

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT,
HON. DANIEL T. ARAP MOI, C.G.H., M.P.,
ON THE OCCASION OF KENYATTA DAY,
MONDAY, 20TH OCTOBER, 1997**

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

We are assembled here today, to observe an occasion of great significance in the history of our nation. On this day, forty-five years ago, the founding father of our nation, the late Mzee Jomo Kenyatta and other heroes of our independence struggle were arrested and sentenced to long prison terms. This action by the colonial authorities did not, however, deter the heroes of the freedom struggle from their determination to pursue the cause of justice and freedom.

Rather, their unshakable conviction and singleness of purpose led to Kenya's independence in 1963. On this anniversary of Kenyatta Day, I send my warm greetings to all Kenyans wherever they may be. I also thank all our friends and well-wishers for joining us in these celebrations and for sending us messages of good wishes. Indeed, Kenyatta Day is a reminder to successive generations of Kenyans of the great sacrifices that Kenya's freedom fighters made in order to win independence for our country.

Our gathering here today, is therefore, to pay tribute to those brave sons and daughters of our country who laid down their lives in order to ensure that successive generations of Kenyans gain their freedom and dignity. It is also a reminder to all of us that the freedom we enjoy today was attained through a long and bitter struggle.

The struggle for independence has taught us many things. Today, Kenyans understand better the value of freedom because

we know what it means to lose it; we cherish hard work because it is central to our nation building efforts, and above all, we understand the importance of unity because it is the foundation of our nationhood. As beneficiaries of this hard won independence all Kenyans have a duty and an obligation to work hard to ensure the fulfilment of the vision that inspired the freedom struggle.

We must all bear in mind that the founders of the Kenyan nation did not envision a country that was split along ethnic lines, rather it was their foremost desire to see the establishment of a single and united Kenyan nation in which equality, justice and freedom abound.

During the past thirty-four years, Kenyans have worked tirelessly to build a strong and united nation. We also committed ourselves to combat poverty, disease and ignorance. We have won many battles, indeed, the victories we have scored are evident from the many achievements we have made in education, health, agriculture and in the growth of our economy.

We take pride in these achievements because they go a long way towards the fulfilment of the vision of the founding fathers of the Kenyan nation. One of the objectives of the freedom struggle was to ensure that Africans manage their own affairs. Indeed, the rapid expansion of educational facilities was intended to fulfil this objective. However, in doing so, we have not sought to oppress other races or communities. Rather we have worked in partnership with people of all races and all nations for the development of our country.

The stable policies we have pursued since independence have made it possible for the free enterprise system to flourish. Indeed, the economy continues to maintain a positive momentum in spite of the unfavourable conditions in the global economy. This remarkable performance of the domestic economy is the result of the implementation of prudent fiscal and monetary control policies which have succeeded in restraining the growth in money supply as well as reducing inflation to manageable levels.

My Government will continue to strengthen these measures in order to ensure that micro-economic stability is maintained and the rate of economic growth is improved, in order to reduce poverty and create employment opportunities.

We must all realize, however, that a lasting solution to the problem of poverty and unemployment will be achieved through attainment of rapid and sustainable growth of the economy. The Government has in the last few years taken bold steps to free the economy from administrative controls and open it up to private investment.

The economy has responded positively to these adjustments thus confirming our conviction that we are on the right path. The way is now open for greater private sector participation in the economy. However, Kenyans must realize that economic and political reforms merely create the enabling environment for greater private sector participation. There is a need for all Kenyans, farmers and workers in both the public and private sectors to redouble their efforts so that the growth targets we have set can be achieved.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You will recall that during the Moi Day celebrations, I expressed my concern for the welfare of all public servants, and that after receiving a report from the committee I had appointed to resolve the issue of teachers salaries, my Government awarded an increase in salary for teachers. You will also recall that civil servants and members of the uniformed forces had also been awarded interim salary increases following recommendations submitted by various committees I had appointed in December last year.

In order therefore, to reduce anomalies in salary scales for public servants, I direct the Directorate of Personnel Management in my office in consultation with the Ministry of Finance, to add ten per cent across the board to the interim increases awarded earlier to civil servants, the Police, Administration

Police, National Youth Service and Prisons Service. The increase should be effected in November, 1997.

I must emphasize, however, that increases in salaries must be taken as a token of appreciation for the service rendered by public servants to tax payers and wananchi in general. At the end of the day, it is what we all put into building the national cake that will determine what we get out of it. Kenyans expect from public servants nothing short of hard work and patriotic service to our motherland.

I therefore call on all public servants to show gratitude to their fellow Kenyans by contributing their very best towards the improvement of the welfare of Kenyans. I wish in particular, to remind those who are charged with the responsibility of collecting revenue to redouble their efforts so that all revenue that is due to Government is collected. I also urge those who are always tempted to evade payment of tax to realize that at the end of the day, they have a lot more to gain from a strong economy which is built from our own resources.

Kenyans must also appreciate the value of savings. Foreign investments will only flow into the country if we demonstrate our own capacity for mobilizing domestic savings. In this regard, I call upon Kenyans to avoid impulsive spending and adopt a savings culture. While the Government will continue to improve the welfare of its workers, the additional income should be used to increase the level of individual savings and investments for by doing so you will not only be sparing something for a rainy day, you will also be making an important contribution towards the growth of the economy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At independence, Kenyans adopted the rallying call of “Uhuru na Kazi”. We knew then, that for Africans to reap the real benefits of uhuru, freedom had to be accompanied by hard work. Since then, Kenyans have distinguished themselves as hard working people. We also cherished peace, for we understood that it was only in an atmosphere of peace that people, whatever their

vocation in life, can devote all their time and energies towards productive activities. It is for this reason that the Government places great importance on the maintenance of peace.

Regrettably, some people among us have continued to pursue a confrontational stance, sometimes even inciting youths to violence. These few self-centred Kenyans have even gone to the extent of threatening to unleash violence on Kenyans during the forthcoming elections. I would like such people to know that the Government will not hesitate to take stern action against anyone who dares to interfere with the electoral process in any way.

As I said earlier, Kenya's patriotic sons and daughters paid for our freedom with their own lives. As a result we are free to decide what is good for ourselves through active participation in the democratic process. Indeed, by wilfully and freely electing leaders of their own choice Kenyans determine the course and direction of national events. This is the freedom which Kenya's freedom fighters fought and died for. Therefore, any attempt to deny Kenyans this right, is not only a gross violation of their constitutional right, but also a lack of appreciation for the great sacrifice that Kenyans paid for freedom.

As we commemorate the events that led to our independence, let us not forget that peace and stability continues to elude many on the African continent. This country has in the past devoted a lot of its resources in the pursuit of peace for our neighbours. In many cases, progress has been slow. However, we still remain optimistic that on-going conflicts in the Sudan and the Great Lakes Region in particular, will be resolved through negotiations. The IGAD peace talks are back on track and are set to resume on 28th October, 1997, in Nairobi. It is my hope that parties to the conflict will come with an open mind so that this long drawn conflict will be resolved in a peaceful manner.

Our efforts to resolve the Burundi crisis have so far not been successful. This is also the case with Somalia where peace still remains elusive despite efforts to resolve the conflict there. I trust that through the IGAD peace initiative as well as continued

support of the international community, Somalis will set aside their differences and strive for peace and national reconciliation.

Finally, in concluding my remarks today, I urge all leaders to foster peace and unity in their actions as well as their utterances. As I said during my Moi Day address to the nation last week, leaders should focus more on the national interest, for this will benefit Kenyans now and in the future. I therefore urge all leaders to maintain high standards of discipline in all their conduct and to uphold the guiding norms of peace and unity so that our country may continue to enjoy greater prosperity.

THANK YOU.

