

Her Excellency Ambassador Lucy Kiruthu, Deputy Director-General,
Political and Diplomatic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs

Students of the Kenya Model United Nations,

Distinguished guests, and colleagues,

Good morning, and welcome to the heart of inspiration and global unity, our magnificent Gigiri campus at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON), as we inaugurate the 23rd session of the Kenya Model United Nations.

Here, where the vibrancy of the African spirit meets the dedication of the United Nations, you stand on hallowed ground—the only United Nations headquarters in Africa and the global south, and the largest United Nations compound worldwide. Gigiri is not just a campus; it is a beacon of hope, hosting the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UN Habitat, along with over 40 other pivotal UN agencies, funds, and programs. It's a place where the entirety of the UN's mission—peacekeeping, humanitarian aid, development, and service delivery—finds a home. We are deeply honored to welcome you to this nexus of change for such a pivotal gathering.

Your assembly unfolds at a juncture of unprecedented challenge and opportunity in our shared history. The tasks and trials you inherit are daunting, yet they are matched by an equally profound capacity for transformation and progress. Understanding these challenges is your first step toward mastering them.

Consider the seismic shift of the ongoing technological revolution. It's a wave of change more potent and far-reaching than the industrial upheaval that once redefined Europe and America. Its pace is relentless, its scope global, and its implications profound, touching everything from how we communicate and create to how we live and work. Yet, in this whirlwind of innovation, there lies a pivotal question: How can we, especially Africa, harness this revolution to leapfrog developmental hurdles and uplift our communities?

Climate change and the imperative for sustainable energy forms another critical frontier. With 2023 marking the hottest year on record, the clarion call for action has never been clearer. Africa, despite contributing minimally to global emissions, stands on the frontline of this crisis. The task before us is monumental: to champion a transition to renewables, advocate for fair compensation for climate impacts, and boldly reimagine our future in harmony with the planet.

Moreover, the demographic surge poised to see Africa become home to one in four people by 2050 speaks to both potential and challenge. This demographic dividend beckons us to forge pathways to nourishment, education, healthcare, and security like never before, even as we confront and resolve longstanding conflicts.

The geopolitical landscape, too, is shifting. The post-World War II institutions eg United Nations, World Bank and IMF etc that have long governed global affairs must evolve to reflect today's realities, including Africa's dynamic role and perspectives. Initiatives like the African Union's inclusion in the G20 and the expansion of the BRICS are steps toward rebalancing the scales, but our journey toward equitable global governance is far from complete.

These challenges set the stage for the Summit of the Future in New York this September—a historic opportunity for your generation to reshape the world, to advocate for a future that recognizes and rectifies past imbalances, and to champion a world that is fair, just, and sustainable for all.

As we look toward this landmark event, remember: the future is not just something that happens to us. It is something we create. Your involvement, your voice, and your actions can and will shape the world. Embrace this opportunity to influence the Summit's outcomes, including the pivotal Pact for the Future, and ensure that the decisions made today honor the needs and aspirations of tomorrow.

As you engage in this week's deliberations, carry forward the spirit of innovation, justice, and unity. Let the decisions of today be guided by the

vision of a better tomorrow. Engage, deliberate, and let your voices echo in the corridors of power and the annals of history.

Thank you for being here, for being part of this momentous journey. Welcome, once again, to Gigiri.

Asanteni!