

SPEECH BY MR. TOM GITOGO, GMD BRITAM HOLDINGS PLC & CHAIRMAN, ASSOCIATION OF KENYA INSURERS (AKI)

AT THE FEDERATION OF KENYA EMPLOYERS (FKE) — 5TH EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARDS GALA DINNER

Radisson Blu Hotel, Upper Hill, Friday, 7 November 2025

Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Guests, Fellow Employers, and Friends,

Good evening.

It is a great honour to join you tonight at this 5th Edition of the Employer of the Year Awards Gala, hosted by the Federation of Kenya Employers. Allow me to begin by expressing my sincere appreciation to the FKE Council and team for this invitation.

As we gather to honour the best employers in Kenya, we celebrate not just organizations, but the people, values, and leadership that make them thrive.

I stand before you this evening in two capacities: as Group Managing Director of Britam Holdings Plc, and as Chairman of the Association of Kenya Insurers (AKI). Both roles share a common purpose: to build institutions that outlive us; institutions defined by trust, people, and impact.

1. Purpose, People and Culture - The Core of a Top Employer

When we speak of “Top Employers,” we are not merely recognizing organizations with attractive benefits or high-performance scores. We are honouring institutions that have put people at the center of their purpose.

These are institutions that have:

- a clearly defined people strategy aligned to purpose,
- a culture of trust, inclusion, and continuous learning, and
- a commitment to employee wellbeing and ethical leadership.

At Britam, our transformation journey has been deeply anchored in this mindset. When we embarked on our Culture Transformation journey in 2023, our goal was simple but profound: to build a purpose-driven, high-performance, and human-centred organization.

We considered what defines an employer of choice in East Africa and beyond and how to ensure colleagues across locations feel valued, trusted, and empowered.

The answer has always been the culture, not slogans. The DNA that holds and grounds everything we do.

Today, our teams operate with clarity around three principles:

1. Customer obsession - putting our clients at the heart of every decision.
2. Collaboration and innovation - working as one agile Britam, despite our size.
3. Care and accountability - owning outcomes and each other's success.

Our Top Employer certification here in Kenya, Mozambique, Rwanda and Uganda is a testament to the commitment to global practices and a culture that fully enables our business.

2. The Role of Leadership- Shaping the Next Generation of Employers

As Chairman of the Association of Kenya Insurers, I see every day how profoundly our industry is changing. And I also recognize that these transformations are not unique to insurance, they are reshaping every sector of our economy: banking, manufacturing, agriculture, energy, ICT, logistics, and even public administration.

Across all industries, the defining challenge of our time is how we prepare our people and organizations for a radically different world of work.

Technology, demographic shifts, and global competitiveness are among the key factors rewriting the rules of employment. In Kenya, over 75 percent of our population is under 35 years old, an extraordinary human capital advantage, but also a profound responsibility. We have the opportunity, and the obligation to ensure that this young, dynamic, ambitious population is not just employable, but empowered, skilled, and inspired to thrive.

That is where leadership and the role of employers becomes decisive and needed.

As employers, we are not merely contributors to GDP; we are nation builders. We shape the capabilities, values, and aspirations of millions of Kenyans through the environments we create in our workplaces.

The Federation of Kenya Employers has long championed this truth - that the success of enterprises and the welfare of employees are interdependent. FKE's mission to "enhance productivity, promote good industrial relations, and advocate for sustainable enterprises" speaks directly to the heart of what being a Top Employer means.

Our commitment must extend beyond our own companies to the broader ecosystem of Kenyan employers; sharing best practices, co-developing talent pipelines, and shaping policies that promote decent and meaningful work for all.

If the private sector, academia, and government work together under platforms like FKE, AKI, KEPSA, and other progressive partners and organizations, we can build a Kenya that exports talent, not just labour - innovation, not just raw materials.

At Britam, we have seen firsthand what this transformation looks like in practice. Our recognition as a Top Employer in Kenya and across Africa is not merely a badge of honour, it is the outcome of deliberate culture transformation, continuous investment in learning, and a commitment to inclusion, wellbeing, and leadership accountability. We reimagined the employee experience to focus on purpose, agility, and empowerment, ensuring that our people can thrive in a fast-changing environment. This journey has taught us that progressive employers must lead from the front, not just adapting to the new world of work, but actively shaping it. In doing so, we can redefine what excellence in employment means for Kenya and the African continent.

3. Learning from Global Excellence and the Future of Work

As we look to the future, we can learn powerful lessons from the most progressive organizations around the world, companies that have redefined what it means to be an employer of choice in an era of disruption and reinvention.

The most forward-thinking organizations share five defining characteristics:

First, they are purpose-led. They align their strategy, operations, and culture to a clear social and economic purpose that inspires both employees and customers.

Second, they are culture-driven. They invest deliberately in values, leadership, and inclusion, ensuring that culture is not left to chance.

Third, they are digitally human. They embrace technology not to replace people, but to enable them. Their HR functions are digital partners to business.

Fourth, they are learning organizations. The best employers continuously re-skill their workforce. They treat learning as a daily habit, not as a one-off intervention.

Finally, they are sustainably minded. They understand that business success and social impact are intertwined. They champion wellbeing, climate consciousness, and ethical governance, creating organizations that people are proud to belong to.

4. Building the Future of Work- What Must Change

As we honour tonight's top employers, let me reflect on what must change for us to collectively build the next generation of top employers in Kenya.

First, we must move from compliance to commitment. The most admired employers globally are not those that comply best, but those that care most.

Second, we must move from hierarchies to networks. Future-ready organizations are flatter, faster, and more collaborative.

Third, we must shift from job security to skills security. As technology reshapes industries, we must invest aggressively in skills development.

Finally, we must move from “doing digital” to “being digital.” Digital transformation is not an IT project; it is a cultural shift. Every employee must think digitally, work digitally, and serve customers digitally.

5. Closing Reflections - Leadership, Legacy, and Hope

This evening, as we celebrate excellence, let us remember that being a top employer is not a destination. It is a discipline.

It requires continuous reflection, humility, and courage to ask uncomfortable, uncommon questions:

- Are our employees thriving?
- Are our leaders truly serving?
- Are our workplaces inclusive, safe, and inspiring?

When the answer is yes, even partially yes, then we move closer to greatness.

To the winners tonight, congratulations. You have set the standard.

To the nominees, well done for daring to be evaluated and for striving for excellence.

To every employer in this room, I challenge you to look forward to building organizations that are not only the best places to work in, but also the best places to grow.

Let us lead with purpose. Let us innovate fearlessly. Let us make Kenya the home of the next generation of Top Employers in Africa.

On behalf of Britam and the Association of Kenya Insurers, I reaffirm our partnership with the Federation of Kenya Employers and all stakeholders to make this vision a reality.

May we continue to honour excellence and more importantly, to live it.

Thank you, God bless you all and enjoy the rest of your evening.