

SPEECH BY DR. KORIR SING'OEI, PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, STATE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AND DIASPORA AFFAIRS DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE INAUGURAL MASHARIKI SECURITY JOURNAL IN NAIROBI, ON 27th FEBRUARY, 2025

Our esteemed host Brig (RTD) Dr. Robert Kabage,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am honored to speak on behalf of the Principal Secretary, State Department of Foreign Affairs, who would have wished to be here but is unavailable due to exigency of duties.
2. At the onset allow me to recognize the Chief Guest, the National Security Advisor, Amb. (Dr.) Monica K. Juma, (Oxon), E.G.H, whose unwavering commitment and leadership continues to inspire us all.
3. On behalf of the entire fraternity of the Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, I congratulate the Mashariki Research and Policy Centre on the timely launch of the Inaugural Mashariki Security Journal.
4. This launch could not have come at a better time than this, when our region is experiencing compounding peace and security challenges, including protracted conflicts, terrorism and violent extremism, transnational organized crimes, and cyber-crimes. Meanwhile, our peace and security architecture, along with the institutions created to address these challenges, are under immense pressure. As a result, the region is slowly gravitating towards worsening political and security instability.
5. As you are aware, Kenya has historically been and continues to be, at the forefront of regional, continental, and global efforts in the pursuit of peace and stability, particularly in the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region. Currently, we are hosting and facilitating the High-Level Mediation for South Sudan (Tumaini Initiative) under the auspices of His Excellency President William Ruto.
6. Kenya is also engaged in stabilization efforts in Somalia, facilitating political reconciliation, as well as participating in peace enforcement and counterterrorism initiatives through the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM). Additionally, Kenya played a pivotal role in resolving the conflict in northern Ethiopia, contributing to the signing of the Agreement for Lasting Peace through a Permanent Cessation

of Hostilities between the Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front.

7. For the past three years, Kenya has been actively involved in the search for peace in Eastern DRC. The Nairobi Process, despite the challenges faced, remains the most comprehensive peace initiative, offering hope for stabilizing the situation. Under the leadership of His Excellency President William Ruto, as Chairperson of the East African Community (EAC), addressing the Eastern DRC crisis has been prioritized. The recent EAC-SADC Summit on the DRC crisis was a pivotal step, providing the necessary political momentum through regional collaboration. Kenya is also a troop contributing country to MONUSCO.
8. Similarly, for Sudan, Kenya has been engaging both bilaterally and through IGAD in an effort to establish an inclusive political process, to create a platform for dialogue among all Sudanese parties and actors to resolve the ongoing crisis.
9. I am highlighting these efforts because I recognize that think tanks, such as the Mashariki Research and Policy Centre, play a crucial role in amplifying our initiatives. The Ministry is fully aware of the invaluable contributions of independent think tanks, especially from Africa, in generating ideas that inform both the formulation and implementation of foreign policy.
10. During the review of Kenya's Foreign Policy in 2024, the Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs deliberately sought extensive public input, including contributions from think tanks, to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive policy framework.
11. Notably, your valuable insights during the Kenya Foreign Policy review process, which culminated in its launch on 2nd December 2024, were instrumental in shaping the direction and priorities of our foreign policy. We deeply appreciate your contributions and look forward to continued collaboration in advancing Kenya's diplomatic objectives.
12. For too long, thought leadership has been perceived as the preserve of the Global North and West. However, it is evident that effective peace and security solutions must harness our own diverse experiences and translate them into actionable knowledge.
13. Security challenges do not conform to geographical hierarchies; they affect economies, regions, and cultures across the globe. Therefore, we must transcend outdated models and reimagine solutions that reflect the unique experiences and needs of every nation and region.

14. The Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs recognizes that our learning should be rooted in local, national, and global experiences. We value researchers and civil society as critical stakeholders because our strategies must draw from a broad spectrum of expertise grounded in societal realities. Think tanks, such as the Mashariki Research and Policy Centre are therefore pivotal in providing deep regional context to the challenges we face today.
15. Also, often overlooked is the critical role of Track-Two Diplomacy in advancing peace efforts. The Sudan Council of Churches played a pivotal role in peacebuilding during the 1990s and 2000s, contributing to efforts for stability in South Sudan. Similarly, Catholic Bishops in the DRC have been instrumental in facilitating local political reconciliation. Think tanks, too, have increasingly been invited to provide technical support to mediation and peace processes, contributing their expertise to both Track-One and Track-Two diplomacy. These examples highlight the immense opportunities available for you to contribute in addressing the challenges in our region.
16. I deeply appreciate the alignment between the Mashariki Research and Policy Centre's five strategic programs—Security and Peacebuilding, Climate Change, Geopolitics, and World Order—with the Ministry's priorities. This alignment reinforces the importance of collaboration between our two institutions in showcasing what we are doing and educating the public about the situation in our region, fostering realistic expectations.
17. We therefore look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with the Mashariki Research and Policy Centre, particularly through the Foreign Service Academy, to promote knowledge exchange, build capacity, and advance our shared objectives in regional diplomacy. We trust that you will serve as ambassadors of our shared mission by promoting and highlighting the initiatives of the Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, contributing to the advancement of our common interests and the prosperity of our country and region.
18. I look forward to the discussions and insights that will emerge from this launch and remain confident that, through our collective efforts, we can advance the shared vision of a peaceful, stable, and prosperous Eastern Africa.
19. I Thank you.