

It is today twenty-two years since we won the right we had been denied for so long; the right to determine our own destiny, as a nation, in freedom and human dignity. The struggle to gain this right entailed the loss of valuable human life and many other sacrifices. But we can now look back with pride, at the purposeful manner in which we have managed our affairs in shaping the future of this Nation.

Inevitably, we have faced many challenges in the difficult task of nation-building. But because of our unity and seriousness of purpose, we have been able to overcome most of them. However, we must anticipate more and equally formidable challenges in the years ahead. It is important, therefore, that we should continue to consolidate and jealously protect this unity, which has been the cornerstone of the economic, social and political progress we have achieved so far.

The basic objectives of our nationhood, has always been to improve the well-being of our people. When we took charge of managing our own affairs, we immediately set about to develop political equality, social justice and equal opportunities for everyone. This required that we maintain a balanced and steady rate of economic growth, which would enable us to provide important services such as health, education, water and housing.

Our efforts have in the past been geared towards the achievement of these goals. It is gratifying to note that considerable progress has been made in all fronts. However, the going has not been easy. In recent years, a series of world-wide economic upheavals have slowed down the momentum of our development to such an extent that it has not been possible to meet some of our targets.

The task before us now is to set in motion the necessary measures which will create a much larger economic base. Renewed economic growth must from now on underline our development planning. This in effect means that we have to channel our resources into those activities which will contribute directly, and immediately, to faster economic growth.

Agriculture has been the back-bone of our economy, and it will continue to be so for many years to come. This is inevitable. General economic growth in our country will therefore continue to depend on a vigorous agricultural sector. Increased agricultural productivity will create more employment opportunities, earn the country more foreign exchange and enable us to meet our objective of self-sufficiency in food.

The Government has continued to take the necessary steps to rejuvenate agriculture, by setting producer prices which encourage the productive use of land. But high prices by themselves are not enough. Farmers must also be paid promptly. In too many cases, payments are long delayed, which reduces the incentive for farmers to increase their production. It also increases their need for short-term credit.

My Government will take the necessary steps to speed up payments to farmers through all channels, including marketing parastatals and co-operatives. The Government will also ensure that farm inputs such as seeds, fertilizers and pesticides are distributed to farmers efficiently and on time.

Improved agricultural productivity will also depend on the direction and quality of agricultural research. We must therefore invest our best minds and adequate funds in research. And we must also ensure that the results of this research are passed on to farmers through an efficient and effective extension service.

Alongside a productive agricultural sector, renewed economic growth requires an efficient and dynamic industrial sector. We have, for several years, taken some steps to make industry more efficient. In doing so, we have had to give protection to some industrial projects. In other cases, we have in the past granted monopoly privileges to industries which we considered necessary at the time.

We have reached a stage in our development process when industrial production must be opened to competition. It is therefore important for us to encourage only those firms which can produce efficiently with modest protection. There is no doubt that some of the reforms will strike at the entrenched privilege of firms which have been established under a protective system. Resistance is therefore inevitable. And it will be expected especially from inefficient producers. But we must not falter in our effort to restructure the sector.

There will be other sacrifices to be made in this essential transition. For example, employment opportunities may shift from the inefficient to the more productive firms. But just as we all have to take bitter medicine once in a while; we must be prepared to bear some temporary discomfort for a greater reward in future. However, every effort will be made to keep the transition costs bearable.

The steps we take to improve industry will also involve informal sector activities and greater support will be extended to industries which have labour intensive approach and are situated outside our major urban areas. The important role of this sector in the economy requires that we create a more hospitable climate for its development. The Government will therefore take appropriate measures to eliminate constraints which have slowed down the development of this sector in the past. It will also be

necessary to channel more credit to this sector in future. I therefore urge Commercial Banks and Financial Institutions, to increase their support for this sector.

When we discuss faster economic growth, we do so while bearing in mind that the final aim is to improve the lives of each and every Kenyan. I therefore find it necessary today to repeat what I have said on many occasions before. The most crucial challenge for us in this decade, is to slow down Kenya's population growth. The present rate of population growth of four per cent means that we have nearly one million children born every year. Such population growth is large enough to fill the entire city of Nairobi every twelve months. This has clear and disturbing implications on the ability of the economy to provide for the basic needs of our people.

We all accept that the best way to alleviate poverty is for the economy to grow at a faster rate than the population. But with an annual increase of one million people, even if the economy were to grow at the desirable rate of six per cent per year for the next twenty-five years, the average Kenyan would enjoy an increase in income of slightly more than a half of what he enjoys today. If on the other hand, we reduced the rate of population growth to three per cent, his income would double what it is today.

The Sessional Paper No. 4 of 1984 has set out Population Policy guidelines which seek to reduce population growth to 3.3 per cent per year during the next three years. This is an ambitious target which will require the full support of every Kenyan. While the Government will continue with programmes of improving the welfare of the people, we must understand the need to limit the number of children to a number we can satisfactorily feed, clothe, educate and keep in good health. This effort must have the highest priority of all of us.

One immediate result of rapid population growth is that some of our people are now faced with conditions which lead to anti-social behaviour. This has coincided with the gradual erosion of traditional African values which controlled the behaviour of people within the society. Consequently, we have experienced an increase in crimes in various parts of the country.

If we allow this trend to continue, the peace which has been the basis of our prosperity, and the envy of many around us, will be disrupted. We certainly cannot allow this. I have therefore issued clear instructions to those responsible for maintaining law and order, to bring this undesirable situation to an end. I also appeal to *Wananchi* to assist the law enforcement authorities by exposing known criminals.

While still on this important subject, let me say that the Government will continue to uphold the rule of law and all other legal procedures related to the handling of criminals. Some of those who have been convicted in courts of law are given custodial sentences in accordance with the gravity of

their offences. However, it is always the hope of the Kenyan Society that such people would reform and become better citizens.

But at the same time, we do all recognize that for each person who is put away in jail, there are many other persons, particularly their wives and children, who suffer for no fault of their own. My Government has therefore considered, from time-to-time, the plight of these persons, and the possibility of releasing those who have been convicted and jailed for minor offences. I have accordingly directed that those prisoners currently in jail for petty offences, be released forthwith.

As an additional measure to assist petty offenders to reform and, at the same time engage in activities beneficial to society, I have directed that the system of committing petty offenders to extra-mural penal employment be revived in all our districts.

Turning now to the recent Kanu Membership Recruitment Drive, the exercise has been successful and I wish to thank all *Wananchi* for responding and registering in large numbers. I expect this momentum to continue until everyone eligible becomes a member.

Kenyans will recall that early last month I promised to announce the date of Kanu National Elections. I wish to fulfil this promise today. I have carefully considered the fact that we shall soon host two international conferences in July and August. And from my recent visits to various parts of the country, it is clear that farmers have completed planting and weeding in most areas. I have also considered other national matters and have decided that KANU elections will be held throughout the country between 22nd and 25th June, 1985. I am confident *Wananchi* will exercise their right and elect leaders who will truly represent their wishes, and make the Party more dynamic. Above all, I want all members to understand the importance of mature and disciplined conduct on the part of each one of us during the period of these elections.

- Before I conclude my remarks today, I want it to be known that we shall not be tired in expressing our grave concern about the situation in Southern Africa. Kenya's stand on Namibia is clear and unchanged. We support the United Nations Resolution 435 as the only basis for an internationally acceptable solution to the stalemate over Namibia's Independence. Indeed, we firmly believe that it is just a question of time before our brothers under the umbrella of SWAPO, will enjoy their God-given right to self-determination.

In South Africa, the situation has taken a turn for the worse. While the black majority have resolved to increase their opposition to Apartheid, the racist regime has responded with a renewed use of brutal force against innocent and defenceless people. Kenya condemns South Africa's blatant oppression of her citizens. We condemn the careless destruction of human

life in that country. And we shall continue to support the liberation movements in that part of the world until the Apartheid system is completely dismantled.

And finally, I wish to remind Kenyans that our own freedom was won after a long and bitter struggle. We succeeded because of our unity and unfailing determination to be in command of our own destiny. Let us all remember that it is this same unity and determination which continue to be a foundation of our efforts to build a strong prosperous Nation. As we celebrate this year's *Madaraka Day*, let us all resolve to re-dedicate ourselves to National Unity in the spirit of Peace, Love and Unity.

*THANK YOU.*