

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT,  
HON. DANIEL T. ARAP MOI, C.G.H., M.P.,  
ON THE OCCASION OF MOI DAY,  
FRIDAY, 10TH OCTOBER, 1997**

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

I am glad to be with you today as we celebrate Moi Day. At the outset, I send my greetings to all Kenyans both here and abroad. I also wish to extend our profound thanks to all our friends for the greetings and messages of goodwill we have received.

Moi Day is an occasion for reflection and thanksgiving to God. We reflect on the challenges of nation-building and also give thanks for the peace and progress that this country has continued to enjoy. It is with this in mind that I have in the past called on Kenyans to set aside time in the service of the less fortunate members of our society, in particular, the sick, the orphaned and the disabled.

Indeed, I am glad that the spirit of giving and of being mindful of each other's welfare, continues to motivate Kenyans to give their time and energies in the service of society. During the past one week, many Kenyans and especially the youth, have taken part in cleaning and social activities for the benefit of society. I commend them for displaying such a selfless spirit and I urge them to continue doing so in the future.

The spirit of giving is highly cherished in our society since it has its foundation in our African values and customs. Kenyans recognize that in any community, there are those who are more endowed than others. However, such people are expected to provide moral and material support to their less fortunate brothers to enable them to lead an honest and productive life. In this respect, Kenyans have developed the harambee spirit of

pooling our resources together in support of the less fortunate members of society. This has enabled children from poor families to continue with their education, it has provided financial support for those requiring specialized treatment and above all, it has enabled our people to initiate various development projects especially in the rural areas.

This year, Kenyans joined hands together to raise funds for a section of our community who contribute much to the development of this country, but who for cultural and historical reasons have little access to and control of development resources. The Women's Development Fund Harambee is an effort by Kenyans to lend support to the development aspirations of their women-folk. Its establishment is an indication of the Government's commitment and that of Kenyans to address the special needs of women. I thank Kenyans and all well wishers for rising to this challenge and contributing whole heartedly towards the fund. I call upon women throughout the country to make use of this facility by setting up productive enterprises that will bring good returns.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Another area of great concern to my Government is the development of our youth. The youth are an important resource in the development of a nation. They have considerable energy and immense potential which can be harnessed and used in nation building.

My Government is aware of the immense challenges facing the youth today and has put in place measures to ensure full participation of the youth in the development of this country. In this regard, my Government has established the National Youth Development Fund in order to promote employment by financing self-help projects by the youth. The Government also continues to support the implementation of labour intensive projects in order to generate more employment opportunities for the youth. The creation of employment opportunities is closely linked with the growth of our economy. We have made tremendous progress in various fields of social and economic development. We have

done much as a country to improve the health of our people. However, these successes have brought new challenges. The rate of increase of our population is high and far outstrips the rate of growth of the economy. I am glad that in general, Kenyans have responded well to the need to plan families. These efforts have begun to bear fruit and the rate of population growth has now reduced from 3.9 per cent to 3.4 per cent, and is projected to reduce further to 2.5 per cent by the turn of the century.

In spite of these successes, the momentum in population growth that was created over the past will continue to be reflected in the coming years. For this reason, the demand for services will continue to put great strain on our economy. It will therefore take a substantial amount of resources for Kenya to deal effectively with the problem of poverty.

While we take measures to remove this problem from our midst, we must also realize that poverty is not unique to this country. It affects most countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and indeed it has not been completely eliminated even from the wealthiest nations in the world. My Government is, however, committed to the systematic reduction and eventual elimination of poverty. Over the years, a number of programmes have been initiated by my Government with a view to addressing this problem. The latest in this regard is the Social Dimensions on Development Programme which was initiated in order to shield vulnerable members of Kenyan society from the adverse effects of Structural Adjustment Programmes.

I am glad that the new Labour Government in the United Kingdom puts more emphasis on the elimination of poverty. This tallies with our own objectives and our two Governments will work closely together on this important subject and we will discuss the issue as equals rather than basing the discussions on conditionalities.

My Fellow Kenyans,

Kenya is today moving forward towards a new political and economic order. However, as we seek to make changes in our

governing institutions let us do so with a sober mind. We must bear in mind that finding a suitable consensus on what is necessary and workable for the millions of Kenyans, requires careful consideration. There must also be willingness on the part of everyone concerned to sacrifice individual interests for the sake of national interest; for whereas personal interests are only for an individual's lifetime, national interest is for the benefit of many generations.

I am therefore encouraged by the action of all those Members of Parliament who set aside personal and party differences to participate in the talks on reforms. This spirit has given renewed hope to millions of Kenyans. It is my expectation that the ongoing consultation and dialogue will be pursued in the coming days and months to ensure that the foundation of peace and stability, which is the envy of many in today's turbulent world, is strengthened for our benefit.

My Fellow Kenyans,

At independence, 34 years ago, Kenyans stood firm against empty talk and divisive politics. As a result, Kenya has recorded commendable progress in various sectors of our economy. The Government has put in place measures that will enable this country to attain high and sustainable levels of economic growth.

However, for this objective to be met, Kenyans must not only work harder, they must also create an environment of peace which will give confidence to investors. I therefore call upon leaders and all peace loving Kenyans to reinforce the existing peaceful atmosphere in the country and to avoid making statements which divide our people along tribal lines.

I thank you all fellow Kenyans, for turning out in such large numbers to celebrate Moi Day. As we give thanks to God for the 34 years of peace and progress we must not lose sight of the challenges that remain ahead of us. We must all strive to maintain peace and unity for faster development.

*THANK YOU AND MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL.*