

SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT, HON. DANIEL T. ARAP MOI, C.G.H., M.P., ON THE OCCASION OF KENYATTA DAY, 20th OCTOBER, 1984

MY DEAR KENYANS,

We are assembled here today to observe a special national day, which we have set aside, each year, to remind ourselves of the long and bitter struggle for freedom which culminated in the arrest of our late founding father of the Kenya nation, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, thirty-two years ago. While we pay tribute to those who fought for so long and sacrificed so much for the independence of our country, let us on this occasion also pose and reflect on the vision which inspired the struggle for uhuru.

As Mzee Jomo Kenyatta always reminded us, our freedom was not handed to us on a silver platter. It took determined perseverance and unshakable unity of purpose to win back our freedom and human dignity. We therefore must not forget that the same unity must continue to be the cornerstone in consolidating our nationhood.

The objectives and aspirations of our nation have been stated in the successive development plans, various policy guidelines on specific issues, our ruling party manifestos, and in my own public pronouncements. In a nutshell, our aim has been to translate in practical terms, our independence into tangible opportunities for improving the well-being of our people.

In pursuit of this goal, our country has made much progress but there are still many challenges which we must face and overcome.

On this occasion, I consider it appropriate to briefly speak on some of the achievements which we can rightfully be proud of when we look back over the past twenty years. Indeed, it is with pride to note that the co-operative movement which was hardly known

at independence, today contributes fifty-seven per cent of our gross national product. Most of the activities of co-operatives are geared towards the improvement of the welfare of small-scale farmers and the rural community, which was for seventy years neglected by colonialism. While we can express satisfaction with the progress that has been made in this area, we must also appreciate that there is now room for co-operatives to expand their investments and cover agro-industries, particularly small-scale food and vegetable processing.

Our energy sector has also achieved tremendous progress despite many set-backs resulting from international developments, about which we have little control. I would like at this point, to mention some of the steps we are taking to reduce our dependence on external sources of energy. We have intensified efforts to search for on-and off-shore domestic petroleum, especially in the northern, eastern and north-eastern parts of the country. In addition, we shall soon undertake a study into all the relevant parameters for the introduction of coal into our system. The expansion of hydro-power and geothermal generation of electricity will be continued. The rural electrification programme will receive greater emphasis with more funds being allocated during the next five years. Electricity is now being regarded as an essential service in the rural areas along with clean water, access roads, housing, efficient telecommunications and other social needs.

Our transport and communications sector has also registered tremendous growth during the period. At independence we had 41,000 kilometres of classified roads of which only 1,800 kilometres were bitumenized. Today, we have 54,000 kilometres of classified roads, which includes 6,770 kilometres of bitumenized roads spread throughout our Republic. During the coming years, emphasis will be placed on the selective strengthening and upgrading of the heavily used major highways, the construction of bridges and culverts and gravelling our major and minor roads. We shall continue improving our rural access roads to facilitate efficient movement of farm produce from all rural areas to market centres.

You will recall that on the Madaraka Day this year, I reminded you all of the need to share the cost of services with the Government. This is the only way we can hope to expand these services to benefit more wananchi. One example of this cost sharing is the trunk roads toll system which we introduced recently. We all accept that in order to maintain our roads in a usable condition we must regularly regravell, patch up and reseal worn-out sections. Regular maintenance of our roads means that we have to spend some six hundred million shillings annually. Through the introduction of road tolls we expect road users to contribute ten million shillings which is only two per cent of what it costs the nation to keep our roads in good repair.

Turning now to education, I wish to express my gratitude to wananchi who have responded to my Government's call to construct additional physical facilities for the 8-4-4 system in primary schools. There are, however, a few districts which have lagged behind, and I wish in this regard, to remind leaders of those areas to ensure that all primary schools in their areas have the necessary facilities constructed before the end of 1984. The new syllabus for the programme is ready, and teachers as well as primary schools inspectors have already undertaken the required in-service courses. Some eleven thousand, five hundred and forty teachers are being recruited in readiness for the additional standard eight classes, and these will be posted to their respective schools by December, this year. We already have nearly one hundred and twenty-three thousand primary school teachers in the country. Thirty-one per cent of them are untrained. In order to improve this situation and to enable us satisfy the increasing demand for these teachers, a three-year in-service course will be conducted in all the 15 primary teacher training colleges in addition to the regular two-year course.

On health, we have, for a long time recognized that it is vital for our people to have the highest attainable standard of health which will promote their creativity, productivity and self-confidence. In our determination to achieve this goal, emphasis will continue to be placed on educating wananchi on how to adopt life styles which discourage the spread of diseases and which promote good health.

Through effective and efficient implementation of health strategies, we have for example, managed to increase the life expectancy of Kenyan males from 40 years at independence to 53 years, and that of females to 56 years. Although this is below the rate existing in developed countries, it is nevertheless an encouraging achievement.

Another area that has been of concern, is the provision of water for every Kenyan. This is an area where we shall continue to invest more of our resources in order to achieve our objective of supplying every Kenyan home with good water. Already, we have achieved some commendable results in sending water supplies closer towards our rural homes. For most areas the average distance our people have to travel to get water has been reduced by one-half. Today, there is no area in the country that has populated centres which are more than 1.8 kilometres away from a water point in the dry season. Ten years ago people in such centres had to travel an average of 3.5 kilometres. Reduction of the distance to water points is our current target, particularly in the drier areas of our country.

I have highlighted these developments in a few of our sectors to indicate our achievements over the past twenty years. In essence, my message is that the remarkable transformation we have experienced in these and other sectors was not brought about by some kind of magic. It is a direct result of our national unity, hard work and unwavering commitment to our objectives.

In more general terms, you are all aware that unfavourable economic conditions have reduced the growth of most economies in the world. Kenya is no exception in this regard. We have experienced a substantial reduction in our economic growth. Although the austerity measures we introduced to reactivate our economy succeeded in reducing the severity of this undesirable situation, we still expect little growth of our economy during 1984/85.

I wish, however, to assure Kenyans that, all possible steps will be taken to ensure that projects in drought-stricken areas will be implemented. On the other hand, we may have to postpone other

less labour-intensive projects which also have a large local funding in order to complete on-going projects, especially those which we have to implement in co-operation with our friends from outside.

Immediately after our independence, we decided to develop a nation where people of different cultural backgrounds could live harmoniously and peacefully, bound together by a common bond of the love for our motherland. We developed a democratic system of Government which we are now all proud of. We embarked on our own unique system of harambee which we cherish and which has won world-wide acclaim. And through our national philosophy of love, peace and unity we shall continue to overcome the problems which are part and parcel of the development process.

Since you gave me the heavy responsibility of guiding this nation six years ago, I have worked tirelessly to ensure that Kenyans enjoy better lives. What I wish to tell you today, as a reminder, is that independence means a resolve on our part to be in command of our destiny. In our efforts to improve the living conditions of our people, we must understand and accept that it is only through dedication and hard work that these objectives can be achieved.

And as I have said on several occasions before, our ruling party Kanu has a vital role to play in providing our national ship with the necessary guidance. This sense of direction is easily blurred when a few people decide to stray from the mainstream, with the intention to confuse Kenyans for their own selfish motives. Kanu leadership, at all levels, must be constituted of individuals who have the interest of our nation at heart. Kenyans have no room for idle people, and we certainly shall not entertain anyone, whether within or outside our borders, who refuses to join us in defending what we fought so hard to achieve.

It is for this reason that I have been engaged in the pursuit of peace with all our neighbours and economic co-operation with all the nations of the world. Since last Kenyatta Day, I have travelled to our neighbouring states of Tanzania, Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia, in search for peace and stability for our region. The leaders of those countries, including Uganda, have also visited

Kenya. In my discussions with them, we have spared no effort to resolve any outstanding issues which may have arisen among us. I wish therefore, to assure our neighbours and all friendly countries in the world, that we in Kenya, are ready, as we have always been, to work with all other countries for the mutual benefit of our people. We recognize that peace is a pre-requisite for economic development for any nation.

I also wish to specifically refer to the continuing improved relations between us and Somalia. Kenyans are aware that, through brotherly discussions, some of the people of Kenya who had fled to Somalia have now returned home, and the shifta menace which has plagued our country since independence is no longer a major pre-occupation. We can now look forward to developing this part of our country. Wananchi in North-Eastern Province must now devote all their energy towards economic development so that this region can advance along with the rest of Kenya. In this connection, I have instructed my ministers to work hard for the welfare of people in this part of our country.

While we celebrate the success of our freedom struggle today, our happiness and joy is not complete so long as there is perpetuation of suffering and human injustice against our brothers and sisters in Namibia and South Africa. We have, here in Kenya, always believed that it is the moral duty of all humanity to defend and sustain human dignity, which is the basis for evolution and destiny of all just societies. This is the reason for our unflinching support of all the freedom fighters in that unhappy region of our continent. Indeed, history has confirmed that all oppressive systems, are doomed to fail by their very nature. We are therefore, confident that the determination of the freedom fighters in Namibia and inside South Africa, which has the support of all peace-loving people of the world, will soon force the promoters of this despicable system to give it up.

In conclusion, every Kenyan knows that, thirty-two years ago, we sought to achieve unity, co-operation and peaceful co-existence so that we can develop. This is the same spirit that we must hold

high today in order to achieve our ultimate goals. There cannot be a better way to remember our heroes than to apply all our energy and make full and wise use of all our resources so that we are well fed, well educated, well sheltered and in good health.

HARAMBEE! NYAYO!

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
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