

Commemoration of KAS @ 50 in Kenya: Visions of the past, Ideas for the future

Image 1: Group Photo of Mr. Hermann Gröhe, Vice-Chairman KAS (far right) and KAS Country Director Dr. Annette Schwandner (Centre) with representatives from Government and Political Parties

On the 3rd of May 2023, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) Kenya commemorated 50 years of its presence and work in Kenya. where Hon. Mrs. Mercy Wanjau, the Secretary to the Cabinet of the Republic of Kenya, Mr. Thomas Wimmer, Deputy Ambassador of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, and Mr. Hermann Gröhe Vice Chairman of KAS. The story of KAS work began in Kenya in 1973, when it started to work with the Pan-African Association of Savings and Credit Unions (ASOSCA). Much has happened since then. Today, Kenya is a regional hub and stable democracy., The changes are reflected in the work of KAS, which by now has political partner parties, motivates young people to get involved in politics and is committed to the devolution process, women representation, food security and economic development in Kenya.

The festivities of KAS@50kicked-off with welcoming remarks by Dr. Stephan Friedrich, Head of the Sub-Saharan Africa Department at KAS. Dr. Friedrich emphasized that "KAS offices abroad are based on collaborations and partnerships. KAS in Kenya has grown to having three programmes, the Country Programme and two regional programs, namely the Rule of Law Programme for Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa and the Regional Programme for Energy Security and Climate

Change. This shows that there is need to address these topics in the country and the Sub-Sahara region”.



Image 1: Dr. Stefan Friedrich conversing with Prof. X.N Iraki (University of Nairobi) and one of the KAS Kenya Staff during the KAS @ 50 celebrations

Dr. Friedrich's remarks were followed by official remarks of the Secretary to the Cabinet of the Republic of Kenya, Mercy Wanjau. She emphasized that the government of Kenya is looking forward to deepening bilateral relations between Kenya and Germany. "Kenya is keen on stronger co-operations around skilled workers accessing German employment and so it is important to recognize areas where we can work together. I would like to thank you for the valuable contribution over the years towards the promotion of governance, the rule of law and social market economy. Indeed, we look forward to continued cooperation in the future" Mrs. Wanjau said.



Image 2: Secretary to the Cabinet of the Republic of Kenya CS. Mrs. Mercy Wanjau during her key note address

The Deputy Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Thomas Wimmer, also talked about the strength of German-Kenyan relationships. He pointed out that Germany was the first country to recognize Kenya as an independent State, thus „Germany is officially the longest-standing partner and friend of the Republic of Kenya.“ Mr. Wimmer used his speech to KAS for its strong support of democratic values in Kenya.



Image 3: German Deputy Ambassador Mr. Thomas Wimmer during his Speech at the KAS @ 50 Celebrations

Hon. Hermann Gröhe opened his speech by pointing out Kenya’s peaceful general election in 2022. "I want to congratulate this country for the well-organized and peaceful elections in the last year that showed a clear signal of the democratic structures," Hon. Gröhe said. He emphasized the importance of civic education, as it teaches the public on the importance of democracy. According to Hon. Gröhe, KAS engages in more than 100 countries in its bid to promote democratic values across the globe.



Image 4: KAS Vice Chairman Mr. Hermann Gröhe delivering his key note address

Following the key-note addresses was the panel discussion *Visions from the past, ideas for the future*. The conversations focused on the role institutions like KAS have played and continue to play in the democratic development of the country, including in the areas of promotion of democracy, economic development and intercultural exchange between Germany and Kenya. The panelists were Mr. Lawrence Kibet, Director General at the National Treasury, Amb. Josphat Kaunda Maikara, MBS, Kenya Embassy to the Republic of Angola and Professor X.N. Iraki, an economic expert at the University of Nairobi.



Image 5: Panel Discussion from 2nd left Mr. Lawrence Kibet (Director General, National Treasury), Centre Amb. Josphat Kaunda Maikara MBS (Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs) and Right Prof. X.N. Iraki (University of Nairobi). Moderator far left Mr. Debarl Inea

To mark the occasion, KAS Kenya produced a video that was broadcasted during the evening. The video showed the impact KAS has had in Kenya in recent years, but also included ideas for its future work. Voices from partners, former country directors and experts were collected, so they could

share their journey and recount how they experienced the impact KAS Kenya has had in the country. In addition, the current Director of the country programme, Dr. Annette Schwandner, described how the work of KAS could look like in the future, a future with more digital innovations for civic and voter education, and an ever greater need for youth empowerment.

In her vote of thanks, Dr. Schwandner expressed that KAS continues to be committed to advocating for democracy in Kenya. “KAS is here to partner with Kenyans in furthering their own development by sharing experiences and ideas. Key among these are good governance, and a vibrant democracy”, she said.



Image 6: KAS Kenya Country Director Dr. Annette Schwandner issuing a vote of thanks at the KAS @ 50 celebrations

Media Coverage Links to the KAS @ 50 Celebration

1. Look Up TV
<https://youtu.be/m8TzSLOrGVA>
2. KTN News
<https://youtu.be/nG8ow2HKBMI>
3. The Star Newspaper
<https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/realtime/2023-05-06-inside-50-year-kenya-germany-pact-to-improve-governance/>
4. Nation Newspaper
<https://nation.africa/kenya/news/german-good-governance-kenya-50th-anniversary-4228854>
5. Standard Media
<https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/national/article/2001472660/germany-faults-misuse-of-religion-in-the-country>