

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT,
HON. DANIEL T. ARAP MOI, C.G.H., M.P.,
ON THE OCCASION OF JAMHURI DAY,
TUESDAY, 12TH DECEMBER, 1995**

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

Today, we have gathered here to celebrate Jamhuri Day. This is the time we remember the day when we attained our independence and sovereignty. Since that great day—the twelfth of December, 1963—we have been free to formulate and manage our affairs and work towards better living conditions for our people. We therefore celebrate this day with pride and confidence. We also celebrate this day with profound gratitude to Almighty God for the strength he gave us to win our freedom and subsequently sustain our nation.

Let me also take this opportunity to send warm greetings and best wishes to all Kenyans wherever they may be. I thank all our friends, here and abroad, who have sent us messages of goodwill and congratulations. We, also, pay tribute to the sons and daughters of this land who, through their patriotism and sacrifice, made our freedom a reality. Their vision, over three decades ago, was for us to remain a stable, united and prosperous nation—despite the diversity of our cultures. We must never fail them.

In the last 32 years, we have been able to make considerable progress in our efforts to eradicate poverty, disease and ignorance—the goals which we had set ourselves to achieve after independence. The Government remains committed to these goals and has continued to formulate and implement policies geared towards the achievement of those goals.

Indeed the success of our efforts is shown in the growth of our gross domestic product this year which is projected at five per cent. In 1994 it was three per cent—which in itself was a major improvement over 1993 when our economic growth was virtually static.

You will, I am sure, remember those days two years ago when the shilling was in free fall and we were told by people who should know better, that our economy was collapsing. You will remember, too, that inflation was running at one hundred per cent and you wondered how you could afford to provide for the essentials of life.

They were indeed worrying times—but we had the strength and determination to carry on with the policies of liberalizing our economy and plan for long-term growth. Above all, God held us together as a nation and sustained our economy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, inflation has declined rapidly to the point where it has reached a single digit figure. This declining trend is expected to continue into 1996 given the availability of ample supplies of food as a result of the good rains this year.

There are other good indicators of Kenya's growing economic strength. Our overall balance of payments position continues to remain strong. Provisional figures indicate that the economy is likely to register an overall balance of payments surplus this year for the second year in a row. The growth of exports this year has so far outstripped the surge in imports of consumer goods brought about by trade liberalization and a much stronger shilling at the beginning of this year. This trend is also expected to continue into 1996 especially with the anticipated repeal of the Foreign Exchange Control Act.

But, as we know, we cannot sit back and just enjoy the fruits of our efforts. In some ways we have to run just to keep up! Kenya's

rapid population growth rate puts pressure on us to increase agricultural production both for the provision of food—and also to increase employment. In order for us to create jobs for the 500,000 job seekers entering the labour market each year, our gross domestic product has to grow annually by a minimum of seven per cent. So, five per cent is simply not adequate.

We must do more. We must be ambitious. We must aim high. One thing is certain, seven per cent annual growth for our economy is possible once all the economic reforms now underway are implemented.

My Fellow Kenyans,

It is not enough that we, as Kenyans, should be confident in our economic strength. Our friends overseas have to be confident too—so that they can invest in our country and help us create the jobs that we need for our people. As I have said before, the private sector is the engine of growth. This is why, over the last few months, I have led delegations to Great Britain, Singapore and Malaysia—to interest business people from these countries to come to Kenya and see for themselves the opportunities that exist for profitable business. Singapore and Malaysia are the “Tiger” economies of the Far East. We must create a “Tiger” economy in Kenya. There is no reason why. We are the centre of a growing eastern Africa market. We have the potential.

If anyone doubts that there is confidence in Kenya overseas—then look at the example of Kenya Airways. Here a loss making parastatal has been turned into a profitable enterprise—and now twenty-six per cent of the airline has, in principle, been sold to KLM, the Dutch national carrier as part of the privatization process. This is a great achievement. It is the first major investment in our parastatal reform programme by a substantial overseas investor. Next year Kenyans, too, will have the opportunity of investing in this profitable airline.

Last week I was in Germany addressing a conference of potential investors. I was pleased and indeed gratified by the interest shown in Kenya—and by the support we received from the federation of German industries. We also had most constructive meetings with high-level German government officials and with the President of the Federal Republic. I am convinced that good business for Kenya will come from this warm and friendly visit.

There are, of course, constraints to growth and confidence. The first is critical to future investment. Our infrastructure must therefore be improved and properly maintained. Major programmes are planned for implementation in the energy sector. These will include new power generating facilities. Similarly, other improvements are underway—such as the port infrastructure at Mombasa, road maintenance, urban and rural water system and enhanced telecommunication services.

The second constraint is the wastage, in all forms, of resources. It is for this reason that I am directing those responsible for the management of public finance to adhere strictly to the instructions issued by the Treasury concerning financial management and expenditure controls. Government officers, at whatever level, who fail to observe the laid down financial regulations will be held personally responsible and the Government will take appropriate disciplinary action against such officers—including the levying of surcharge.

The third constraint to confidence is inaccurate and often hostile reporting of events in this country by the international news media. This sometimes seems designed deliberately to damage us by hitting at industries such as tourism, which rely on positive publicity and positive image of Kenya. They hit at investor confidence as well. As I have said before, we are pleased to host foreign correspondents in Kenya. Indeed, we have the largest Foreign Press Corps in Africa. They enjoy living here, just because we are a peaceful country.

Let them repay our hospitality by writing constructively about Kenya. We, in turn, will honour our obligations to them and respect their integrity. In this regard I deplore any violence to journalists—Kenyan or foreign—who go about their lawful professional business. Violence solves nothing—as we have seen all too recently elsewhere.

My Fellow Kenyans,

I am aware that the war against poverty and unemployment is far from over. We still have a long way to go. We know that structural adjustment has left its mark on the poor and disadvantaged in our society which is why we have concentrated on the delivery of social dimensions of development programmes.

I am aware, too, that we have been faced with an acute shortage of medicine in Government hospitals largely as a result of misappropriation by unscrupulous people in our health institutions. However, appropriate action is being taken to correct the anomaly.

Another area of great concern to me is that of security to the individuals on this land and their property. In the recent past we have experienced spate of anti-social activities such as highway robbery, drug-trafficking and stealing from people's houses. In some cases this has resulted in injury or death. This is not acceptable, as no person in this Republic has the right to hurt or take another person's life. This Government is determined to discharge its mandate to protect your life and property as is stipulated in the Constitution of Kenya. In this respect, I have directed that the perpetrators of these heinous acts must be stopped. The police are now vigilant and any person found to be contravening the law shall be dealt with firmly and in accordance with the law. On your part, as members of the public, you are expected to assist the police by reporting elements that would want to ferment chaos or disturb the enjoyment of peace by all persons living in Kenya.

Turning now to the international scene, our policy of good neighbourliness remains the cornerstone of our foreign policy. We respect the integrity of sovereign States as well as the sanctity of human life. We condemn those who do not show this respect. We must always strive to ensure that justice is done. This is why we insist that, in Rwanda, the root cause of the genocide must be made known to the world. While welcoming the efforts being made by the United Nations Tribunal on Rwanda, we wish to see it expanding its scope to cover events before the genocide. We hope that the United Nations security council will look into this matter impartially—regardless of ethnic considerations or status.

Elsewhere, we have done our duty to the international community with the sending of our troops to Bosnia and other troubled spots. They have served the United Nations well—and I congratulate them for their courage and fortitude.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank friendly countries, organizations and individuals who have supported us in various ways with our development efforts. Kenyans appreciate your support and encouragement. We also trust that you will continue to give us that co-operation in the task of nation building in the years ahead.

Fellow Kenyans,

I have often said that the destiny of our nation lies in our own hands. We shall always appreciate external assistance but find it confusing when rules are made for Kenya that do not seem to apply to others. We reject the use of aid as an instrument for enforcing the political views of donors on us. This, we believe, sets a dangerous precedent.

We must also accept that global political and economic changes have had a direct effect on our own development programmes. There has been a shift of focus from Africa to the emerging Eastern European countries since the end of the Cold War. The

answer lies in working our way into a position where we will no longer require aid—but the road ahead will be a challenging one. Nonetheless, we accept the challenge.

Fellow Kenyans,

As I said before our economy is on an upward course. Economic strength is the platform for our future security and stability. Let us not jeopardize this potential by exhausting our energies in endless, futile political infighting. Unity has been the source of our strength since our founding fathers liberated this country from the yoke of colonialism. Let us rise above party politics, tribalism and self-interest and follow this example. Criticism for the sake of criticism will lead us nowhere instead it becomes a poison which eats into the heart of our unity. We must not swallow the poison. Rather let us dedicate ourselves to unity—and work together to build a strong, vibrant and dynamic Kenya.

Together we can—we will succeed.

THANK YOU.