



Republic of Kenya

PRESS STATEMENT

VISA FREE ACCESS TO SOUTH AFRICA FOR KENYANS

As of January 1, 2023, Kenyans will enjoy visa-free travel to South Africa for a period of 90 days in a year. The announcement was made on 9th November 2023, in a joint press briefing, by H.E. Dr. William Samoei Ruto, CGH, President of the Republic of Kenya, and H.E. Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa.

The bold and timely move to a visa-free regime between the two brotherly countries is a concrete demonstration of the deep bonds of friendship and a commitment to nurture closer ties. Kenya and South Africa share strong bonds of friendship, anchored on mutual respect, common values and solidarity not only on issues of bilateral concern, but also on regional, and international matters.

The conclusion of the longstanding negotiations on the visa exemption further reflects conscious efforts and political good will by leaders of our two countries to eliminate any barriers to building greater business, cultural and communal relationships. It is the recognition that easier movement of people will promote integration and Pan-Africanism as envisioned in the African Union Free Movement of Persons Protocol of 2018. I therefore commend our two presidents for the visionary leadership and the commitment to a borderless continent.

Trade and Economic Cooperation remains a key pillar of Kenya's bilateral relations with South Africa. Kenya is among South Africa's leading trading partners in Africa. As Kenya's High Commissioner to South Africa, I am excited by the numerous economic benefits presented by the visa-free travel. The new policy complimented by the already existing Strategic Partnership Framework between South African Airways and Kenya Airways will not only facilitate tourism exchanges but also boost trade and investment.

At the time of the announcement, President Cyril Ramaphosa was in Kenya for his first official trip to the country from 8th - 9th November 2022 at the invitation of President Ruto. Happening two months after Kenya's 2022 general-election and barely a year after another successful State Visit to South Africa by former President Uhuru Kenyatta in November 2021, the reciprocal State Visit was an

important statement of the will to maintain and deepen the sound and steady relations through high-level visits and diplomatic exchanges.

During the November 2022 State Visit, Kenya and South Africa signed three (3) Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and one (1) Agreement on: Cooperation in the Field of Correctional Services; Cooperation in the Field of Housing and Human Settlement; Cooperation between the Kenya School of Government and the South Africa National School of Government; and an Agreement on Audio Visual Co-Production. This is in addition to eight other legal instruments signed in November 2021. The signed Agreements and several others under negotiation cover the wide scope of cooperation and a deep determination by the two countries to elevate the nature and level of relationship.

I look forward to deepening the new chapter of engagement with the South African people under the visa free regime.

Catherine Muigai Mwangi
High Commissioner, Kenya High Commission Pretoria

January 1, 2023