

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT  
DANIEL ARAP MOI, C.G.H., M.P.,  
ON KENYATTA DAY  
20th OCTOBER, 1981**

**MY DEAR COUNTRYMEN,**

I begin my address to you today by sending my warm greetings to all of you and your families. We should also, on this occasion, send our brotherly greetings to those Kenyans living abroad either working in our Embassies, International Organizations or undertaking education and training programmes. We wish them well, and I know that they too have made their own arrangements for celebrating this important national day.

My dear Kenyans, for nearly two decades now we as a nation have always found it important to come together to commemorate some of the events or influences associated with the living history of our Republic. As I have said to you before, ceremonial days of this kind must not be regarded as empty gestures. They serve, among other purposes and objectives, to cast a continuing light upon the reality of nationhood, while reminding us all of the strength of our democratic institutions. In this country, as Mzee Jomo Kenyatta himself so frequently emphasized, the Government is the people.

In this whole context, Kenyatta Day may be described as a critical anniversary for many reasons. One of the most important reasons is that Kenyatta Day reflects upon qualities of patriotism, and readiness to sacrifice, in the simplest but most noble causes of human freedom and advancement. At the same time, with thoughts and memories concentrated upon the Father of our Nation, it reminds us of many of his teachings. Throughout the whole of his long political and public life, his convictions were founded upon the impulse of national unity, first as the means of achieving human dignity in freedom, and then as the only sure way of sustaining countrywide economic and social development.

Today, therefore, we should all rededicate ourselves to the vision which constantly inspired all those who struggled for so long, and who sacrificed so much, for Kenya's independence. We should reaffirm our commitment to the fact and the force of national unity, as the life-blood of our loyalties and development efforts. And then we should re-examine some essential human purposes, to see how these have been maintained or, in a few cases, have had to be adapted to trends and evolutions in the international community as a whole.

Since the dawn of the 1960s which ushered in for Kenya so much promise and so much potential, there have been many remarkable changes. The world has of course become more modern, in the sense that many fresh ideas and opportunities have been created by truly remarkable advances in science and technology. But human communities everywhere have also become threatened by increasing environmental degradation and destruction of natural resources. Alongside this peril, we have recently witnessed the very serious and growing threat of widespread inflation and economic recession. We have also witnessed leading currencies, interest rates and terms of trade all being manipulated for selfish and narrowly nationalistic ends—and in ways that exploit the poor nations and depress productive capacity thus inhibiting creation of wealth for the world as a whole.

I mention these points, just briefly, and partly to illustrate an earlier comment about flexibility and complexity of what is referred to as progress. But the more important point is that these challenges to human destiny have begun to inspire something of truly fundamental importance—which is realization, increasingly on a world-wide scale, that all countries and races on this tiny planet have become irreversibly inter-dependent. There is no longer the question of advancement for some and collapse for others—certainly not in the medium and long term. The global web of mutual activities and interests have become all-embracing. As a result we will progress or perish together.

When this new understanding of inter-dependence grows to full maturity, and finds its way into the every-day philosophy of human

affairs, it will represent the greatest change of all when compared with the events and practices of 1960s. It will also proclaim a new and vital message of hope for all mankind. This is the message which we in Kenya send to the North-South meeting in Cancun, Mexico.

As I am sure you will judge from all this, it is my conviction that we in Kenya must take active interest in these broad international issues. To this end, our Republic must go on being active in all departments of African affairs, in Commonwealth discussions, in the endeavours of non-aligned states, and in the work of the United Nations Organization. We must always be ready to contribute in the worldwide human cause, to share our experiences and to learn from others. Moreover, our interest in these matters should never be academic. In particular, we fully recognize the importance of co-operating with other nations. And in this connection and as you all know, my Government has constantly been anxious to promote and uphold programmes of regional co-operation in Eastern Africa, for the benefit of the peoples of all the countries concerned. And of course our hope is that regional co-operation will lead to continental co-operation so that Africa plays her full part internationally. In addition and at international level, we are of the view that what the world urgently requires is a new economic order which will work in a just and equitable manner for the benefit of all nations and, therefore, for the international community as a whole.

But above all, we must have peace. The one thing that has in no way changed, over the past two decades, is the commitment of our Republic to peace between nations—peace as the foundation of development within and co-operation among all communities which make up the family of mankind. We live in a world that is so often afflicted by the values and emotions of evil. We have seen many times, and again just recently, how men of peace may be struck down by the insanity of violence. But all such actions must simply harden our resolve, to defend and to work for what is right.

Everything that I have said so far may be regarded as the context of, or the background to, essential human purposes in

Kenya and the characteristics of our nationhood. None of these should ever be taken for granted. Indeed all of us, Government and people alike, should constantly be watchful to ensure that such values are not eroded or demolished.

The freedom of this Republic is real and unquestionable. In the framing and pursuit of any kind of policy, we are our own masters, in no way subject to command or intrigue from any quarter. At the same time, we have preserved the Bill of Rights, and enjoy all the human freedoms associated with an open and a tolerant society. Our progress continues to be rooted in the vital component of political stability—since a Government which springs entirely from the will and mandate of the people does not need to rule by force or fear. And we have maintained the machinery of law, with an independent Judiciary, under which all men and women are equally treated and respected.

This is the kind of Kenya that we at the time of our political independence set out to establish. I know that it is the kind of Kenya that all of us still want today. Under such an umbrella, the objective of development has been to create countrywide opportunities and vocational outlets, giving rise to better living standards for every family. Since the beginning, priority has been focussed upon mass needs of the rural areas. But we have never neglected, and must increasingly acknowledge, modern trends towards urban living and industrial technology.

In the process of our development efforts we have used the method of comprehensive economic and social planning. This has meant, for example, that designs and methods underlying the purposes of development have had to be amended, at times quite dramatically, over the past two decades in order to keep pace with harsh economic realities in the world which surrounds our Republic. And one of the lessons we have learnt so far is that we must continue to do all we can to strengthen our self-reliance. This fact underlies the recent publication by my Government of a national food policy, with provisions covering all aspects of the production, storage and distribution of basic food supplies. At the same time, and far more energetically than has been the case

so far, all of us must pay heed to means of conserving energy whereby, among other advantages, we can reduce the enormous annual cost of imported fuel. And then we must proceed with work, already in progress, to make our industrial sector more self-sustaining, through strengthening the existing industries and establishing new ones which provide internal dynamism for future economic growth of the national economy.

My dear countrymen, up to this point, I have been painting a picture, first of the unchanging nature and strength of our society here, and then of some approaches which, on this same foundation, have had to be elastic. So let me now touch briefly upon one other fundamental matter. There is sometimes a tendency to look at a country, or think of a country, in terms of its physical features, factories, farms, or its big city buildings and modern communications. All these things have their place in the sum total of evaluation. But the only true essence of any nation has to be sought in the qualities and convictions of its people. And so what I have described in the foregoing remarks as the characteristics of our nationhood can only be upheld by the attitudes, and sustained by the attributes, of the people of Kenya. There is no other way.

This reflection is a source of confidence, since there is no difference whatever between the Government and the vast majority of Kenyans under such headings as constitutional freedoms, national stability and justice. Moreover, as a tolerant society, we are always ready to look at all views or opinions that are openly and honestly expressed.

It is very important that we continue with this open and frank approach. No one can claim to be perfect or to know everything. But through frank, constructive and continuous dialogue we shall be able to find and implement the most effective solutions to any problems that might face us.

I am saying all this because in the course of the future development of our nation and its economy we shall, now and then, encounter problems—which at times will be quite serious. In such

situations there are sure to be a few ambitious and greedy individuals who will wish to exploit the situation by misleading the people through, for example, putting forward what might sound to be short-cut solutions but, in reality, measures or approaches which would compound the problems in the long run. We must be aware of that danger.

As I have already said, we tolerate, and shall continue to do so, frank views. Indeed we welcome any views or comments when constructively given. In addition, we have a fully democratic system and those who want to play a direct role in politics should realize that the right to leadership is given by the people when they vote in elections as required and arranged under the law. And I will say as well, to anyone who might not have known that simple fact or might be out of step, that anyone seeking to distort truth or to engage in any practices that might jeopardize our national unity and stability must expect consequences that are both swift and severe.

Finally, my brethren, let us realize that we have a rich heritage of philosophy and striving, enshrined most deeply within the recollections that are always associated with Kenyatta Day. I remind you all now that the number of children in our nationwide primary schools has passed the four million mark. It is their future that must be safeguarded and built, and only we can build it. Let us never spend time dwelling on the historical origins of poverty, or blaming others for real or imagined shortcomings. Let us avoid envy, tribalism and greed. Let us instead devote all our mental and physical capacities, brought together in peace, love and unity, to the cause of human destiny in Kenya, shaped and fashioned to our own design.

*NYAYO!*

16th October, 1981.