

Good morning everyone,

I am glad to be here today for the opening ceremony of the biennial pilot proficiency training for the Kenya Wildlife Service Airwing. I would like to extend a warm welcome to our special guests, the team from the US led by world-renowned aerobatic champion, Patty Wagstaff, Capt. Jeffery Rochelle, Capt. Peter Scott and to all participants who have travelled to be with us here today.

We all agree and appreciate the fact that Airwing is an essential part of KWS. It is therefore critical that our pilots receive the requisite training and support they need to perform their duties safely, meticulously and effectively. Since the inception of Airwing, KWS has made tremendous strides in improving the quality of its flying and the techniques involved. The training of KWS pilots has been a huge success story, and the high standards of safety and efficiency achieved by our pilots is a testament to the dedication and hard work of everyone involved.

I am particularly impressed by the fact that the biennial proficiency training has continued to evolve and expand over the years. This year, the training will cover a wide range of important topics, including a review of the current general operating, flight and company standards, a review of manoeuvres and procedures necessary for the pilot to demonstrate the safe exercise of the privileges of the pilot certificate, emergencies training and demonstration, unusual attitudes familiarization, and ground briefings.

The objectives of this training are clear: to improve safety in all phases of operation, upskill the operational capabilities of our pilots, impart efficient flying skills to reduce operational costs, and foster team bonding. I am confident that our pilots will learn a great deal from the international experts who will be leading the training, and I encourage all of you to make the most out of this unique opportunity.

I note, with tremendous appreciation, that the Airwing has made significant contribution to the reduction of poaching through the support of aerial reconnaissance and personnel transportation. It is a fact that Airwing has undergone great transformation under the leadership of its Head, Captain Michael Nicholson since 2018. I commend Captain Nicholson and his team of skilled colleagues who continue to do us proud.

I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to Kilaguni Serena for their continuous support and hosting of this biennial proficiency training for the Airwing team. Their warm hospitality and commitment to excellence has been a hallmark of this event, and we are truly grateful for their generosity over the years.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have worked tirelessly to make this training possible. Your dedication and commitment to improving the skills and knowledge of our pilots is truly inspiring, and I am confident that this year's training will be a great success.

I now wish to invite the Principal Secretary, State Department for Wildlife, Madam Silvia Museiya to speak to us and officially open the training.

I wish you all a productive and enjoyable stay here at Tsavo West National Park. Whenever you have time, during and after the training, please sample the diverse wildlife species in Tsavo conservation area.

THANK YOU.