



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**MINISTRY OF EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY, ARID AND
SEMI ARID LANDS AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

STATE DEPARTMENT FOR EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

**THE 7TH GREAT AFRICA CYCLING SAFARI
(GACS)**

REMARKS BY

ABDI DUBAT, CBS

PRINCIPAL SECRETARY

22ND AUGUST 2024

Hon. Cabinet Secretary,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good morning

It is an honor for me to join you in this annual cycling event taking place in the entire EAC, and today in its leg here in Nairobi, Kenya. Let me take this opportunity to welcome you all to the State Department of East Africa Community. Be assured that you are in the right place.

As I begin, I wish to thank the Great African Cycling Safari fraternity for taking the pains to plan and organize this event that brings together cyclists and cycling enthusiasts from the great region of East Africa comprising especially the six participating countries of Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda.

I understand that the Great African Cycling Safaris (GACS), is in its 7th Edition and this year's tour is themed thus "**Furthering Campaigns to Promote Food Security, Peace and Climate Mitigation**". This sports event aims at taking the EAC Integration Agenda to the citizens through highlighting regional and community issues/challenges and showcasing the opportunities offered by the East African Community (EAC).

The Great African Cycling Safari contributes significantly to various key areas of development within the East African Community (EAC). This event serves as a catalyst for sports development, fostering the growth of cycling as a sport in the region. It provides an invaluable platform for talent identification, skills enhancement, and the cultivation of a culture of sports excellence.

The safari demonstrates the economic potential of sports through its ability to attract sponsors, media coverage, and spectators. This paves the way for the creation of a vibrant sports industry, encompassing equipment manufacturing, event management, and sports tourism. The event also plays a crucial role in youth education, offering young people exposure to professional cycling and inspiring them to pursue careers in sports. It imparts practical lessons in teamwork, perseverance, and cross-cultural understanding.

The economic impact of the safari extends to trade and e-commerce, stimulating local economies along the route. It promotes trade in cycling gear, local products, and services, while also showcasing the potential for e-commerce platforms to support sports events and tourism. Additionally, the safari acts as a mobile advertisement for the diverse landscapes and cultures of the EAC, potentially boosting both intra-regional and international tourism.

The event fosters working class engagement by involving local communities in event organization and support. This creates temporary employment and skills development opportunities for the working class across the region, further contributing to the socio-economic development of the EAC.

As you are aware, the Cycling is without doubt a significant healthy, fun and low impact exercise that people of all ages can comfortably engage in with positive outcomes besides being one of the sporting events and competition popular among young population of the world. Of course, it can protect one from serious health concerns including stroke, heart attack, some cancers, depression, diabetes, obesity among others. The Government of Kenya has identified monetization of talent as one of the solutions towards youth empowerment and employment. Thus, the region should consider making it more competitive and commercial.

I wish to thank John Bosco Balongo and the team for their leadership and joint efforts in making this event such an epic and coveted adventure in the region. We at the Ministry

greatly value this initiative and commit to support you in any possible way. It is for this reason that we are gathered here to share your experience, vision and strategic proposals during this leg of the Great African Cycling Safari .

Equally I also wish to recognize our partners s onboard (East African Community Civil Society Forum- Kenyan Chapter and also the Collaborative Centre for Gender Development), the media and the staff of the State Department for making this day a success.

It is now my pleasure to invite the Honorable Cabinet Secretary to make her remarks and officially flag off the 7th Great African Cycling Safari.

Thank you all.