



OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY PRESIDENT

**SPEECH OF H.E. RIGATHI GACHAGUA, THE DEPUTY
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA, DURING THE
CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE MAA CULTURAL FESTIVAL
AT SEKENANI GATE, MAASAI MARA, NAROK COUNTY, ON
AUGUST 24, 2023**

**The Cabinet Secretary, Tourism, Wildlife and Heritage,
Peninah Malonza;**

**The Cabinet Secretary, Environment, Climate Change
and Forestry, Soipan Tuya;**

The Host Governor, Narok County, Patrick Ntutu;

The Governor, Kajiado County, Joseph ole Lenku;

The Governor, Samburu County Jonathan Lati;

Members of Parliament and other Leaders;

**The New Elders and Members of the Maa Community;
Distinguished Guests;**

**At the onset, I congratulate you, the Maa People, for this
colourful Cultural Festival.**

You have uplifted Kenya to international status through your rich culture. You have given our Nation and the Continent an indelible identity through your distinct regalia intertwined with the unique culture, which you have preserved and sustained through generations. This is the real MAGICAL KENYA.

We are immensely proud of you.

Besides entertainment, the guests at this festival, have without a doubt, gained better understanding of the community.

Culture is as old as human beings. It embodies social values, defines and refines the relations within and beyond the community. *Waswahili husema, Mwacha Mila Ni Mtumwa.*

Distinguished Guests;

One of the key highlights of the cultural week is the graduation of over 5,000 Morans into elderhood during the *ENKIPAATA* ceremony.

With this landmark ceremony, we have new elders in the community. We have more elders to unite the community and strengthen relations within and with the neighbours.

As I congratulate the new elders, I would also like to challenge them to work with the other elders in sustainable peace initiatives.

Distinguished Guests;

The cultural heritage we celebrate today has been the source of unity among the Maa for centuries.

The Maa people are accommodative. While interaction with people of other origins enriches culture and perspectives, with time, it may dilute values, which have been the moral compass of this great community.

Similarly, technology has shrunk the globe into a village. Technology is good; we cannot do without it.

But it comes with a cost; our culture is at risk of infiltration and erosion. This, therefore, calls for strategies of integrating technology to our advantage. We must create a self-sustaining ecosystem that incorporates culture, transcending generations.

Distinguished Guests;

On the other hand, this year's edition of the Maa Cultural Festival happens when the EIGHTH WONDER of the WORLD- the wildebeest migration is taking place.

The migration is triggered, by among other factors, the search for greener pastures.

This is very similar to the lifestyle of the Maa, who have kept the tradition of moving with their animals in search of pasture for centuries. Livestock is part of culture.

We also note that as time changes, many of the community members are adopting to a more settled lifestyle. We support you in that decision. The Ruto Administration takes this matter seriously.

That is why we are working with the leadership of the region in, among other measures, processing title deeds to not only increase the value of land, but also ignite long-term and diverse investments.

Even with a settled life, the Government is keen on working with the community in preserving your culture. We invite the leadership of the community to propose ways of sustaining this rich culture for posterity.

Distinguished Guests;

We are here at the world-famous Maasai Mara National Reserve because the Maa people are among the few communities in Kenya and the Globe living harmoniously with wildlife- our tourism heritage.

Wildlife is part of your daily lives. You have an innate sense of protecting forests and wildlife. For decades, you have sustained the Mau Forest and the entire Maasai Mara Ecosystem.

In the context of Climate Change, our lives are threatened. That is why President William Ruto is leading the country in planting 15 billion trees by 2032.

With your daughter, Soipan Tuya as the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Climate Change, we cannot go wrong in meeting the forest cover target and protecting our water towers.

I, therefore, urge the community's leadership to work with her.

Distinguished Guests;

On this note, I declare the Maa Cultural Festival closed.

ASANTENI SANA