

Statement

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.

Occasion : THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE INTER-
PARLIAMENTARY UNION REGIONAL
SEMINAR ON PARLIAMENTS AND THE
NATIONAL BUDGET, INCLUDING A GENDER
PERSPECTIVE.

MR. CHAIRMAN,
HONOURABLE MINISTERS,
HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO
JOIN YOU TODAY FOR THIS IMPORTANT
INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION REGIONAL
SEMINAR. THIS IS THE SECOND SEMINAR
TO BE HELD IN KENYA BY THE INTER-
PARLIAMENTARY UNION, SINCE THE ONE
WHICH WAS HELD IN NAIROBI IN 1984.
I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO WELCOME
ALL THE DELEGATES TO NAIROBI. AND TO
KENYA.

THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE BEEN TO OUR COUNTRY BEFORE, KNOW THAT KENYANS ARE WARM AND HOSPITABLE PEOPLE. I URGE ALL OUR VISITORS TO FEEL AT HOME, FOR YOU ARE AMONGST BROTHERS AND SISTERS. I WANT TO ADD THAT NAIROBI IS ONLY A SMALL PART OF KENYA. I HOPE THAT AT THE END OF YOUR BUSY SCHEDULE, YOU WILL CREATE TIME TO VISIT OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, TO SEE OUR DIVERSE FAUNA AND FLORA, AND TO SAMPLE THE VARIED CULTURAL LIFE OF OUR PEOPLE.

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MR. CHAIRMAN,

THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION IS AN IMPORTANT ORGANIZATION WHICH ENABLES MEMBERS OF DIFFERENT PARLIAMENTS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE TO INTERACT AND EXCHANGE VIEWS ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF EFFECTIVE LEGISLATIVE INSTITUTIONS. I HAVE PERSONALLY BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE ACTIVITIES OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION FOR A LONG TIME, AND I FULLY SUPPORT THE PRINCIPLES AND IDEALS THAT THE ORGANIZATION HAS CHAMPIONED OVER THE YEARS. OF COURSE, INDIVIDUALS COULD DISAGREE OVER THE INTERPRETATION OF SOME OF THE IDEALS OF THE ORGANIZATION, ESPECIALLY WHEN APPLIED TO SPECIFIC COUNTRIES OR REGIONS.

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BUT SUCH DIFFERENCES ARE HEALTHY AND MUST BE EXPECTED, ESPECIALLY IN AN ORGANIZATION THAT HAS GLOBAL MEMBERSHIP. OVER THE YEARS, KENYAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT MANY OF THE COUNTRIES REPRESENTED HERE, AND THEY HAVE COME BACK HOME WITH NEW IDEAS THAT HAVE ENRICHED THE CONDUCT AND QUALITY OF OUR PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS.

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THE THEME OF YOUR SEMINAR IS VERY CENTRAL TO THE EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF MODERN DEMOCRACIES. AS YOU WILL AGREE, DEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES ARE VERY SENSITIVE TO CASES WHERE SOME GROUPS FEEL EXCLUDED FROM THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS. PEOPLE HATE TO BE ALIENATED. EXCLUSION OF A GROUP, WHETHER BASED ON GENDER, LINGUISTIC PECULIARITY, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY, RELIGIOUS AFFINITY, OR ETHNIC PAROCHIALISM, IS BAD POLITICS WHICH IS LIKELY TO UNDERMINE AND ENDANGER THE STABILITY AND WELL-BEING OF A COUNTRY.

ONE OF THE MAJOR ISSUES YOU WILL DISCUSS IN YOUR SEMINAR IS EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF NATIONAL RESOURCES THROUGH BUDGETARY PROVISION. IN THIS REGARD, A NATIONAL BUDGET IS A CENTRAL POLICY DOCUMENT WHICH REFLECTS THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF COMMITMENT TO FACE THE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES FACING A COUNTRY. THE FORMULATION OF A BUDGET AND ITS PRESENTATION TO PARLIAMENT FOR DEBATE AND ADOPTION, IS VERY CRUCIAL TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND STABILITY OF A DEMOCRATIC STATE. THROUGH THE BUDGET, A GOVERNMENT SPELLS OUT ITS PRIORITIES FROM THE MANNER IN WHICH RESOURCES ARE ALLOCATED AND DISTRIBUTED.

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IT IS FOR THIS REASON, THAT MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ARE ALWAYS KEEN TO KNOW HOW THE BUDGET WILL AFFECT THEIR CONSTITUENTS.

BESIDES, WE ARE NOW OPERATING IN A NEW SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT, WHERE THE BENEFICIARIES OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES WANT TO PLAY A BIGGER ROLE IN DECIDING HOW THOSE PROGRAMMES ARE DESIGNED, AND EVEN IMPLEMENTED. THE PEOPLE WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN MAKING VITAL DECISIONS WHICH AFFECT THEIR DAILY LIVES.

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THUS THE PARTICIPATION OF ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE IN THE BUDGETING PROCESS IS NECESSARY, AS IT WILL ENSURE THAT NATIONAL RESOURCES ARE DISTRIBUTED FAIRLY AND EQUITABLY. IN KENYA, WE HAVE SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THIS YEAR, BEEN INVOLVED IN A CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE WITH HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, TO DISCUSS THE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH THE BUDGET WILL BE BASED. I HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING THE DELIBERATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN TAKING PLACE ON THIS SUBJECT, INCLUDING THE MEETING AT THE SAFARI PARK HOTEL LAST WEEK, AND I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THIS WILL GO ALONG WAY IN IRONING OUT ANY ANOMALIES AND WEAKNESSES THAT HAVE AFFLICTED OUR BUDGET-MAKING IN THE PAST.

MR. CHAIRMAN,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

IN A DEMOCRACY THE THREE ARMS OF GOVERNMENT, NAMELY: THE EXECUTIVE, THE LEGISLATURE AND THE JUDICIARY CARRY DISTINCT POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES. THIS IS IN THE SPIRIT OF CHECKS AND BALANCES. THESE ARMS OF GOVERNMENT ARE AUTONOMOUS. BUT VERY OFTEN, THERE IS NEED FOR CONSULTATION BETWEEN THE THREE ARMS BEFORE CRUCIAL DECISIONS ARE MADE.

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FOR INSTANCE, ALTHOUGH PARLIAMENT HAS THE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY TO ENACT LAWS, THIS MANDATE NEEDS TO BE EXERCISED WITH CAUTION. IN PARTICULAR, PARLIAMENTARY MOTIONS WHICH HAVE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS SHOULD INVOLVE PROPER CONSULTATIONS IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THEY DON'T CONTRADICT THE SPIRIT OF THE NATIONAL BUDGET. IF A SITUATION SUCH AS THIS IS ALLOWED TO CONTINUE IT CAN LEAD TO FRUSTRATIONS, AND UNNECESSARY SUSPICIONS BETWEEN THE LEGISLATURE AND THE EXECUTIVE. FOR NO SELF-RESPECTING EXECUTIVE WOULD ENDORSE UNBUDGETED-FOR EXPENDITURE WITHOUT FIRST OF ALL KNOWING WHERE THE MONEY WILL COME FROM.

ANOTHER ISSUE RELATED TO YOUR DISCUSSIONS, CONCERNS THE WATCHDOG ROLE OF PARLIAMENT. IN EXERCISING ITS MANDATE TO AUDIT PUBLIC SPENDING, PARLIAMENT SHOULD ALWAYS PASS OVER TO THE JUDICIARY CASES THAT IN THEIR THINKING REQUIRE JUDICIAL ACTION. AFTER ALL, PARLIAMENT DEALS WITH LEGISLATIONS, AND SHOULD NOT PROSECUTE AT THE SAME TIME. THIS SHOULD BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE JUDICIARY.

ANOTHER AREA WHERE AFRICAN PARLIAMENTS CAN PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DEMOCRACY. THIS NEEDS TO BE DONE CAREFULLY AND CAUTIOUSLY, WITHOUT LOOSING SIGHT OF OUR AFRICAN VALUES.

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AS YOU ALL KNOW, MOST AFRICAN SOCIETIES ARE BASED ON ETHNICITIES, AND MANY OF THE AFRICAN POLITICAL PARTIES TEND TO RELY ON ETHNIC SUPPORT. THIS SITUATION IS NOT ALWAYS IN LINE WITH THE SPIRIT OF DEMOCRACY, AND OFTEN UNDERMINES THE STABILITY OF OUR COUNTRIES. I DO HOPE THAT IN YOUR SEMINAR YOU WILL ALSO DISCUSS THE NEED FOR AFRICAN LEADERS TO STRIVE TO EXPAND THEIR HORIZONS BEYOND THEIR TRIBES AND EVEN NATIONS. THE DRIVE TOWARDS SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION OF OUR CONTINENT WILL REMAIN AN ILLUSION, IF LEADERS CONTINUE TO FOCUS ON LOCALISED ISSUES.

WE NEED LEADERS WITH A BROADER APPEAL, WHO WILL FACILITATE INTERACTION WITH PEOPLE OF ALL ETHNICITIES, NATIONALITIES AND COUNTRIES. IT IS IN THIS WAY, THAT WE CAN SUCCEED IN DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF PEACE, AND ELIMINATE WARS AND CONFLICTS WHICH HAVE GIVEN THE AFRICAN CONTINENT A BAD NAME.

LET ME ALSO ADD THAT THIS SEMINAR HAS DRAWN EXPERTISE FROM A WIDE RANGE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS AND SPEAKERS WHO HAVE COME TO SHARE THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND VIEWS WITH US.

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WE HAVE LEARNT IN THIS COUNTRY THAT GOOD INTENTIONS ALONE ARE NOT ENOUGH TO CHANGE BAD POLICIES. YOU ARE ALL AWARE THAT WOMEN PLAY A BIG ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICAN ECONOMIES. I HOPE THAT THIS SEMINAR WILL GO AS FAR AS ADDRESSING THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL REASONS WHICH HAVE MILITATED AGAINST EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF OUR WOMEN-FOLK NOT ONLY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY, BUT ALSO IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.

I BELIEVE THAT THIS SEMINAR WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN FROM EACH OTHER AND ABOUT ONE ANOTHER. YOUR EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES WILL NO DOUBT HELP TO REINFORCE OUR CO-OPERATION AND MUTUAL RESPECT, WHILE ALSO SERVING TO ENRICH OUR DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES. AFRICA, AS YOU ALL KNOW, IS A CONTINENT WHERE WARS, CONFLICTS AND CIVIL STRIFE ABOUND. AFRICAN PARLIAMENTS SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE RULE OF LAW IS MAINTAINED, WHILE JUNGLE LAW IS REJECTED ALTOGETHER. THIS CALLS FOR CONSULTATION AND CO-OPERATION AT ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY, SO THAT MORE ATTENTION WILL BE GIVEN TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR RESOURCES.

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IN CONCLUSION, MR. CHAIRMAN, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS ONCE AGAIN MY GRATITUDE TO THE ORGANIZERS OF THIS SEMINAR FOR ENABLING LAW-MAKERS FROM OUR REGION TO COME TOGETHER TO EXCHANGE VIEWS AND OPINIONS ON VARIOUS ISSUES AFFECTING OUR PEOPLE. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT FOR DEMOCRACY TO FLOURISH IN AFRICA THE LEGISLATIVE ORGANS MUST PLAY THEIR ROLES EFFECTIVELY. I DO HOPE THAT THIS, AND SIMILAR FORUMS WHICH WILL BE HELD IN THE FUTURE, WILL GO ALONG WAY TOWARDS THE PROMOTION OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA, AND TO ASSIST OUR PARLIAMENTS TO FULFIL THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL MANDATE.

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WITH THESE REMARKS, IT IS NOW
MY GREATEST PLEASURE TO DECLARE THIS
SEMINAR OFFICIALLY OPEN.

THANK YOU.

State House Nairobi.

21st May, 2000