

Speech By H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, CGH, President of The Republic of Kenya and Commander-in-Chief of the Kenya Defence Forces During the 58th Anniversary of Madaraka Day on Tuesday 1ST June 2021, at Jomo Kenyatta Stadium Kisumu City

Fellow Kenyans,

It gives me great pleasure to celebrate the 58th Madaraka Day in this beautiful and beaming city of Kisumu.

I thank you the People and the leaders of Kisumu and the entire Nyanza Region for your warm welcome, and the great work that has gone into hosting this Year's Madaraka Day Celebrations.

Asante Sana Kisumu for your very warm welcome. It is wonderful to be back here. We have two special guests, one a Sister and In-Law, the Hon. Lindiwe Sisulu, Minister for Human Settlement, Water and Sanitation of the Republic of South Africa.

Fellow Kenyans,

This City and, indeed, this Region are the gateways to the hinterlands of Eastern and Central Africa; a special position they have held for centuries, tying our peoples in bonds of trade, friendship, and family. In recognition of this, my Brother, H.E. Évariste Ndayishimiye, the President of the Republic of Burundi, honours us with his presence here today.

We thank you, Your Excellency, for this honour, which will go a long way in strengthening the bonds between Kenya and Burundi. Indeed, your presence here today shows that the East African Community is continuing to grow stronger day by day.

Mr. President as the current Chairperson of the East Africa Community and given the great work your Administration is doing in bringing back peace and development to Burundi, I pledge to work together with all our regional brothers and sisters to see an end to economic sanctions against your Country.

Fellow Kenyans,

Please join me in giving His Excellency the President of the Republic of Burundi a warm and thunderous welcome to Kisumu and Kenya, as I invite him to greet you and say a few words.

Fellow Kenyans,

To celebrate the cultural diversity of Kenya and strengthen our nationhood, in the year 2015, I issued the Executive Order on rotational hosting of our national Day's celebrations in the Counties.

Today, Kisumu joins the growing list of counties that have played host to a national day celebration. That is Counties of Nakuru; Nyeri; Machakos; Meru; Kakamega; Narok; Mombasa; and Kisii.

This tradition allows for a focus on the positive contributions being made under Devolution, while also enabling the hosting County to showcase itself on the national stage.

Fellow Kenyans,

Being in Kisumu today is significant and uplifting as we forge lasting bonds between the people of Kenya. This congregation is also a celebration of the 'Handshake'; a new political normal that not only embraces competition, but also encourages reconciliation, and the healing of wounds - irregardless of how fierce the competition was.

The choice of Kisumu to host Madaraka Day this year, is also intertwined with our national heritage, for there cannot be a better place to celebrate our liberation struggle and ponder the future of our self-rule than Kisumu City.

Kisumu is not only the historical hub of East African co-operation; it was also the intellectual incubator of some of the leading ideas behind our liberation movement.

The national motto of "Harambee", even though an import from India was, for instance, introduced as a political rallying-call in Kisumu city during the 1950s. After independence, our Founding Fathers popularized it as the national mantra of "Pulling Together".

Similarly, and led by Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, Kisumu was the epicenter of the push to release Mzee Jomo Kenyatta and the "Kapenguria Six" from their illegal detention by the colonizers.

Furthermore, during the detention of those liberation heroes at Kapenguria, union leaders from this region joined other Kenyans and quickly stepped into the gap to ensure that the liberation momentum was not lost.

It was pre-independence leaders from this region, who taught us that attaining self-rule was not a one-man race. Rather, it was a relay in which, if one set of runners fell out, another set was ready to continue the race.

With such a well-appointed history of the struggle, and the history of reconciliation we are making today, there cannot be a better place to commemorate Madaraka Day today than Kisumu City.

Fellow Kenyans,

Today we celebrate close to six decades of self-rule. We celebrate the return of our liberties, the restoration of our dignity, and the democratic resilience we have built over the last 58 years.

Today, we also celebrate the war heroes who gave their all, including their lives, for us to be free. They sacrificed their freedom and their lives, knowing fully well

that sometimes those who plant the seeds of freedom may NEVER enjoy the fruits that follow.

For their martyrdom, we honour our fallen heroes this Madaraka Day. And we do it fully conscious that "...a nation that does not honour its heroes, will receive no honour amongst nations" – to quote one thinker.

As we celebrate self-rule today, we must also honour our Founding Fathers who dared to imagine Kenya - the bold and selfless Architects of this our great Republic. And from this region of Luo Nyanza, we honour among others, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, who led the campaign for the release of Jomo Kenyatta and the "Kapenguria Six"; Tom Joseph Mboya who was the architect of our Economic Blue Print at independence; and Achieng Oneko who was one of the "Kapenguria Six".

Fellow Kenyans,

Today as we honour all the Founding Fathers of this Nation, we must also recall their Principles of Nationhood. I will mention just a few of those principles.

One, they taught us that a progressive nation is one that is in continuous conversation with itself. This is because nationhood is a negotiated process that needs constant alignments and adjustments in the pursuit of perfection. The architects of Madaraka, however, warned us, a fact that I will not tire to remind you, that in making such adjustments and alignments, we must avoid the 'paralysis of constitutional rigidity'.

Two, they taught us that self-rule is not an end in itself; it is a means to a greater end. Indeed as T.J. Mboya once said, "...Only through freedom and human rights could a people cooperate fully with their government". But for freedom and human rights to be realized, the paradox of choices must be resolved.

Three, they revealed the paradox when they emphasized that self-rule is the granting of opportunities, accompanied by the burden of choice. Every opportunity in the exercise of freedoms and self-rule, must be tempered by the consequences of choice.

Every right granted must have a corresponding responsibility. And those who enjoy opportunities, but neglect the burden of choice, cannot be said to be truly free. This paradox of choices and freedoms applies to both individuals and institutions.

Fellow Kenyans,

Based on some of these teachings, we have built one of the most robust democracies in Africa. The fields of individual freedoms have expanded and citizen participation has become emboldened.

Our independent institutions have also occupied their rightful positions, and all of this is because of the 2010 Constitution. And as I have said in the past, ours is probably the most progressive constitution in the continent of Africa and the World.

However, since the 2010 Constitution expanded our individual fields of freedom, it also expanded the burden of the choices we make. Even our Founding Fathers urged the liberated patriots to shift from the status of being subjects to that of citizens when their fields of freedom were expanded.

They made it clear that a citizen is someone who understands the responsibility that comes with freedom; while a subject will squander opportunities granted by self-rule and refuse to shoulder the burden of their choices.

Similarly, the framers of the 2010 Constitution did not envisage a situation where the expanded fields of rights results in diminished responsibility by citizens and institutions. They saw a balance between freedoms and the consequences of choice.

But this balance is probably most challenged by the growth of our independent institutions. Their growth has stretched our democratic boundaries to the limit; but it has not cracked them. It has bent the will of the people; but it has not broken it.

In fact, any other African country experiencing the political turns and twists we have experienced in the search for greater perfection in our nationhood would have burst asunder.

From nullification of a presidential election in 2017 to an attempt to stop the will of the people as expressed through BBI, the Judiciary has tested our constitutional limits.

While I stand by the Rule of Law and I will always obey the decisions of the courts, I am also compelled by my position to heed the sovereign and supreme voice of the People of Kenya. That is why our National Conversation today must focus on the consequences of choice.

If the citizens are required to exercise their will and shoulder the burden of their choices, should the independent institutions not do likewise?

If the field of independence has been expanded in the Judiciary, how should the field of their responsibility respond to the summons of nationhood? Shouldn't their decisions also be accompanied by a burden of choice? These are the questions our national conversation should objectively ponder. And here I must be frank and ask what I believe to legitimate questions.

It is a fact that were loosing close to 1 billion shillings every working hour for the 123 days we held the 2017 election. The question the National Conversation should ask is; who carried the burden of this choice? Was it the Judiciary or the people? The truth of the matter is, it is the people who carried the burden of this choice. Development programmes meant to make a difference in their lives had to be shelved; courtesy of the decision by the Judiciary.

Two, BBI is meant to build bridges, create inclusive politics, and to end ethnic majoritarianism.

If the court had subjected its decision to stop BBI to a cost benefit analysis, in other words if it had considered the burden of choice, then, these are the

questions the Judiciary would have asked: If we are in a constitutional moment, is a decision against BBI a decision in support of the status quo?

If BBI were to be stopped, who carries the burden of choice? On whose shoulders will ethnic majoritarianism rest? And who will carry the burden of losing 30% of our national budget every five years due to the toxic politics that BBI seeks to resolve?

The Judiciary would also have asked itself another question; can Kenya truly be a democracy if the People are denied the opportunity to express the sovereign and supreme choice at the ballot box, on the basis of elevating technicalities over the overriding objectives of law?

Our Constitution is not a yoke around our necks, rather it is a mighty sword that can break the chains that limit us. The moral foundations of Justice demand that the Judiciary bears the burden of choice and the consequences thereof; especially where the burden of judicial choices is proposed to be carried by the people.

Fellow Kenyans,

Now I will turn to the National Question of our times as is tradition every Madaraka Day.

But before I do so, I wish to remind us of an instruction left behind by the Founding Father of our Nation, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta. He said: "...Our children, born and unborn, may learn about the heroes of the past. But our present task is to make ourselves the architects of the future".

This was a call to action. It was a call to predict the future by creating it. And against this background, the National Question of the moment must be posed.

If, indeed, freedom is nothing but an opportunity to become better, how have we enriched what the Founding Fathers placed in our custody? Have we made it better than we found it? And has Kenya occupied its rightful place in the society of Nations as a result of our improvements? That is the National Question of the day.

And in response to this Question, I will use the "FOUR FRAMES" of our liberation struggle that have informed My Administration.

The first is economic. This frame is informed by the notion that political freedom in the absence of economic freedom is nothing but an illusion.

Given that the Founding Fathers stood for economic inclusion and the administration before mine was about economic recovery; my Administration has embraced the maxim of economic acceleration.

Economic acceleration, in my Administration is about increasing the speed of achieving our national goals. We have increased this speed at the national, county, and individual levels.

At the national level, the colonizers left us with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) – the measure for the National Cake, of close to Ksh 6.4 billion in 1963 at the exchange rate of that time. After 74 years of colonial occupation, this is what Kenya was worth every year.

Then the combined administrations of Mzee Kenyatta, Mzee Moi and Mzee Kibaki increased this National Cake to Ksh 4.5 Trillion. And they did this in a span of 50 years.

But in only 8 years, my Administration has doubled what the colonizers and the first three administrations did in 128 years. Our National Cake, or our annual worth as a country every year, is now at Ksh 10.3 Trillion. Even if you factor in inflation, our economic acceleration programme has multiplied what the Founding Fathers left in our custody.

At the County Level, we have allocated Ksh.2.3 Trillion to counties. This is equivalent to about 16% of our current GDP. What this means is that, we have sent to the counties the equivalent of what our National Cake was between 1885 when the colonizers came to Kenya and when President Moi retired in 2002. We have achieved this in a mere 7 years.

The BBI dream is to send even more resources to the counties to catalyze their accelerated development. That is why we have proposed under the BBI to send 35% of our national revenue to counties.

At the individual level, our economic acceleration initiative has focused on the allocation of title deeds. I am proud to say that, we have accelerated land adjudication in a way that is unprecedented. The previous administrations issued 6 million title deeds in 50 years; but my Administration has issued 5.1 million title deeds in 7-years only. On a pro rata basis, this is seven times what previous administrations had done combined.

I am happy to note that close to 20% of the titles we have issued are in the Nyanza Region. In fact, most of them are in Kisumu County. The title deed is what our Founding Fathers fought for when they made land ownership a central plank of our independence struggle. And by accelerating land adjudication and settlement, my intention is to give security of tenure to as many Kenyans as possible.

The second FRAME is what I call, “the Big Push Investments”. Our Founding Fathers laid the foundation for the future they dreamt of. Then they dared us to build that future by doing big things. But on this, they also cautioned us that, to do big things, you cannot be distracted by small things.

The Big Push Investments are about laying the ground for our economic take-off. Many Kenyans have asked why my Administration is investing in big infrastructure projects. Why the roads, the rails, and the ports?

And my answer to this question is simple. When Cecil Rhodes, the British colonizer and his brothers dreamt of a road from Cape Town to Cairo, their vision

was not the road. The road was not the dream. The dream was what the road would do for them.

In the same vein, our brick-and-mortar investments of roads, rail and ports are NOT the dream. The dream is what the “Big Push Investments” will do for Kenya; and how they will transform our standing in the community of nations. And form the basis of national prosperity and creation of decent and steady jobs for our people.

Take for instance the Lamu Port, which I commissioned its First Berth two weeks ago. It is the first Port to be built in Kenya since the Port of Mombasa in 1896. For 115 years, no government has built a deep-sea port on the East African Coast of the Indian Ocean. Kenya is the first country to do so.

Similarly, the history of this Port dates back to 1972 when the idea was hatched. It took 49 years for us to conceptualize and mull this port; but it took just 8 years to make it a reality.

Once it is operational, Kenya will have claimed its stake in the Indian Ocean real estate. The Port of Lamu will be able to handle ships the size of those that transit through the Suez Canal.

And this capacity will not only increase our transshipment business, but will also impact on over 130 million residents of the Eastern African region.

Another “Big Push Investment” we have engaged in is the revival of dead capital. And we have done this because the instructions of our Founding Fathers were to take care of what they had built.

In this regard, we have revived 566 Kilometres of the dead Metre Gauge Railway. The revived 200-Kilometers Nairobi-Nanyuki railway will be a game changer.

Every trip, the train will transport 1,600 passengers, which is equivalent to a convoy of 120 matatus. And the cost per passenger will be Ksh.200 compared to Ksh. 500 by Matatu.

Although it takes a little longer by train, the passenger will make a 60% saving using the revived train system; all while travelling at greater comfort and safety. Further, by moving our tea and coffee through this line at greatly reduced costs, will result in shillings in the pockets of our hard working farmers.

But the most uplifting story of the revived dead capital is our Big Push Investment in the Port of Kisumu and the reconditioning of the MV Uhuru vessel. I will not talk about the jobs this has created and the business buzz it has evoked in Kisumu. Those are obvious. I will talk about the economics of this decision.

To transport fuel by road from Kisumu to Uganda takes 72 hours because of the long queues at the Malaba border. But to transport fuel from the Port of Kisumu to Port Bell in Uganda by ship takes only 12 hours.

This means that by the time a tanker makes one trip to Uganda by road, the MV Uhuru Ship will have made six trips.

Then there is the question of volume. One tanker carries 20,000 litres of fuel; but one wagon aboard MV Uhuru carries 60,000 litres, which is three times the size of a tanker.

If the ship accommodates 22 wagons, each voyage it makes to Port Bell is an equivalent of a convoy of 66 tankers headed to Uganda.

What is more: If it costs \$ 35 to transport one thousand litres of fuel by road per kilometre, it costs \$ 16 to transport the same through the Port of Kisumu. For every \$2 spent transporting fuel to Uganda by road, you spend only \$1 through the port. Further, the fuel lost by road transport was estimated to be worth Ksh. 6 Billion per year. Indeed, today, by transporting through rail, this has been redced to Zero, while fuel adulteration is a thing of the past.

And for those asking why we have made the “Big Push Investment” in the Port of Kisumu, there is your answer. If it takes one-sixth of the time to transport goods by ship compared to road transport, this is good for traders and also for investors, making our region that much more competitive globally.

If in one trip you carry three times the volume by ship compared to tankers, that is good for commerce. And if it costs you half the price to use the Port of Kisumu compared to road transportation, that is good economics.

Indeed, all our “Big Push Investments” have been conceived to catalyse the economy and to provide the most rational choices for all actors.

Fellow Kenyans,

The third FRAME I want us to ponder over this Madaraka Day is that of the Restoration of Dignity. And our Founding Fathers defined ‘dignity’ as ‘freedom from want’.

From the outset, liberation from the ‘poverty of dignity’ was a central motif of our independence struggle. Indeed, our Founding Fathers taught us that self-rule will not be fully attained until self-worth is restored.

And the National Question we must ask this afternoon is whether we are on track in liberating our people from the poverty of dignity. To what extent have we liberated them from ‘want’?

Article 23 and Article 43 of our Constitution make the restoration of dignity a continuous process rather than a one-off activity. And the question this Madaraka Day is how well we have rendered this aspect of our freedom.

Some may ask what ‘poverty of dignity’ is and I will explain. Before we started the Big Push Investments in Nairobi under the Nairobi Metropolitan Service, there was only one clinic with 15 beds serving 500,000 residents of Mukuru Informal Settlement.

When a mother delivered a baby in Mukuru, she had less than one hour of post-natal care before being asked to leave to make way for the next patient. This is poverty of dignity. We fixed this indignity by building 25 hospitals in the informal settlements of Nairobi in a mere 100 days.

Let me give another example. When a patient suffering from Kidney disease, had to travel for 70 kilometres from Siaya to Kisumu three times a week for dialysis, that was a tragic indignity.

But this tragedy of indignity was made worse because this patient needed 10 dialysis sessions a month. If one session costs between Ksh. 9,000 and Ksh. 16,000, it meant that the patient had to spend between Ksh. 90,000 and Ksh.160,000 every month.

How many subsistence farmers from Siaya can afford Ksh. 160,000 every month for dialysis? Such patients had to sell their ancestral inheritance, such as land, in order to get treatment. The net effect of this was that their illness ended up disinheriting their families and indignifying the generations to come. This is what poverty of dignity looks like.

But today, I am happy to note that the patient from Siaya does not have to travel for 70 kilometres to Kisumu for treatment. There are dialysis machines in Siaya at the sub-county level.

Similarly, he does not have to pay Ksh 160,000 a month for dialysis or sell his ancestral land. All he needs is to spend Ksh 500 a month on a NHIF card. This card gives him free dialysis every month.

If dignity is 'freedom from want', then we have restored it using our health interventions; in fact, we have accelerated it.

I say so because, between 1963 and 1978, as a country we had only one renal unit and one dialysis machine. President Moi added one more and President Kibaki added four more renal units. By the time my Administration took over, we had only 6 renal units for the entire country.

Today, and in only 6 years, we have 54 renal units with 360 state-of-the-art dialysis machines distributed among all 47 counties. Coupled with the NHIF card, this uprated health infrastructure has restored the dignity of families previously condemned to disinherit their children because of disease.

The dignity of families is supported by sustainable livelihoods. It is for this reason that my Administration's agenda continues to focus on creating an enabling environment that offers every Kenyan an opportunity to participate in the economy.

Over the years Micro, Small and Medium Business Enterprises have turned to be a breeding ground for indigenous industries.

Because of this remarkable expansion, their contribution to national development continues to grow from strength to strength; and they are today the greatest engines of employment creation in our Nation.

Fellow Kenyans,

To enable this region make its contribution to our national development, I look forward to making another visit to Kisumu in the coming months to commission the development of the 1,000- acre Kisumu Special Economic Zone.

This singular initiative will provide immense opportunities for value addition of agricultural products, from the entirety of the western region and enhance the blue economy activities of the Lake Victoria basin.

The dignity we seek to restore through sustainable livelihoods will give every Kenyan, an opportunity to participate in economic development. For instance, to address the inequity in tendering for contracts by the Jua Kali artisans and craftsmen, due to their lack of certification and to secure opportunities for them, I am announcing today a new initiative by my Administration to provide a framework for recognition of the skills through awards of certificates, based on competence, to better enable them participate in various economic opportunities.

It is in this regard that I direct the Ministry of Education, through the Kenya National Qualifications Authority, to, within one month from this date, issue a policy framework for comprehensive recognition of prior learning. This policy intervention will expand the opportunities for artisans and craftsmen in our Jua Kali sector to participate meaningfully in our economy.

Fellow Kenyans,

Now I will end very briefly with the fourth FRAME of our National Question this Madaraka Day. For us to secure what we have achieved in 58 years, we must not make politics the heat and light of our national existence.

Instead, we must endeavour to pursue political stabilization by any means necessary. I say so because stability is the life-blood of our Republic. What we have built for 58 years, can be destroyed in one day of political instability. But we cannot engage in political stabilization if we live in political denial. For instance, everyone knows that BBI is good. It is good for our country. It is even good for those unhappy with it.

But too many Kenyans have embraced fear of change over the need to continuously strive for a more fair, just, peaceful, cohesive, and democratic Kenya.

They oppose BBI not because of its substance; which even its harshest critics concede is good, but because, unlike our Founding Fathers, they cannot dare imagine a better Kenya for all.

Fellow Kenyans,

As I said of the Judiciary, their decisions must consider the letter of the law, but fundamentally, the spirit of the law must also guide them. And I say so because the spirit of the law is the light that will illuminate the burden of the choices they make.

For every decision they make, the spirit of the law will lead them to the consequences of their choices. If the Judiciary is guided by the spirit of the law, political stabilization will be easy to achieve.

As for the political elite, if we remain short-termist and self-serving, the consequences of our choices will become a permanent burden on our people. Let it be clear to all Kenyans, short-termism is not the path to political stabilization.

Our Founding Fathers encouraged the liberated patriots to upgrade from the status of being subjects to that of being citizens by embracing freedom with responsibility. I want to make a similar invitation to our political class this Madaraka Day.

I want to invite them to upgrade their status from being politicians to being leaders. Politicians are obsessed with personal gain; but it is our national pain that should disturb them.

Fellow Kenyans,

I have illuminated just a fraction of what my Administration has done, for that is not what is important. What is important is the recognition of what those who went before us did. We have only built on that foundation with the full recognition that we are still a long way to achieving all the hopes and aspirations of our people.

But, like our fore fathers we live in the hope that future administrations will not seek to live in a acrimony and division, not to destroy but to build on our achievements and reach even greater heights, so that we can truly live the vision of Kenya as articulated by our fore fathers that the task before us is not today, but how to be architects of the future.

This is why I want to thank the Right Honourable Raila Odinga for embracing our national pain over his personal gain, when we did the Handshake. What is more: he did this without asking or demanding anything from me. That is why, it has been a great pleasure working with him. And whatever the future holds, I look forward to working with him and all Kenyans to build a better, brighter, more united and prosperous Kenya, East Africa and Africa. I thank You.

Fellow Kenyans,

In concluding my remarks, let me say how delighted I am to formally announce that Kisumu City will, from 26th to 30th April 2022, play host to the largest Africities Summit ever hosted in Kenya.

That event will be a gathering that will feature ministers, mayors and leaders of local authorities, representatives of civil society, the private sector, academia, national, regional, and international financial institutions, development partners, and other stakeholders.

My Administration will extend to the County Government of Kisumu every support to showcase Kenya and Kisumu to Africa and the rest of the world. In the same breath, allow me to say how proud I am to be addressing you and Kenya from this brand new Jomo Kenyatta International Stadium, Kisumu. I assure you that the remaining works will be completed in the coming weeks. Hongera Waziri Amina Mohamed and Your Team.

Fellow Kenyans,

It is now my distinguished pleasure to wish you all a Happy Madaraka Day. Stay Safe.

God Bless You All, God Bless the Republic of Kenya.