

Remarks by Hon. Prof. Kitila Alexander Mkumbo (MP), Minister of State, President's Office – Planning and Investment at the Opening of the Tanzania–Kenya Business Forum

Dar es Salaam, Monday, 4 May 2026

Distinguished Delegates;

Leaders of the Private Sector;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good morning.

I warmly welcome our brothers and sisters from Kenya to Dar es Salaam. *Karibuni sana.*

It is indeed a pleasure and profound honour to open this Tanzania–Kenya Business Forum, and I want to thank all institutions—TISEZA, KenInvest, TPSF, KEPISA, and our partners—who have worked hard to bring us together.

Most importantly, I wish to recognise the leadership of Their Excellencies President Samia Suluhu Hassan and President William Ruto. Their commitment to economic diplomacy and regional integration is what gives this Forum real meaning.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me speak plainly.

Tanzania and Kenya are not just neighbours—we are economic partners with enormous, and still underutilised, potential.

Together, we represent a market of over **120 million people**, with a combined GDP of roughly **USD 200–230 billion**. We are connected by geography, by history, values, language, and by infrastructure corridors that link the Indian Ocean to the hinterland of Africa.

And yet, when you look at the data, intra-regional trade between us remains far below what it should be.

That tells us something important: **the opportunity is not ahead of us—it is already here, but we are not fully capturing it.**

Now, here is the key point I want to emphasise today: Our future success will not come from *competing against* each other. It will come from **complementing each other**. We must move from a mindset of *competition* to one of **comparative advantage**.

Because when Tanzania and Kenya try to do the same thing in the same way, we fragment markets and dilute scale. But when we specialise and integrate, we create strength.

Let me give a few practical examples.

In **logistics and trade corridors**: Tanzania offers strategic port capacity—Dar es Salaam, and increasingly Bagamoyo in the future—serving southern and central corridors. Kenya, through Mombasa and the Northern Corridor, serves East and Central Africa.

These are not competing systems—they are **complementary gateways**. Together, they can make East Africa the most efficient trade hub on the continent.

In **energy**: Tanzania has abundant natural gas resources and growing generation capacity. Kenya has made significant advances in geothermal and renewable energy. Imagine the opportunity in **power pooling, cross-**

border energy trade, and industrial energy security—this is where integration lowers costs and boosts competitiveness for both sides.

In **agriculture and agro-processing**: Tanzania has vast arable land and production potential. Kenya has strong agro-processing, branding, and export market linkages. If we connect production with processing and markets, we build **regional value chains** instead of exporting raw potential.

In the **digital economy and finance**: Kenya has global leadership in fintech innovation. Tanzania has rapidly expanding digital adoption and a large, youthful market. Together, we can scale innovation across borders—not as two small markets, but as one integrated digital ecosystem.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is what we mean by unlocking private sector growth. It is not just about more investment—it is about **smarter investment**. Investment that recognises where each country is strongest—and builds linkages.

On our part, Tanzania is continuing to improve the investment environment.

- We are strengthening TISEZA as a One-stop Centre.
- We are expanding Special Economic Zones.
- We are investing heavily in infrastructure—standard gauge railway, ports, roads.
- We are improving the regulatory environment and reducing bottlenecks.
- And importantly, under our Dira 2050, we are positioning the private sector to contribute about **70 percent of economic transformation**.

But let me be clear: Government can only create the environment. It is **you—the private sector—who will drive this integration. Our role as**

governments is to have the right priorities, create necessary conducive environment and catalyse actions.

Distinguished Participants,

This Forum is important because it brings decision-makers and investors into the same room. So I would encourage us to focus on a few practical outcomes:

- Identify **joint investment opportunities**, not parallel ones
- Address **non-tariff barriers** that increase the cost of doing business
- Build **cross-border value chains** in key sectors
- And most importantly, **think regionally when making business decisions**

Because in today's world, competitiveness is not national—it is regional.

As we say in Kiswahili: *“Umoja ni nguvu, utengano ni udhaifu.”*

If we get this right, Tanzania and Kenya will not just grow—we will anchor the economic transformation of East Africa and the continent at large.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The global economy is changing. Supply chains are shifting. Investors are looking for stability, scale, and connectivity. East Africa has all three—but only if we act together. This is our moment.

Let me conclude by reaffirming Tanzania's commitment to deepening economic cooperation with Kenya.

To our Kenyan guests: you are not just visitors—you are partners. We are relatively, biologically and socially.

Let us use this Forum not just to talk, but to agree on concrete actions.

Let us move from potential to performance.

Again, Karibuni sana Tanzania.

I wish you fruitful discussions and a successful Forum.

God Bless Kenya. God Bless Tanzania. God Bless East Africa.

Ahsanteni Sana!