

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT,  
HON. DANIEL T. ARAP MOI, C.G.H., M.P., ON THE  
OCCASION OF KENYATTA DAY ON SUNDAY,  
20TH OCTOBER, 1996**

FELLOW COUNTRYMEN,  
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I am delighted to be with you today to celebrate this year's Kenyatta Day. As we assemble in various venues to observe this historic day I send my greetings to all Kenyans. I take this opportunity also, and on your behalf to thank our friends who have sent us greetings and messages of goodwill.

We celebrate this day in honour of our fallen heroes and the pioneers of this nation. But first and foremost it is fitting that we pay tribute to the founding father of the nation, the late Mzee Jomo Kenyatta. It was through his personal sacrifice that we are able to live today as a free and proud people in a democratic sovereign state.

As an honour to those departed heroes we should demonstrate our respect for them by strengthening the spirit of nationalism and patriotism by promoting peace and unity. Our noble duty is to utilize our energies towards the attainment of prosperity and higher standards of living for our people. The Kenyans who sacrificed their lives to obtain our freedom from colonial bondage did not allow their individual interests to derail their collective purpose. We have no reason today to depart from that resolve.

On a day like this, it is most fitting for us to reflect on the successes we have made. Looking back over the last two years, we see that we have made significant steps forward in all areas. Last year our economy recorded a commendable level of growth of 5 per cent compared to 3 per cent in 1994. In addition, the fiscal and monetary policies implemented by my Government

have been effective in controlling inflation and maintaining stability of the exchange rates. The average annual inflation rate has been brought down to 7 per cent by August, 1996. Our overall fiscal deficit has declined from 11.4 per cent of Gross Domestic Product in 1992/93 to 1.4 per cent in 1995/96. These are all positive economic indicators.

This progress can, however, be quickly reversed if we allow a few individuals to destabilize the country. Of late we have witnessed a few incidents of irresponsible behaviour in our country. It is clear that there are some criminal minded people who imagine that they can rob banks and take other people's property by force and get away with it. Let me assure you that the Government has the necessary laws, the means to enforce them and certainly the determination to deal with criminals firmly and without mercy.

Fellow Kenyans,

The challenges which lie ahead are enormous and require hard work and total commitment of all Kenyans. One of the challenges is the economic hardships that have been brought about by the liberalization process. In an effort to cushion the poor from the adverse effects of the Structural Adjustment Programmes, the Government has initiated appropriate programmes for vulnerable groups.

As a follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen, Denmark, in May, 1995, a national poverty eradication action plan is being formulated. This will be our long-term response in tackling the problem of poverty which in the short-term is being addressed through the Social Dimensions of Development Programme.

In my address to the nation on Moi Day last week, I did talk about the need for us to assist the youth find gainful employment opportunities. The importance that the Government attaches to the National Youth Development Programme is clear. This is a public funded national youth development initiative that is designed to provide financial support to businesses and economic

activities which are owned and managed by the youth in Kenya. It embraces a collective responsibility and a joint effort between the Government, development partners, businessmen, local communities, individuals and the youth themselves.

The broad objective of the programme is to promote the setting up of small business enterprises by the youth, as a response to the growing youth unemployment as well as a measure of poverty alleviation. The programme aims to achieve this by providing soft loans to the youth who should organize themselves in groups so as to have the capabilities to undertake viable economic activities.

My office will be responsible for the overall co-ordination and implementation of the programme. The District Development Committees will be responsible for the final approval of the projects before funding commences, while other Government agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations and private sector institutions will provide technical assistance as appropriate. A brochure specifying the procedures of benefitting from the fund has been finalized and will be made available to the public.

Fellow Countrymen,

As we strive to tackle the challenges facing our country, it is important that we take into account what is happening around us, since no country can live in isolation.

Our policy of good neighbourliness, and peaceful coexistence will continue to guide our relations with neighbours. However, the unstable political climate that is prevailing in our sub-region has continued to slow down our efforts to create a more comprehensive regional co-operation, as well as an ideal climate for economic advancement. With regard to the situation in Burundi, for instance, the coup which toppled the legitimate authority in that country has pushed the peace process backwards. It is for this reason that the international community, speaking with one voice, has fully endorsed the sanctions imposed by the regional leaders. It is my sincere hope that the

conditions we laid down towards the restoration of the constitutional order will be met without delay in order to avoid further suffering of the people of Burundi. In our meeting in Arusha, Tanzania last week we made this point very clear.

On the Sudan, we hope the stalled IGAD peace talks will soon be on track again so that the people of Sudan can find lasting peace. Soon we shall be launching the revitalized IGAD with a broader mandate. Our region which is characterized by mixed fortunes at the moment has the potential for faster development. Kenyans will play their part to ensure that our sub-region grows and prospers in an atmosphere of peace.

In conclusion, let me stress the need for us to preserve peace and unity. Peace and security are essential for the economic development of any country. Kenyans must therefore avoid activities that are likely to disrupt peace. We should reject those who, in pursuit of their selfish personal interests, whip up ethnic sentiments to divide our people along tribal lines. No house can stand when it is divided. As Kenyans, we are one people, we belong to one nation and we have one destiny. We therefore cannot afford to allow anyone from within or from outside our borders to undermine our unity.

We have inherited a beautiful country. We have done so much during the past thirty-three years to develop what was passed down to us by our forefathers. Our duty is to hand over, to the future generations, a peaceful, united and prosperous country. For to do less is to betray the noble ideals our freedom fighters fought so gallantly to achieve.

*THANK YOU.*