

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT,
HON. DANIEL T. ARAP MOI, C.G.H., M.P., ON THE
OCCASION OF KENYATTA DAY, ON TUESDAY,
20TH OCTOBER, 1998**

**FELLOW KENYANS,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

Today, we commemorate the thirty-sixth anniversary of Kenyatta Day. We pay tribute to all the men and women who laid down their lives during the struggle for freedom so that we may be free. On this historical day, I send my greetings to all Kenyans wherever they may be. I also thank all our friends and well-wishers throughout the world, for sending us messages of goodwill and support.

The sacrifices that the heroes of the freedom struggle made are a constant reminder to us all of the enormous price that was paid for our freedom. But their contribution would be beneficial to us and to Kenya as a whole, if they inspired us to be patriotic and above all, to serve this nation with honesty and dedication. As we pay tribute to our heroes we can also learn vital lessons about our role and conduct as citizens of this country.

Those who fought for our independence recognized the need to sacrifice personal ambitions and comforts and to dedicate all their energies towards the course of freedom. Their loyalty and singleness of purpose enabled them to face many challenges and overcome them with courage. But the struggle that led to the founding of our nation was not an end in itself. It was the beginning of a continuous effort to build a strong and prosperous nation in which the ideals of equality, justice and freedom can flourish.

You will recall, fellow Kenyans, that the late Mzee Jomo Kenyatta reminded us time and again that political independence was not handed to us, rather we fought for it. We did so, because

of our strong conviction in the ideals of freedom and justice. We also recognized that this is our country and therefore, its destiny rests in our own hands. But managing our own affairs calls for self-discipline and commitment on the part of all Kenyans to build our nation. It calls for all of us to set aside the pursuit of narrow, selfish interests for the common good of our country.

It is therefore, necessary for all of us to avoid self serving attitudes and dedicate ourselves to the noble goal of building our nation. Before we can talk of sharing the national cake we must first of all work hard to produce enough. Indeed, it is a time for all of us to work hard in building our country. For in the end, the economic benefits that we can draw must depend on the productive effort that we all put in.

Fellow Kenyans,

You will recall that during my Madaraka Day address to the nation, I indicated that our country has continued to face severe economic difficulties. We are thankful that despite these adverse circumstances, our economy has remained strong. The long rains have been good throughout the country and we expect a good harvest. Our export commodities are also doing well on the international market. Clearly, this is not the time to panic. However, we cannot afford to be complacent. The current state of the world economy is highly unpredictable. We must continue to strengthen measures to cushion our economy from any adverse situations that may arise in the future.

My Government has continued to implement measures to stimulate the economic growth of our country. At a meeting of leaders and economic experts which I convened on 6th May this year, to discuss ways of improving the state of our economy, a number of measures were considered necessary to bring the economy on the path of sustainable growth. Some of the measures require great sacrifices on the part of all of us. But, as I indicated during my Moi Day address to the nation, we must continue to exercise patience so that the full benefits of these measures can be realized.

For its part, my Government will continue to strengthen the fiscal control measures already in place in order to ensure that Government revenue is strictly controlled. Accordingly, I expect those responsible to ensure that public funds are used only for the purposes for which they have been budgeted. In this regard, accounting officers should identify and seal all areas of waste in order to avoid misuse of public funds. Government revenue must be used wisely for the greatest benefit to all.

One area that is continuing to cause great concern to my Government is revenue collection. There is no doubt that inadequate revenue is the source of many of our problems. There is a need to enhance efficiency of our revenue collection procedures in order to ensure that all revenue due to the Government is collected.

Although there has been an improvement in revenue performance for the fiscal year 1997/98, there are still disturbing cases of corruption which lead to the loss of Government revenue. The Ministry of Finance and the Kenya Revenue Authority should continue to seal loopholes in our tax system. For its part, my Government will continue to deal firmly with unpatriotic businessmen who dump untaxed transit goods in our country.

As I have said before, the development of this country is a responsibility which we undertook at the time of our independence. However, to carry out this responsibility in a meaningful manner, we must rely more on our own resources. This is the path that the newly industrializing countries have taken. It is the path we must choose if we are to maintain our dignity as a nation. We must therefore, strive to generate our own resources and use them productively to strengthen our economic growth.

Fellow Kenyans,

The development of this country requires concerted efforts of all Kenyans. The Government may produce sound development plans. However, in the end, it is the sum total of all our actions that will determine whether the development strategies we have put in place will produce positive results. Indeed, whereas it

requires great effort to realize even a minimum of positive economic results, experiences from other countries in the region and elsewhere, show that it takes only a few people to disrupt achievements built up over many years.

We can only achieve our development goals, if we remain united. As I have said many times before, leaders come and go, but Kenya remains. Our duty as leaders and indeed, as Kenyans, is to respect the future of this country and do everything within our power to leave this country a better place than we found it. Indeed, leaders have a moral obligation to conduct themselves in a dignified manner and avoid the temptation to divide wananchi along tribal lines.

Many lives of our people on this continent continue to be lost while many more are facing hunger and starvation as a result of tribal conflicts. Here in Kenya, we should be thankful for the peace we have enjoyed for the last thirty-five years which has enabled us to record significant progress in all areas. In unity, we are better placed to face the challenges that lie ahead. In the words of our National Anthem, we should all strive to live in unity, peace and liberty so that plenty may be found within our borders.

To conclude my remarks this afternoon, fellow Kenyans, I wish to remind you that the destiny of this nation is in our hands. We are the ones who will determine whether today's children and youths will enjoy a brighter future. It is this generation which must determine whether this country will enter the new millennium as a proud nation on the path to greater prosperity. But whether that future will be better, will depend on the actions we take now.

Therefore, as we celebrate this historical day let us all be inspired by the singleness of purpose and sacrifices of those who fought for our independence. Let us all join together and strive to make this country a better place to live in.

THANK YOU AND MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL.