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# Speech

by

His Excellency

**Hon. Daniel T. arap Moi, C.G.H., M.P.**

President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces  
of the Republic of Kenya

on the occasion of

**The State Opening of the Third Session  
of the Seventh Parliament**

on

Tuesday, 22nd March, 1994

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT, HON.  
DANIEL T. ARAP MOI, C.G.H., M.P., ON THE OCCASION  
OF THE STATE OPENING OF THIRD SESSION OF THE  
SEVENTH PARLIAMENT ON TUESDAY,  
22ND MARCH, 1994**

**MR. SPEAKER,**

My first and pleasant duty this afternoon is to welcome all Honourable Members to the third session of the Seventh Parliament. I believe you had a well deserved break which enabled each one of you to interact with wananchi.

**Mr. Speaker,**

Unfortunately, during the recess, this August House lost two of its leading members; the leader of the opposition and chairman of Ford-Kenya, the late Honourable Oginga Odinga, and the late Honourable Dr. Josephat Karanja, who was Ford-Asili member of Parliament for Githunguri Constituency. In their memory, let us all stand up and observe a minute's silence.

Thank you.

In my opening remarks during the second session of the Seventh Parliament, I appealed to Honourable Members to regard themselves first and foremost as guardians of the welfare of Kenyans irrespective of their political affiliations. I am grateful, Mr. Speaker, to note that most members took my advice seriously. By and large, you conducted yourselves honourably. But, of course, there were moments when Kenyans were concerned about the conduct of some Honourable Members, both inside and outside Parliament.

**Mr. Speaker,**

The necessity for Honourable Members to set a good example which fellow Kenyans could emulate is particularly important in our efforts to face the many challenges before us. As custodians

of the interests of our people, members should use parliamentary time to promote the welfare of their constituents. This can, however, only be done in an atmosphere of tolerance and appreciation of each others' point of view without resorting to violence in all its form. As I have said in the past, true democracy can only thrive in an environment of give and take. I, therefore, expect members not to shy away from supporting one another if by so doing the prosperity of this nation and her people shall be enhanced. It is a noble and a blessed thing to serve your nation to such heights of development.

Indeed, I expect KANU members of Parliament to support motions sponsored by members of the opposition if such motions are geared towards promoting the common good. Likewise, I expect the opposition to support Government sponsored motions rather than oppose them for the sake of opposing.

Mr. Speaker,

Let me briefly, mention a few areas which call for united approach by both the Government and the opposition. Honourable Members are no doubt aware of the famine which has affected most parts of our country resulting in the need to provide food to the affected Kenyans. The primary cause of the famine has been the severe drought and the harsh economic conditions which have made it difficult for most farmers to purchase the required farm inputs. As a result, close to five million Kenyans now need food assistance. Honourable Members will agree with me that a hungry Kenyan cares little about politics or political affiliations. What is of paramount importance is the availability of food for himself and his family.

As I have said before, the Government will ensure that no Kenyan goes without food. In this regard, I am grateful to those Honourable Members who have worked with the Government to reach out to those who required assistance in their constituencies. Indeed, it is the duty of all Honourable Members to support the ongoing efforts to provide famine relief to all those who are in need.

Mr. Speaker,

Let me take this opportunity to thank all those who have responded to my appeal for food assistance. In particular, I am grateful to the many Kenyans who have made sacrifices so that their brothers and sisters could have something to eat. On their behalf, I say thank you. This is indeed the most practical demonstration of our concern for the welfare of the less fortunate in our midst. Also, it is an indication that Kenyans have the will and the ability to address problems facing their country. Equally, I thank our foreign friends who have responded to my appeal in the true spirit of the saying that "A Friend Indeed is a Friend in Need".

Another area which requires a united approach is the need to cushion the common man from adverse effects of the economic reforms which we are currently implementing. Honourable Members are in no doubt aware, that during the past two years, the vulnerable groups in our society have been forced to put up with extremely difficult conditions. For instance, as a result of removal of price controls, the prices of essential commodities have risen to a level which the common man cannot afford. As a result, some of our people are unable to feed their families as they would wish. Members are also aware of rising state of unemployment among our youth and the attendant social dangers that poses for the future of our country.

With a view to alleviating the suffering of the poor, the Government has already developed a safety net programme to check further economic marginalization of vulnerable groups in our society. But such programmes can only succeed if they enjoy the support of all Kenyans. In particular, the Government will always welcome suggestions aimed at improving the socio-economic status of our people.

Mr. Speaker,

There are many other areas where Kenyans could benefit from a patriotic approach to national issues by our leaders. As the most distinguished institution in our land, it is the duty of Parliament to set a good example and offer guidance to other institutions including the local authorities.

I have deliberately emphasized the need for a united and selfless approach to national issues because I genuinely believe Kenyans deserve the best from their leaders. History will not spare us if we do not rise to the challenge. My Government is, therefore, prepared to take into account the views of all Kenyans who may have positive ideas in nation building.

Mr. Speaker,

During the last session, this August House discussed and passed eleven bills which I am glad to report have all now received the Presidential Assent. The bills cover important national issues and I thank members for their useful contributions. There were also bills which were introduced during the last session but left in abeyance. These include; the African Re-insurance Corporation Bill which seeks to provide for the implementation of the agreement establishing the African Re-insurance Corporation of which Kenya is a founding member. In particular, the bill seeks to give legal effects to articles 27 and 28 of the agreement. These articles require insurance and re-insurance organizations registered or authorized to carry on insurance business in Kenya to remit a minimum of five per cent of their re-insurance business to the corporation, as well as conclude separate insurance arrangements for local risks.

Honourable Members will also have an opportunity to deliberate on the Narcotic Drugs Control Bill whose objective is to replace the Dangerous Drugs Act which has been in operation since 1933. The new bill takes into account the various international conventions on the subject, such as the 1988 United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs. Also, the bill proposes severe penalties for possession and use of prohibited drugs.

Further, the bill provides for the establishment of rehabilitation centres with facilities for drug addicts. But since drug trafficking is a world-wide problem, provision has also been made in the bill to enable the Attorney-General seek the assistance of other countries in the investigations of alleged offences of drug trafficking.

Other bills which will be reintroduced for Members to consider include; the Trademarks (Amendment) Bill and the Water (Amendment) Bill.

The need to amend the existing legislation regulating water resources has been necessitated by changing climatic conditions which calls for the need to design affordable and sustainable water harvesting systems preferably utilizing local materials. Permanent rivers have had their water flow drastically reduced and unless urgent measures are taken, this invaluable resource shall be depleted and our country shall lose its capacity to support any form of life including that of our human populations. That trend must be reversed; which is the intention of the proposed Water (Amendment) Bill.

Mr. Speaker,

In my opening remarks during the last session, I expressed the Government's commitment to review and reform our laws so as to anticipate and respond to the changing needs of our society. Honourable members are aware, that the Attorney-General has already set up task forces to review various laws.

Nevertheless, the formation of the task forces should not be an end in itself. I expect that Honourable Members will soon have an opportunity to discuss the recommendations of these task forces.

Mr. Speaker,

The agenda before Members during this session is demanding, but I am confident you will not let down Kenyans who have given you the mandate to represent them. With these remarks, Mr. Speaker, I wish Honourable Members a fruitful session.

THANK YOU.

STATE HOUSE,

NAIROBI,

22ND MARCH, 1994.



