

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT,
HON. DANIEL T. ARAP MOI, C.G.H., M.P.,
ON THE OCCASION OF MOI DAY
ON SATURDAY, 10TH OCTOBER, 1998**

MY FELLOW KENYANS,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

We are gathered here today, to celebrate Moi Day. We have every reason to celebrate this day with thanksgiving to God for his kindness and mercy towards us, and for holding our nation together through difficult times. We also have reason to thank our friends and well-wishers for their support and messages of goodwill.

It has been my utmost desire that this day be set aside for showing mercy and compassion to those amongst us who are less fortunate than we are. I am glad to note that during the past one week, many Kenyans have demonstrated this spirit by extending various forms of support and assistance to the sick and needy. Let me also add that, the doing of good to others should not be reserved for Moi Day alone. Rather, this day should motivate us on the need to do good to one another at all times.

During the past twenty years that I have served this country as your president, I am grateful that I have received your support which has enabled us to achieve progress in many areas. As a result of expansion in our education system, all young people who are eligible to join primary schools are able to do so. Our health care system has also been expanded substantially to enable Kenyans to be served better. As a result, Kenyans are able to enjoy healthier and longer lives today.

We have also put in place various economic and social reforms. On the political front, for instance, we adopted a multi-party democratic system which we must all nurture to full maturity. But there are many challenges that we must still overcome on our path to development and prosperity.

As an important part of this reform process, we have embarked on the vital exercise of reforming our constitution. This is a vital exercise since it touches on the foundation of our nationhood. Indeed, the constitution has served us well since our independence, and unless and until we are all agreed on the aspects we wish to change, it must remain as the guiding force behind our nationhood.

The constitutional review process that we are undertaking now should remind all of us of the need to respect our laws. The law does not give freedom to anyone to destroy other people's property. We have a judicial system where people can seek redress. In this connection, I urge aggrieved parties to seek redress through these recognized channels. At the same time, I expect the police and the law courts to hasten the administration of justice in this country in order to minimize the need for people to take the law into their own hands.

Fellow Countrymen,

When you renewed my mandate to lead this country for a further period of five years, I pledged to dedicate myself towards leaving behind a legacy of a united and prosperous nation. This is a legacy that each and every Kenyan will be glad to see. It is a legacy that every patriotic Kenyan would like to identify with and contribute towards its achievement. Indeed, this is a legacy that the present generation of Kenyans would be proud to leave behind for future generations.

The culture of hate and personal vendetta that is based on the pursuit of narrow and selfish ambitions will not assist us achieve this objective. Indeed, it can only succeed in creating disunity and drawing us all further away from this noble objective. We can avoid unnecessary and unproductive ethnic misunderstandings. We can avoid the culture of mob justice which has often led to the loss of innocent lives. But above all, Kenyans must know that we are the final custodians of our own peace and security. Those who commit crimes in this country are our own brothers, sisters and children. We live with them and possibly, even go to churches and mosques with them. Accordingly, those of us who conspire to

cover up criminal activity, have no moral justification to blame others for the increase in crime in our society.

As I have said before, it is my desire also, to leave behind a legacy of a morally upright society, where each Kenyan can live in peace and go about their daily activities without fear or harassment. But this is not a duty for me or for the Government alone. It is the duty of all Kenyans. Indeed, leaders, preachers, imams, elders and heads of families all have a duty to cultivate a culture of responsible citizenship. In this way, we can all move forward in building a nation that we can be truly proud of.

Fellow Kenyans,

You are aware that our country has been facing severe economic difficulties. But, Kenya is not alone in this predicament. Many countries in the world, including the developed countries, are experiencing economic decline. Kenyans may wish to know that in some countries today, governments are having to pay their public servants through unconventional means. Workers in these countries are paid in the form of locally produced commodities which they would then have to exchange to obtain the things they need. In yet other countries, public servants do not receive their salaries on a regular basis. Indeed, some may not have been paid for the last seven months. Further, in some countries, on our continent, public servants have had to be paid through assistance from outside.

Thankfully, our economy has withstood the many crises we have encountered during the last seven years. However, we face a great deal of danger if we do not concentrate more of our energies towards economic and productive activities. I therefore call on all Kenyans, irrespective of their political persuasion, to shun destructive rhetoric and instead focus their attention on finding ways and means for strengthening our economy.

In particular, I would like to urge Kenyan workers to refrain from the practice of resorting to work boycotts as a means of resolving disputes with their employers. This practice, which appears to be taking root in our society, is both wasteful and

undesirable. Kenya can least afford work stoppages which undermine our efforts to increase national production.

You will recall, that on 6th May, this year, I convened a meeting of economic experts and local leaders to chart out a common stand in addressing the economic issues affecting our country. The recommendations of this meeting have since been included in the Budget proposals presented before Parliament in June this year, and their implementation is in progress.

I am glad to report to you, fellow Kenyans, that implementation of these measures has started to bear positive results. Indeed, at a meeting I convened on 11th of September, 1998, to review progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the economic consultative meeting, we noted a number of successes that have already been achieved. These include, a marginal reduction of the budget deficit, reduction of the stock of domestic debt by close to fifteen billion shillings and also a progressive decline of interest rates.

As I have said before, the development of this country is not the responsibility of the Government alone. All Kenyans have a duty to strive for the greater prosperity of our country. Indeed, everyone has a role to play in increasing productivity and ensuring the economic growth of our nation.

As we celebrate this day, I therefore urge you all fellow Kenyans, to reflect on the nation-building challenges that lie ahead. Let us all dedicate ourselves to building our nation as we uphold the virtues of peace, love and unity.

THANK YOU AND MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL.