

REMARKS BY H.E. MR. MANOAH ESIPISU, HIGH COMMISSIONER DESIGNATE OF KENYA TO THE UNITED KINGDOM, DURING THE KENYA SOCIETY RECEPTION ON 20TH NOVEMBER, 2018 AT THE ROYAL OVER-SEAS LEAGUE

- Mr. Patrick Orr, The Chairman of the Kenya Society
- Dr. Diana Owen, Director General of the Royal Over-Seas League
- Mr. Kamal Shah, Head of Stephenson Harwood's Africa and India groups
- Mr. Juvenal Shiundu, the Deputy Chairman of the Kenya Society
- Distinguished Members of the Kenya Society
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon,

It's a very great pleasure to join you today, and to see so many friends of Kenya — friends who have distinguished themselves by constant support of Kenya's best interests, and to whom we owe our thanks. Asanteni.

Let me start by saying that I look forward to new friendships as much as I hope to strengthen the old. Kenya is at a transition. The new constitution wrought dramatic changes in our government; these must now be translated to actions that expand opportunities for our country.

The UK, likewise, is looking to renew its role in the world while renegotiating ties with its close neighbours to ensure new prosperity and freedom for the British people. Kenya is keen to maintain the prevailing stable and flourishing economic relations with the UK post Brexit. We are keen to ensure predictability and continuation of the existing market access conditions to the UK as well as Foreign Direct Investment flows to Kenya.

And let's admit that Kenya's relationship with Britain is, without doubt, one of our most important relationships. We trade more with the UK than with virtually any other country. More visitors from the UK visit us than go to almost any other country on the African continent; and more Kenyans visit

the UK, for business, pleasure and education, than visit any other country in Europe.

We have a strong relationship and bond, indeed. Now, in my view, the task of Kenya's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom is to advance Kenya's interests in alliance with one of its oldest friends. I am not alone in that view: some of Kenya's most distinguished public servants—from Dr. Josephat Karanja to Bethuel Kiplagat, and from Dr. Sally Kosgei to Lazarus Amayo - have served in this post. They were as adamant in defence of Kenya's interests as they were astute in advancing the alliance between Kenya and the United Kingdom. I am humbled by their achievements; I hope to follow in their footsteps.

I propose to take up, right away, the matter of economic diplomacy, which will be profitable to us. We all accept, I believe, that Kenya could do a far better job finding investors abroad, and informing them of the opportunities we offer; I look forward to doing my part to ease the path of potential investors looking to apply their expertise and experience in Kenya. Equally, we don't find as many opportunities for Kenyan investors abroad as we could. It's time, in my view, to change that; it's time to rededicate ourselves to the search for opportunity for our people, born here and abroad. We are devoted to win-win partnerships.

I am keen to advance the interests of Kenya's diaspora, investors and students.

When, in her speech at the Conservative conference, the Rt. Hon Theresa May called Kenya an engine-room of growth in years to come, she was right. She asked the people of the UK to meet the possibilities Kenya presented. I couldn't agree more; indeed, I see it as my job, in my new designatal role, to ease both sides' search for those possibilities.

On our part, His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta is keen to continue creating a business friendly environment and is committed to keeping the economy open to investors. In this context, this year's World Bank Ease of

Doing Business report indicated that Kenya maintained its strong business reform agenda, carrying out key reforms in the past year to improve the business climate for small and medium-sized businesses.

The reforms raised Kenya to 61st place in the global ease of doing a business ranking, from 80 last year, and show Kenya on the path of consistent improvement over the last four years. It is, my desire to see more UK companies investing in Kenya in order to strengthen the already flourishing economic relations, and to take advantage of the greatly improving business environment.

In achieving this objective, the UK stands out as a Key partner particularly in execution of our development Agenda in the next four years as clearly articulated by H.E. the President in his “Big Four” agenda which aims to:-

- Grow the manufacturing sector and increase its contribution to GDP from the current 9% to 15% over the period;
- Ensure sustainable food security;
- Build 500,000 new affordable housing units by 2022;
- Achieve 100% Universal Healthcare.

This agenda can only be delivered through a combination of public and private sector financing, sharing knowledge, experiences and expertise. Foreign Direct Financing will definitely play a significant part in the implementation of “the Big 4 Agenda” and I expect some of the finances will come from those of you in this room, you who are at the heart of partnering_our country and are keen to see it ascend in its reform and growth agenda.

When it comes to security—a second major concern—the President put it best: Kenya will prosper with its region. If Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Burundi — if all our neighbours — do well, so will we. He was quick to draw the obvious conclusion: peace in the region is Kenya’s interest, and ought to be the interest of all her friends.

In Somalia, we've seen fantastic progress: the work of countless ordinary men and women rebuilding the country. Kenya has been glad to pitch in: we have men under arms in Somalia, fighting terrorists, and helping the lawful, elected government defend its people.

While in South Sudan, there have been many number of ceasefire agreements. It is our hope that this last one will end the country's devastating civil war.

We look to the United Kingdom for help and advice where appropriate, drawing on their long experience in peacekeeping, anti-terrorism work, and state rebuilding.

In closing, let me reiterate our commitment to further strengthen the ties between Kenya and the United Kingdom and as High Commissioner Designate, pledge to do all in my power to ensure continued partnering to grow people to people relations, trade, tourism, investment and security areas.

Let me thank Patrick and the Kenya Society for this Karibu Balozi event. I look forward to working with you to deliver on our objectives, that is advancing our interests to secure mutual growth and win-win development.

I Thank You.