

**MADARAKA DAY STATE ADDRESS BY H.E. UHURU KENYATTA,
CGH ON WEDNESDAY, 1ST JUNE 2022 AT UHURU GARDENS,
NAIROBI CITY**

Your Excellency Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the First Lady of the Republic of Sierra Leone,

Hon. Speakers,

Your Ladyship the Chief Justice,

Leaders from across the entire spectrum of our Nation,

Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Fellow Kenyans,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Happy Madaraka Day!

Today, I am delighted to return to these hallowed grounds of Uhuru Gardens to commemorate our 59th Madaraka Day. I am overjoyed because, after 59 years of self-rule, this is the first time we are celebrating Madaraka Day at these hallowed grounds. Madaraka Day is significant in our history because it is on this day in June 1963 that the Founding Fathers of our nation replaced the outgoing colonial government and formed the first indigenous Government of Kenya.

And with this act, we achieved self-rule or Madaraka, with Mzee Jomo Kenyatta as our first Prime Minister.

However, self-rule was NOT the same thing as independence. With Madaraka, we had merely surmounted the first hurdle in our liberation struggle.

It was Six months after the first Madaraka Day, that we secured our full independence on the 12th of December, 1963.

On that day, the nation was summoned to these sacred grounds of Uhuru Gardens. An elated people listened with tears in their eyes as our national anthem played for the first time. And then we cheered in boundless joy as our flag was hoisted and the flag of the colonizers lowered.

This act of raising our national flag was not an exercise in symbolism or a sheer sentimental exploit. It was a sign that we had achieved sovereignty as a Nation. But fundamentally, it was a call to civic duty and responsibility to our people.

Once hoisted, our Founding Fathers reminded us that the flag was not just a cloth painted in designs of four colours. Instead, it was a painting of the national wounds and scars we bear from our liberation struggle, coated with an illumination of our shared aspirations – our future.

It was and still remains a picture of the blood we shed to regain what we had lost. It is a reflection of the dignity of our black heritage and the pride we restored.

And because the ultimate act of every liberator is to lay down their weapon, the shield and spear on our national flag is a symbol of victory. But it is also a notice of readiness should our “heritage of splendour” be threatened.

According to our Founding Fathers, therefore, our flag is not a sentimental piece of fabric decorated in ink. We must always remember that each time it flies, it is NOT blown by the wind. It is blown by the last breath of our liberators as they made their final bow to liberate Kenya.

Fellow Kenyans,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Why did our independence heroes choose Uhuru Gardens as the place to midwife our young Nation? What was the significance of these grounds in the history of our liberation struggle? And what did they want remembered by generations to come?

On these grounds sat one of the largest concentration camps in colonial Africa, holding up to 10,000 freedom fighters at any one given time.

Many of our compatriots were tortured and maimed for life in that camp. And many more unknown heroes died in this field.

The horrors of this camp are what inspired our Founding Fathers when they taught us that " ...the tree of freedom must be watered by the blood of our patriots". And that is why on Jamhuri Day in 1964, we planted a mugumo tree standing to my right, as a solemn and symbolic reminder of this eternal truth.

Although the colonizers killed the messengers in this camp, they could not kill the message. The liberation 'fever' spread across the Nation and the colonizers had no option but to surrender.

Fellow Kenyans,

Why do I call Uhuru Gardens a hallowed ground? I do so because our Founding Fathers wanted us to celebrate this ground as a camp of martyrs and the birthplace of a Nation. A place of remembrance, healing and renewal.

Each time we gather at this birthplace of our great nation, we must remember that being free is the easy part; but staying free is the difficult part. Although we are now fully free, we cannot continue to claim freedom casually. Instead, we must begin to practice it and jealously guard it against all threats, both foreign and domestic. The practice of freedom comes with a price.

If our heroes paid the price to liberate our nation, we must similarly pay the price of nurturing our freedom. But fundamentally, we must remember that the price today is NOT the price tomorrow. The price of liberating the Nation is not the price of growing the Nation. To keep and nurture our freedom, we have to pay a higher price. And part of this price is to be trustworthy stewards of what our Founding Fathers passed down to us.

My joy today is that My Administration has restored the sanctity and historical significance of Uhuru Gardens. Following many years of neglect, this historic site had become a den of

thieves. In fact, it is on record that the 68 acres on which these sacred grounds sit had fallen into the hands of some unscrupulous individuals. My Administration had to reclaim the 'grabbed' site in 2019 and restore its dignity and purity.

Yesterday, I had the distinct honour of inaugurating these grounds as a monument and a museum of remembrance; and a place of unedited history. And we have done this because a progressive nation does not hide its history. It confronts it and endeavours to correct it, so as to change the future.

Fellow Kenyans,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Each time we celebrate our liberation struggle, tradition demands that we ponder a series of questions. Fundamentally, we must ask this: how have we built on what was handed down to us? What account can we give of ourselves as the successors of the course of our liberators? And can we honestly say that we have been faithful steward's worthy of their sacrifice?

On the 9th of April, 2013; I assumed office as our Nation's fourth President. Nine Years and two months later to the day, in discharge of the mandate you bestowed upon me, My Administration has built on the gains secured by the previous three administrations and strengthened our social fabric, making Kenya safer and healthier; fairer and just Nation where justice is truly our shield and defender; reinforced our educational and technical excellence; integrated devolution as a way of life; successfully led the Nation through the worst global health crisis in a century; whilst also expanding economic opportunities for all Kenyans.

As Kenyans, we often dwell on the what and the how, without asking ourselves "WHY". And so, I answer, why has My Administration invested so heavily in infrastructure? Why has My Administration extensively equipped and retooled our Defence and Security Agencies; and expanded the benefits enjoyed by staff therein? Why has the Government driven digitization in the delivery of public services; while also fostering grassroots location and access to the same?

Why has my tenure in office seen so much emphasis on transformative programmes and reforms in healthcare,

education, agriculture, energy, titling of land, housing, social protection, affirmative action, commerce and industry, and the ease of doing business? Why the Big Four Agenda?

We have done all this because they are interrelated aspects of our national life that are tied together by a singular golden thread; areas of challenges that can become the engines that drive Kenya into a more just and prosperous future.

Fellow Kenyans,

National Security and Defence has been a priority area since 2013, because we cannot deliver on the National Anthem's promise of plenty within our borders, if those borders were porous and insecure. I, therefore, made your security a top priority because I know that without a secure environment no life can flourish, and no enterprise can thrive.

With the mandate that you gave me, we silenced the wave of terror attacks that had a strangle hold on our Nation. We achieved this by retooling our security organs and making them more capable to address the dynamic contemporary security challenges that Kenya faces.

To our security officers, because of your commitment to defend our Nation and to squarely face new dangers, every citizen is able to participate in the socio-economic development of our Nation.

You keep us free, preserve our way of life, and allow us all to enjoy the present as well as the better tomorrow that is upon us.

Fellow Kenyans,

In realizing equitable development through devolution, it was my distinct honour to be the President who received, fostered, and gave impetus to the devolved system of governance.

Today, the results of My Administration's proactive and enthusiastic support, are markedly visible: from Makueni to Mandera, Busia to Bungoma, Mombasa to Meru, Lamu to Laikipia, and from Turkana to Tharaka-Nithi.

With the mandate you gave me, we institutionalized devolution and forever changed the face of Kenya; buoyed by the Ksh. 2.44

Trillion transferred by the National Government to the Counties from 2013 to-date.

On the regional front, with the mandate you vested in me, Kenya led the push to admit the Democratic Republic of Congo into the East African Community. With this singular move, the EAC common market grew by 90 million people; yielding a now expanded market of 300 million and the consequent enhanced opportunities for Kenyan enterprises. To exemplify this, Equity Bank is already breaking ground in the DRC and it is already the second largest Bank there. This is what I have done with the mandate you gave me.

On the global stage, we remain a leader in the cooperative multilateral order – as evidenced by our membership of the United Nations Security Council, that has provided us a voice on international peace and security matters threatening humanity.

This position has cemented our international stature and enhanced opportunities for Kenyans in the diaspora and within the international civil service.

In return, diaspora remittances have increased tenfold in the last decade; and they now stand at an all-time-high of over Ksh. 400 Billion in 2021; surpassing traditional exports and making human capital our greatest export.

With the mandate you gave me, you challenged us to enhance the global competitiveness of our human resources. We did this because every epoch in our nation's history has placed a unique set of demands on the skills and competencies required of our people; which in turn has required us to reform and recalibrate the content and architecture of our education system.

At independence, our Founding Fathers embarked on a mission of course-correction to transition from a colonial education system that prepared learners for servitude to one that gave them the tools to lead a newly independent Nation.

In 1985, we made yet another monumental shift by transitioning from the 7-4-2-3 system into the 8-4-4 system.

But with time, the 8-4-4 curriculum became inconsistent with the aspirations of our growing Nation, particularly because of its

overloaded curriculum and its focus on rote learning and the passing of examinations as the ultimate goal of the system.

As we begun re-engineering it, we had to return to the foundational philosophy of education that: 'citizens do not fail - systems fail them'. And if the systems are inconsistent with the aspirations of the people, they must be changed.

The challenge of the day calls us to imagine a system that creates responsible citizens as opposed to subjects, a system that celebrates the creative potential of all our children as opposed to one that leaves them with labels of failure, if they do not pass exams. A system that brings about freedom to be creative and innovative as individuals. This is the promise of the Competency Based Curriculum and that is why in December 2022, the pioneer CBC Class, now in its sixth grade, will transition to Junior Secondary.

Given the manifest successes achieved in this short period of time, there is no turning back with respect to the Competency Based Curriculum.

With the mandate you gave me, we also secured 100% transition from Primary to Secondary education, ensuring that no-child is left behind. We have also achieved Africa's first 1:1 child to book ratio and restored the integrity of our national examinations.

In regard to higher education, we live in a time when knowledge is replacing other resources as the main driver of economic growth; and thus, education has increasingly become the foundation for greater individual prosperity.

Our universities continue to incubate innovations and prepare the next generation of leaders who are technically proficient and knowledgeable. Talents continue to be nurtured and a workforce that is globally competitive is with each passing year, transitioning from our institutions of higher learning into prominent positions locally and abroad.

To ensure that even those that are not admitted in Universities get an equal chance, we have transformed our Technical and Vocational Education Training.

Where there stood only 52 institutions in 2013, today we are home to 238 institutes, representing a 435% growth. With this transformation, every Kenyan child has a chance.

Fellow Kenyans,

In our efforts to foster inclusivity and gender parity, the one thing I am proud of is how we have built women leadership and expanded their fields of participation in governance.

For a long time, women affairs were relegated to the Department of Social Services; where they were grouped with children and persons living with disabilities. In fact, the first woman to be appointed as a Permanent Secretary happened 24 years after independence.

Margaret Githinji was appointed the Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Industry on Maradaka Day of 1987. And thereafter, the first woman to become a Cabinet Minister was Hon. Nyiva Mwendwa. This happened 32 years after independence, in 1995.

Today, and thanks to the 2010 Constitution and my commitment to equality and inclusivity, I have had the pleasure of working with eleven women in My Cabinet, at different times and in different capacities. All of them have occupied high-profile portfolios. In fact, all the Cabinet Secretaries for Foreign Affairs for the last 9 years have been women.

Of equal note, My Administration has fast-tracked the promotion of women to leadership in our security sector. I appointed Fatuma Ahmed as the first woman Major-General of our Defence Forces in 2018. Similarly, the first holder of the constitutional office of Auditor-General of our Republic was appointed under My Administration. Mrs. Nancy Gathungu, appointed in 2021, continues to serve the Republic in that capacity.

And of course, one of the three arms of government is now headed by a woman. After 58 years of independence, in May 2021, I had the profound honour of being the first President of the Republic to commence an address with the salutation “Madam Chief Justice”, when the Hon. Lady Justice Martha Koome assumed office as the first woman Chief Justice.

I am also proud of the fact that Kenya's Judiciary boasts a female Deputy Chief Justice, a female Chief Registrar, and many female Principal Judges and Presiding Judges across our Superior Courts.

In August this year, if it is the wish of the electorate, we have a chance of a woman shattering the glass ceiling by assuming the second highest office in our Republic, the Office of the Deputy President of the Republic of Kenya.

If our women were part of the liberation struggle, advancing their course intentionally is a duty we owe them and ourselves as a country. And I am, indeed, proud to have been part of this push for women leadership in our Republic.

Fellow Kenyans,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Now I will give a further account of how My Administration has multiplied the fruits of our liberation. And I will give this account using the Four Legacy Frames that have guided our execution of the mandate bestowed to us over the last 9 years. These are what I call the Big-Push Investments, Economic Acceleration, Restoration of Dignity, and Political Stabilization.

I begin with the first legacy frame of the Big Push Investments. And I want to start with this frame because, the question many have begged is WHY the heavy investment in infrastructure?

I have been asked why have we built mega dams; expanded ports and built new ones; increased our road networks; and revived dead railways as we have built new ones? And our logic here is simple: It has nothing to do with WHAT we have built; but WHY we did it.

The naysayers said that we should not invest so heavily in infrastructure. Because people don't eat roads and floating bridges. I refused their pessimism because I know what a new road means to the farmer who has for decades been unable to get their produce quickly to the market.

I refused to delay the dream of world-class ports and fishing-support infrastructure because I wanted that fisherman in our oceans and lakes to be able gain more from the sweat of their brow.

I looked at a Nation whose potential was being limited by road connectivity and I vowed to open up Kenya to ourselves and to the world. The result was that once sleepy villages and towns roared to life, becoming vibrant centres for economic and social activities.

The result was the appreciation in the value and utility of land in many rural and peri-urban areas, instantly elevating hundreds of thousands of homes out of poverty.

Similarly, as we learn from our history, when the colonizers built the Kenya-Uganda Railway, some people called it the 'Railway to Nowhere' passing through a swamp called Nairobi. But to the colonizers, the railway was NOT the end game. What the railway was meant to achieve WAS the end game.

Years later, what was called the 'Lunatic Express' by cynics converted a swamp called Nairobi into a mega-city that is in the top five in Africa. It opened up an entire hinterland corridor running from Mombasa on the Indian Ocean to Banana on the Atlantic Ocean in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The railway had transformed the East African landscape, opening up new frontiers of trade, commerce and urbanization.

This demonstrates that infrastructure has a way of turning swamps into cities, dead spaces into high value properties, and village shopping centres into city malls. Without infrastructure, there are no ways of finding new possibilities. And that is why we made it one of our Big Push Investments.

When My Administration took over the helm of leadership, we knew we had only a maximum of two terms to accomplish a very ambitious agenda. And the challenge was that the bar set by my predecessor, the late President Kibaki, was high. To face this challenge, we had to first embrace what previous administrations had done and accelerate their achievements. This was part of the big push.

And today, I am proud to record that, if the Third Administration built 2,000 Kms of tarmac roads, we accelerated his achievement by building over 11,000 Kms, which is close to six times what they built. In fact, we have built more roads in 9 years than what the previous administrations combined, including the colonizers, built in 123 years.

If the nation's Third Administration had set the bar high, we have set the bar even higher. And the record is there for all to see. Across all 8 former provinces, in each of the 47 counties, we have transformed Kenya a kilometer at a time.

Our world-class infrastructure, from iconic elevated expressways to floating bridges, have put Kenya on the global map. As a result, we have distinguished ourselves as an investment destination of choice, a regional and continental hub, and a leader on the African continent.

Fellow Kenyans,

With the mandate you gave me, we also transformed the way the government services reach you. We did this through the introduction of Huduma Centres and online platform eCitizen to make access to public services a fast and pleasant experience and not a toil that every citizen must endure so as to obtain basic services.

In 2012, who would have believed that Passport Applications, Birth Certificates, Marriages, Business Registration, Driver's License, and so many others could be done online from anywhere in the world? My Administration has also supported similar advances in the independent arms of government; resulting in a situation where Kenyans now file and serve documents for their Court Cases online, with the era of the notorious 'missing court file' being firmly put behind us.

It is in the life of this Administration, that a business can be registered online, and certificate issued on the same day, together with the KRA PIN and other statutory registrations. We did it because we know that it is our duty to facilitate your enjoyment of socio-economic rights without unnecessary and cumbersome barriers.

In the past, all land matters were handled using a manual registry. And this made the Ministry of Lands a den of corruption. In fact, part of the Wilson Airport runway, to my left, had a Tittle Deed registered in the name of a private entity.

But as part of reforms in the Land Registry, the process of stumping out fake Tittle Deeds and reversing this fraud has been accelerated. If it took a minimum of six months to do a single land transaction, this has now been reduced to 48 hours using a system called Ardhi-Sasa. Similarly, instead of taking between one and three months to do a land search, this system will give you land search results in 3 to 5 minutes.

With the mandate you gave me, we have set a high bar for how and where government services should be provided. Never again will Kenyans accept that they must contend with long winding queues, pay the infamous and notorious 'facilitation fee' to receive their rights, or travel long distances to the nearest major town to receive even the most basic of public services.

As the Administration that assumed office on the signature pledge of being a digital government, the revolution that is the delivery of services online, coupled with the concept of Huduma Centres which we implemented, we have kept our promise. In doing so, we have created greater opportunities for Kenyans in the private sector and built an enabling environment for an ICT versatile society.

It is in the tenure of this Administration that we successfully transitioned from analogue to digital television and radio, resulting in the country being home to 130 TV stations up from 14 in 2013; and 204 radio stations up from 130 in 2013. These impressive figures do not factor in the massive expansion of the digital space that has seen many hundreds of thousands of Kenyans successfully monetize various digital communication avenues.

Besides jobs, through our expansion of the digital space the Government has enabled small and medium enterprises; regional, community and church-based broadcasters throughout the country, to create niche routes for direct engagements.

The dividends of the investments in undersea cable are also manifest, despite many having asked why? Here is the why.

To fully seize the opportunities on offer in this information age, our massive investment in ICT has seen internet penetration rise from 31.4% in 2013 to 93.9% in 2022; with cellular phone penetration increasing from 74.9% in 2013 to 131% in the last reporting cycle. Over the same time, mobile money transfers increased from Ksh. 1.9 Trillion to Ksh. 6.8 Trillion. Online jobs have secured close to a million jobs for Kenyans while our innovators continue to make waves globally from their locations here in Kenya.

As we prepare to hand over the baton to the Fifth Administration, there are three critical areas that the next administration must focus on.

Firstly, you cannot do the Big Push Investments in dams, roads and rail in an environment of corruption. I say so because the devil of corruption is still alive and well.

For the next administration to multiply our dividend and continue raising the bar, therefore, it must work from the inside out. It must NOT backslide on the corruption 'clean-up' agenda.

When corruption festers in government, you cannot fight it from the court of public opinion. You must fight it from the inside out. That is why the leaders we elect must have the credentials and will to continue the clean-up we started.

Two, and fundamentally, you cannot implement Big Push Investments in an environment of political strife and hypocrisy. My Government has achieved more in the second term than we did in the first term. And the record must reflect that this is true of all sectors.

During the first term, for instance, we built slightly over 3,000 Kms of tarmac roads. But in the second term, we have completed close to 8,000 Kms and over 6,600 kms of tarmac roads are currently on-going.

And all this happened because of the political stability achieved through and because of the handshake.

Three, Big Push Investments are bold investments. They call for surgical, and sometimes ruthless execution. Such undertakings cannot be fed on the milk of meekness. They need an attitude that shows the contempt card to those who dwell in negativity and naysaying.

For instance, if we had told you that we were going to build an expressway that snakes through the heart of Nairobi in only 18 months, the pessimists would have said it was impossible. Yet we did it!!

And, if we had said that we would do it without a single coin from the taxpayers - except for relocation of utilities, including electricity, water and fiber optic cable, many would have said we were dreaming. But we did it.

Today, the Nairobi Expressway snakes majestically through the skylines of Nairobi as a wonder to behold. Under normal circumstances, it would have taken us 4 years to build it but we achieved in a year and a half because we believed in Kenya, in our people, and in ourselves as government.

As an affirmation of the confidence we enjoy from foreign investors, we built the first expressway in Africa using private foreign capital. Indeed, we did this it at half the time and at no project cost to the taxpayer. It is also notable that we built it to international standards found only in top world capitals. With this signature project, we have opened-up new possibilities for our own private investors including equity and pension funds to invest in public infrastructure and make decent returns.

Fellow Kenyans,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Now I will turn to my second legacy frame of Economic Acceleration. And by this I mean multiplying the economic foundations of our Nation at a rate outside the normal. The first limb will address how we are faring on production and the second limb will respond to a question by many - why we had to borrow in order to accelerate our fundamentals.

Since 2013, we have used the mandate you vested in me to ring-fence and grow our traditional exports of Tea, Coffee, and

Horticulture. Across the country, the coffee rates for 2022 are out and we have nearly doubled earnings made by coffee farmers from an average of Ksh 60 per Kilogramme of Cherry in 2013 to Ksh 110-125 per Kilogramme today.

Tea earnings from export rose by 20 % from Ksh.114 billion in 2013 to Ksh.136 billion in 2021. In the last 9 years, over Ksh. 454 Billion has been paid to smallholder tea farmers.

In addition to the traditional export crops, My Administration has stayed ahead of the curve by supporting the emerging crops that will bolster our agricultural and horticultural earnings for decades to come. One of these is the Avocado, which is on course to becoming a top export earner. In the last year alone, we earned Ksh. 15 Billion from Avocado exports compared to Ksh. 1 Billion in 2013. My Administration has leveraged on the improved diplomatic stances between Kenya and leading importers of the crop to negotiate preferential access for Kenyan Avocado products.

Another plank of our strategy for employment creation is anchored on the “Buy Kenya build Kenya” Policy. With this singular intervention, the supply of uniforms for our security organs including footwear have transformed our textiles and leather industries and unleashed thousands of new jobs for our youth; in addition to the immeasurable pride in having the magical tag of “Made in Kenya” affixed to those items of apparel.

To encourage leading motor vehicle brands to set-up shop and restore our existing assembly lines in Kenya, the procurement framework for motor vehicles by our security organs accords preference to locally assembled vehicles. With this policy shift, a moribund industry is once again alive.

With the mandate you gave me, the voice of women, youth, and persons with disabilities that was once muted is now at the centre of our growing Kenyan enterprise.

To exemplify this, My Administration established a framework for affirmative action in Government Procurement through the Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) policy that requires that at least 30% of procurement in government be reserved for youth, women, and persons with

disabilities. Over the last nine years, the Government has procured goods and services worth a staggering 169.6 Billion from these historically marginalized groups.

Fellow Kenyans,

To address the second limb, why borrow? We must look at how other nations prospered. It took England 200 years to industrialize, the United States of America 160 years, and Japan 110 years. But China took only 35 years and the four Asian Tigers of Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and the Republic of South Korea took 25 years to industrialize. And that is why their accelerated growth was called the 'Asian Miracle'.

The secret to these 'miracles' was acceleration. They contracted their development timelines by implementing aggressive interventions and through policy choices that aided their acceleration. In just one generation they were at par with the West.

The afro-pessimist will tell you that Kenya cannot replicate this 'miracle'. But they are wrong. Our accelerated path to economic growth has begun and must be maintained by the incoming administration.

In just 9 years, we have moved from being the 12th largest economy in Africa, to being the 6th largest economy and growing. We have almost tripled the wealth of our nation from a GDP of 4.5 trillion in 2013, to close to 13 Trillion currently. As a mark of this remarkable growth, our tax revenues have doubled from Ksh. 800 Billion in FY 2012/13 to Ksh. 1.662 Trillion as at April 2022. With the mandate you gave us, we are firmly on course to achieve the record shattering projection of Ksh. 2 Trillion by the end of the Current Financial Year.

Fellow Kenyans,

We have grown our road network almost 6 times, our power generation 40 times, and connected more homes to electricity than any other country in Africa. And if we have done this in just 9 years, the next administration can multiply our efforts to unprecedented heights.

But to keep this acceleration, the Fifth Administration must borrow two lessons from My Administration.

One, it will not be possible to maintain the speed of our achievements in a contaminated environment. And on this, allow me to go back to the corruption 'clean-up' we have made.

When we took over in 2013, some of the state corporations were "...rotten from the core and to the core". We had to "...drain the swamp" from the inside-out. But we had to balance this 'clean-up' exercise with accelerated performance. That is why we turned to the disciplined forces and summoned them to the course of nation building.

The record must reflect that they have not disappointed us. When we gave them the Kenya Meat Commission to manage, they turned it into a profit-making enterprise in record time.

The other institution worth of mention is the Kenya Shipyard Limited. This institution had collapsed due to mismanagement and corruption. Then last year, we handed it over to the disciplined forces. Today, this Corporation is poised to be the largest shipyard in sub-saharan Africa.

This is evidence that in an environment that is not contaminated, it can be done. If we could build this museum using the disciplined forces in only 22 months instead of 10 years, and restore the glory of Nairobi using the Nairobi Metropolitan Services (NMS), it can be done!

The second lesson that will keep our accelerated achievements afloat has to do with debt. And on this I want to pose a National Question: How much is 'too much' borrowing? When does borrowing become 'too much' and unbearable to a nation?

The only time that debt is a burden to a nation is if the nation is led by a cabal of looters. But in the hands of a visionary administration, debt is a catalyst for rapid development.

When South Korea achieved its economic 'miracle' in a record 25 years, it also achieved the rank of being the 4th most indebted country in the world. But they did not call it debt, they called it 'using other people's money' to advance their course.

Similarly, in the 1900s, Britain borrowed 'other people's money' to industrialize. Indeed, Britain only finished repaying this debt in 2015 after 102 years.

What this means is that nations that have advanced have not used their own money. They have borrowed from others to catch up and to become world economic leaders.

And the National Question to us today is not whether debt is good or bad. The more legitimate question has to do with what the next administration will do with borrowed funds. Will they end up in private pockets or will they be used to accelerate economic advancement?

On the part of My Administration, we used 'other people's money' to close our infrastructure gap and to connect our markets. If it took a maize trader 3 days to travel from Kitale to the border of South Sudan, what we borrowed ensures that it takes him now just 5 hours.

Similarly, today, any trader can travel on tarmac road to 4 out of 5 of our neighbouring countries in record time.

And if we can transport 10 times more passengers with SGR at half the price and half the time and move 3 times more cargo daily from Mombasa to our neighbours, then our borrowing has surely been worthwhile and paid tangible dividends.

To maintain the tempo of our accelerated achievements, the Fifth administration should not shy away from using 'other people's money'. Debt, in a cleaned-up government, is an enabler, not a burden.

With the mandate you gave us, you the people summoned us to secure sustainable development and foster inter-generational equity: we honoured this solemn duty by restoring water towers, protecting the environment through pollution control and conserved wetland areas, and firmly established Kenya as a global leader in the arena of sustainable development.

Our conservation efforts have fortified our biodiversity and as a result we have also recorded the lowest levels of poaching in our nation's history. On account of this robust and stable ecosystem

we have registered the highest wildlife population for a majority of our wildlife species that are home to us.

We did this so that every Kenyan can enjoy their right to a clean and healthy environment; and so that our heritage and splendor can be passed down from one generation to another, unencumbered.

With your mandate, we have planted 1.34 billion trees, moving our forest cover from 6.99 percent in 2013 to 8.83 percent in 2022, and our tree cover to 12.3 percent, well over the 10% envisaged in our constitution and eight years ahead of the target date of the year 2030. To halt the destruction of water towers, an elusive dream that had eluded every other administration, we contained the encroachment and illegal extraction activities in the water towers resources in the Maasai Mau Forest Complex.

We also banned single-use polythene bags, and in doing so saved marine and terrestrial life from that deadly hazard, while also setting the stage for the beautification of our urban areas that had been choking under mounds of polythene waste. This initiative has led to the emergence of our nation as a leader in climate change action and established a thriving green economy fueled by green innovations.

With your mandate, we made tenfold investments in the water sector so as to accord every Kenyan household the dignity of access to water and sanitation. We did this by building dams (including Thiba Dam in Kirinyaga, Yamo Dam in Samburu County) and we are on course to complete and to start others, notably: Thwake Dam (Kitui/Machakos/Makueni), Mwache Dam (Coast Region), Karimenu Dam (Kiambu), Siyoi Muruny (West Pokot), Bute Dam (Wajir), and Soin Koru Dam (Nyanza).

In total we are currently implementing 685 water and sanitation projects across the country, so that by the end of this year at least 80% of Kenyan households will have access to water and 40% access to sanitation.

Today, because of the mandate you bequeath us, we have 13 Million Kenyans connected to clean water. On irrigation, notwithstanding the false starts we experienced, we have managed to recover and to double the total acreage of land

under irrigation from 374,000 acres in 2013 to 664,000 acres in 2022.

Fellow Kenyans,

With the mandate you gave me, and in recognition of the status of land as the principal factor of production, after 50 years of independence when I assumed office, only 5 Million title deeds had been issued across the country. With the mandate you vested in me, we have more than doubled that number, having issued an additional 6 Million titles, bringing our national aggregate to 11 Million. We did this to support in unlocking economic value so that every citizen can participate in national development.

As part of the ground-breaking reforms in the sector, and to ensure value for money, we heralded the enactment of The Land Index Laws (Amendment) Act, through which we are formulating guidelines that put a stop to the bloated valuations figures we have been a blight in the process of compulsory land acquisition. The immediate benefit of this is that it shall be easier and more cost-effective for the Kenyan taxpayer to compulsorily acquire private land for the purposes of meaningful public projects.

Fellow Kenyans,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to finalize by combining the last two legacy frames of Restoration of Dignity and Political Stabilization.

And I will begin with a question we must ponder this Madaraka Day. As we head to the August 9th General Election, we must ask ourselves this: What is the purpose of elections in a nation? Are they meant to accelerate its path of growth, or should they breed more indignity amongst its people? Do they heal the wounds of the past or do they create new wounds in the Body and the Soul of the Nation?

Let me pose this question more pointedly using two examples. When we chose the legacy frame of Restoration of Dignity, we wanted to reduce the burden of indignity on our people. We

targeted healthcare in particular, because this is where the 'poverty of dignity' was most pronounced.

With the mandate you gave us, we moved the closer to the realization of the Universal Health Coverage. As part of this transformation, we have registered a 400% growth in the number of Kenyans insured under NHIF – Today, we have 17.1 Million Kenyans insured compared to 4.4 Million insured as at April, 2013.

To enhance access to healthcare, we have constructed an additional 1,912 healthcare facilities across all levels of care countrywide; representing a 43% increase in the total number of public health facilities in the country. These facilities range from the recently commissioned modern state-of-the-art Level 6 Kenyatta University Teaching, Referral and Research Hospital to health centers and dispensaries at the village level.

In the same time period, we have increased our ICU capacity by an impressive 502%, from 108 to 651 ICU ready beds. Similarly, our total hospital bed capacity as a country has also increased by 47% from 56,069 in 2013 to 82,291 hospital beds.

Additionally, through NMS, we built 29 new hospitals in the informal settlements in 100 days. In fact, we just opened a level five hospital in the settlements, popularly known as "Korogocho".

And although we have increased affordable access to healthcare, the lingering question is how these fragile facilities that we have built be affected by elections.

Will future administrations backslide to the former corrupt practices of running down public institutions and diverting medicines bought by the public to private practitioners? Or will the incoming administration nurture and upscale what we have achieved and do it even better?

These are not rhetorical questions, they are political questions we must ponder before electing our leaders.

The second example of indignity we encountered was in the area of chronic diseases. For those suffering from Kidney disease

and in need of dialysis thrice a week, it used to cost them over Kshs. 100,000 a month.

Families had to sell their ancestral land and disinherit their children to keep loved ones alive. Others had to migrate from their comfortable homes upcountry and live in informal settlements in the city where dialysis machines were available.

This was because for 40 years we had only 2 renal units and two dialysis machines countrywide; located in the city of Nairobi. Then President Kibaki added four more renal units during his 10-year tenure.

This means that for 50 years, the entire country was served by only 6 renal units that provided dialysis for kidney patients.

But in only 9 years, we have built 54 renal units located in the 47 counties and installed 360 state-of-the art dialysis machines. Added to this, we have made dialysis free of charge so that families do not have to sell their land to save their loved ones. The only cost is a subscription fee of Ksh 500 per month to the National Insurance Hospital Fund, NHIF.

Fellow Kenyans,

While we have had longest and most consequential period of transformation in our Nation's history, it does not mean that the work of nation building is complete; or that we are free of want. Recurring waves of drought continue to subject our brothers and sisters to hunger; Worse of as at today, it is hard to tell whether the long rains expected in April have commenced or not.

Even as we contend with the devastating effects of climate change; we are rising from challenges that no other generation has faced in over a Century – a health pandemic that has caused untold suffering – robbing us thousands of our fellow compatriots and in its wake, rendered over a million jobless! Global tensions that are threatening global food and fuel supply chain, causing untold disruptions in transport and logistics, sky rocketing prices of basic commodities and food items leading to higher cost of living; and turbulence in international finance; issues which require our attention and vigilance.

We are also still faced with security challenges in parts of the country including Kerio Valley where bandits cannot even spare our children, robbing us our future; Unemployment is still a major challenge, dampening the spirits of our youth and disheartening their parents.

Equally important to highlight is the threat to our traditional values and the family as the basic unit of our Society. The evolving face of the Kenyan family is characterized in the 2019 national census where families headed by single parents rose from 25.1% in 2009 to 38.2% in 2019.

If unchecked, this trend shall destroy the fundamental character of Kenya and reap untold harm onto our most vulnerable and precious members of society; our Children.

I urge our media houses, our religious leaders, our community elders, and the concerned government agencies to step up to the plate and make sure that the Kenyan Family remains the strong and respected institution that it has historically been.

Fellow Kenyans,

My message to the nation today is that whereas we are claiming progress, we do not claim perfection. Yes, we have made commendable progress on our socio-economic front, but we cannot claim to have reached the pinnacle of our nation's potential. There is much more to be done to move our nation to the next level of development. The Fourth Administration, that I had the privilege to lead, has laid the foundation upon which the Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and all future administrations can build on.

However, to achieve the shared aspirations of our people, successive administrations are called upon to foster national unity as this is the single greatest enabler for sustainable development and shared prosperity for all.

Our first collective national duty is in the forthcoming general elections on 9th August 2022 – choose peace and stability over fear; hope over hate; and progress over retrogression.

Fellow Kenyans,

On this solemn occasion, we also reflect on the plight of our brothers and sisters who have run into headwinds with the law and are serving custodial sentences in our correctional facilities.

In response to various petitions from actors with the Justice and Legal Sector; and in line with our commitment to restorative justice and reintegration of offenders; on the recommendation of the Power of Mercy Advisory Committee, I have on this day exercised the presidential prerogative of pardon and granted a second chance to 3,908 inmates.

The pardoned inmates comprise of petty offenders and inmates serving sentences of less than 3 months. I, therefore, direct that their sentences be commuted by the end of next week in full compliance with all legal procedures and processes and in cognizance of the inmates' individual probation report.

To those that have been pardoned, I charge you all to be change-makers in our society and to restore faith and confidence in our criminal justice system. Reciprocate the generosity of your motherland through this act of mercy with a high sense of civic duty and service to your country.

Fellow Kenyans,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With the Eternal Flame burning bright behind me, on this Madaraka Day, the first to be held on these hallowed grounds; let us all commit to fanning the flames of Freedom, Democracy, Prosperity, Unity, Integrity, and the unceasing commitment to 'Project Kenya.'

God Bless You. God Bless Kenya.