disasters must likewise increase.

But that's not all. We Germans can also learn a great deal in and from Kenya: for example, how solar energy can be used to power cargo bikes, how mobile-phone-based electronic payment systems work, how an upcoming start-up sector is producing sustainable fashion, and much, much more.

There is so much creativity here, so many ideas on how to build a better future – for Kenya and for the entire region.

My delegation and I are looking forward to getting to know Kenya's strong, vibrant society and to sharing many conversations and experiences over the coming days.

For this, we will need sustenance. So allow me now to conclude on this note: Ngoja Ngoja huumiza matumbo. I don't want to keep us from our food any longer.

Mr President, distinguished guests, I raise my glass to drink to your health and to the friendship between our nations.

Asante sana! Thank you very much.