

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT,
HON. DANIEL T. ARAP MOI, C.G.H., M.P.,
ON THE OCCASION OF JAMHURI DAY,
THURSDAY, 12TH DECEMBER, 1996**

MY DEAR KENYANS,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

We have gathered here today to celebrate the 33rd anniversary of Jamhuri Day. We commemorate the day we assumed full independence and became a democratic sovereign state. We have every right to celebrate this day with pomp as it reminds us that the freedom we enjoy today is the result of great sacrifices by the founding fathers of this nation.

As we pay tribute to the heroes of our independence, I send warm greetings to all Kenyans. I also extend greetings to our friends and well-wishers both here and abroad. Kenyans are most grateful for the many messages of congratulations and goodwill we have received.

In the past one year, the Government has continued to liberalize the economy and open it up to private enterprise and international trade. I am glad to note that as a result of these efforts, the economy has shown marked improvement with real Gross Domestic Product growing at five per cent. This growth rate is, however, still not sufficient to effectively reduce poverty and unemployment. In order for us to raise living standards, narrow income inequalities and stimulate job creation, the economy will need to grow by at least seven per cent on a sustainable basis. We shall, therefore, need to continue pursuing measures which will accelerate economic growth.

The Government's public enterprise reform programme has also made considerable progress. So far, we have realized some

five billion shillings from the sale of parastatals. It is expected that sixty-four parastatals will be divested during 1997.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During the past three decades, the agricultural sector has continued to be the driving force behind Kenya's economic growth. Although this sector has served us well in the past, it is evident that agriculture offers limited opportunities for employment and growth.

This is a great challenge to each one of us. Our farmers must increase our agricultural output to enable us meet our food requirements for the coming years. As our population continues to increase, we must also create jobs for the large number of job-seekers who enter the labour market each year.

In order to meet the development challenges of the coming decade and beyond, my Government has outlined a strategy for realizing rapid economic growth and employment for the next century.

Our country has achieved considerable development in various sectors of our economy. We have attained critical levels of human resources. However, the slow expansion of our infrastructure continues to restrain growth. We shall therefore need to set aside more resources in improving infrastructure.

The economic reforms we have pursued place us in a suitable position to achieve rapid growth. Indeed, it is in pursuit of these goals that my Government has today launched the 8th National Development Plan with the theme: "Rapid Industrialization for Sustained Development". This development plan outlines the overall strategy of transforming Kenya into a newly industrialized country by the year 2020.

We have set highly ambitious goals for ourselves. It is now the duty of all Kenyans to re-double their efforts so that the development targets for the coming years can continue to be met. In doing so, we must always bear in mind the fact that no one can develop this country for us. Our friends can only supplement our efforts, but the responsibility for developing this country remains ours.

I therefore call upon Kenyans of all walks of life to maintain unity and patriotism as these are the basis of social and political stability of our country. If we all, as individuals, and in our different professions perform our duties and responsibilities with dedication, then we will find the task of nation building to be more rewarding.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I now wish to comment on the international scene. Kenya is an active member of the international community of nations. My Government continues to forge close economic ties with neighbouring countries and the entire Sub-saharan Region.

In this regard, I want to affirm Kenya's commitment to the success of the East African Co-operation and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). These two regional bodies offer an opportunity for the business community in our sub-region to expand their business operations. They also offer investors easy access to a larger market.

Our efforts towards close co-operation in this region are, however, being undermined by the present situation of social and political insecurity being witnessed in the Sudan, Somalia and the Great Lakes Region. The current crisis in eastern Zaire causes us all much concern. The growing tension between Zaire and her neighbours continues to worsen day by day. The despair of the displaced and refugee populations, is an abuse to human dignity and reasoning. This crisis is senseless and uncalled for. At a meeting with fellow Heads of State in Nairobi on 5th November, 1996, some resolutions aimed at solving this crisis were adopted.

These measures were also endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 1078 of 1996. Kenya is deeply committed to the implementation of the resolutions of the Nairobi Summit. We also call upon all others to act in accordance with the letter and spirit of these resolutions. In this regard, may I also warn that unilateral and unco-ordinated responses will only serve to compound the issue further and push the situation to the brink of a catastrophe.

The situation in Southern Sudan is no less serious. I have, on previous occasions expressed my desire for a resumption of the peace talks so that a negotiated settlement to the conflict there can be achieved. It is my earnest hope that upon resumption of talks, the parties involved in the conflict will be more committed to IGAD's peace initiatives.

On the situation in Somalia, Kenya is committed to assisting in all possible ways in the search for a political settlement. In October, this year, we brought together the factional leaders in Somalia, in a bid to help them reach an understanding geared towards stopping the long drawn conflict in that country. It is my hope that the situation in Somalia will be normalized soon so that her people will experience and enjoy lasting peace.

During the past few months, the sanctions imposed on the regime in Burundi by the regional leaders started to yield positive results. Political parties were unbanned and the National Assembly re-opened. These are positive developments. However, for true peace to be realized in Burundi, the third most important condition—that of opening unconditional negotiations with other parties in the conflict must be fulfilled. In this regard, I take this opportunity to call upon the people of Burundi to commit themselves to the search for lasting peace in their country.

As you are aware, Kenya has been nominated to sit on the United Nations Security Council for a period of two years starting January, 1997. This is a useful development as it will enable us to play our part more effectively in promoting world peace.

Fellow Kenyans,

While we participate as a useful and active member of the world community of nations, we must not forget that the great successes that we have achieved in the past are as a result of unity of purpose that we have been able to forge regardless of our political affiliations.

I therefore urge all leaders to cultivate a sense of maturity and exercise restraint in their utterances. The freedom of speech which is enshrined in our constitution must not be used to

promote ethnicity and senseless disregard for law and order. Leaders must be mindful of their conduct and utterances at all times. I also urge Kenyans to stand firm against divisive tendencies.

Fellow Countrymen,

As I conclude my address today, let me remind you, that the aim of the founding fathers of this nation was to have a united and prosperous country. As we celebrate this occasion, let us renew our commitment to building a strong and united Kenya. To achieve this goal, we need to remain united and loyal to our motherland. We must resist the attempts by a few people among us who out of selfish interest seek to divide us. We must be aware that we cannot develop our country through empty talk..

Let us therefore resolve on this great day, to strengthen and consolidate our national unity and build one united and strong nation—our unity is our strength.

THANK YOU.