

SPEECH BY PRESIDENT KIBAKI DURING 2010 MADARAKA DAY CELEBRATIONS.

Fellow Kenyans,

I salute you all on this auspicious occasion of our 47th Madaraka Day. On this day, we remind ourselves of the day in 1963, when we assumed responsibility over the affairs of our country.

Today, we remember and appreciate the men and women whose personal sacrifice led to Kenya's freedom. We also recall the journey we have taken since then, towards making Kenya a free, prosperous and democratic nation.

The idea of Madaraka is fundamental to our nationhood and we must never forget that it is our solemn duty to develop Kenya. It is our responsibility to make Kenya a Working and Caring nation, where every individual is given the opportunity to reach their full potential. In turn we can collectively make Kenya a better home for all of us. This responsibility and obligation lies not only with the Government and its leadership, but with every Kenyan.

It is therefore fitting, that on this Madaraka day, we salute all the Kenyans who have made enormous contributions to our country in the political, social, cultural, and economic spheres.

Let us take this moment to salute our unsung heroes; the farmers, workers, teachers, nurses, doctors, policemen and women, businessmen and women, soldiers, public servants, and many others.

Their daily sacrifice, hard work, dedication and innovation continue to make our country a much better place to live in. Their endeavours truly embody the spirit of self reliance, responsibility and obligation. This is the essence of Madaraka.

Fellow Kenyans,

We are marking this year's Madaraka day at a time when our economy is finally looking up once again. Last year our economy grew by 2.6 percent. This was an improvement from the 1.6 percent we recorded two years ago when we went through challenging times. This year, we expect to grow at between 4 and 5 percent. This is because Kenyans, even under difficult conditions, continue to work hard to improve their individual and collective welfare.

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The tourism industry has bounced back due to intensive joint marketing by the Government and industry players. The building and construction sector continues to show good growth. Tea and dairy sectors have benefited greatly from the good rains.

Free or subsidized seed and fertilizer provided by the Government together with bountiful rains will give a surplus harvest this year. In this regard, relevant Government agencies will work closely with farmers to reduce post harvest losses by properly storing their produce.

On this occasion, I also want to salute and celebrate Kenya's innovators and inventors. Kenya is now a leading contributor to innovative technologies in the information,

communications and technology sector. We are the nation where mobile money transfers and payments and mobile phone banking were invented.

Not surprisingly, our telecommunications sector continues to perform impressively. Today, Kenya is a world leader in delivering innovative financial services for mobile phone users. As Kenyans we should be proud of these achievements that are truly transforming our social and economic lives.

Fellow Kenyans,

As Government, we remain concerned by youth unemployment and its impact on our country. I am aware of the priority we must place in job creation. This is because widespread employment is the way to generate income and wealth.

Employment also enhances individual self-worth, and knits together the social fabric of families, communities and our nation. I therefore note that last year, total employment, excluding rural small scale agriculture and pastoralist activities, rose by 4.5 percent. As a Government we continue to implement the Kazi Kwa Vijana and the Economic Stimulus programmes that create employment opportunities for our youth.

However, we are fully aware that we need much more job creation by the private sector and the rest of the economy, because the Government can only employ a limited number of Kenyans.

Therefore, in addition to all the other policies, projects, and programmes the Government is implementing, we have given priority to the opening up of the second development corridor in Northern Kenya.

We want to open up Northern Kenya fully and to develop strong trade and investment relations with our neighbours. The Government has recently awarded contracts to undertake feasibility studies for Lamu port, the railways from Lamu through Isiolo to Juba and Lamu through Isiolo to Moyale. The construction of these infrastructure facilities will begin soon. We have also tendered for the Standard Gauge Railway from Mombasa to Malaba, and will also put in place a much improved Nairobi commuter rail service.

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These developments, taken together with the significant investments we are making in the expansion of roads, electricity generation, water supply systems, telecommunications, and airports, are clear indications that we are preparing our country for the sustained employment creation and development expected under VISION TWENTY THIRTY.

This is why we are expediting works on the Nakuru-Eldoret-Malaba and Kericho-Kisumu Highway as well as expanding the Kisumu International Airport to ensure efficient and quick connectivity to people and markets.

The ongoing rural electrification and rural roads access programs will also be facilitated in every part of the country. We are also keenly aware of the need to train our youth to make them more marketable. We are therefore rejuvenating youth polytechnics which will impart marketable technical skills to our youth. New national polytechnics will also be launched to

ensure the country has sufficient skilled technicians. At the grassroots level we have begun a programme to equip and construct at least one modern polytechnic in every constituency.

In the social sector, the Government has increased budgetary allocations by 20 percent in the current Financial Year. This has tremendously increased the number of educational institutions and student enrolment.

We are also making provision for the most vulnerable members of our society, by providing cash transfer programmes to orphans and the elderly. The direct cash disbursement under social protection for older persons and Orphans and Vulnerable Children increased significantly from 550 million shillings to 1.1 billion in the current financial year.

Fellow Kenyans,

We are aware that no meaningful development can take place in an atmosphere of insecurity. The Government remains focused in its fight against crime. In this connection, we have continued to improve the police-population ratio. This will continue until the country attains the United Nations recommended ratio of one police officer for every 450 citizens.

In addition to this, we have provided more vehicles and other facilities. To impart right attitudes among the officers, we have lengthened the period of training and initiated reforms in many other areas. The objective is to transform the force into a more proactive and efficient Police service.

Besides improving security, I am saddened by the frequent reports of fatal road accidents. This is a situation that must be contained. We cannot afford to continue losing innocent lives simply because of the recklessness of public transport operators and failure to enforce the Highway Code by the police. I am, therefore, directing the Ministry of Transport and the Traffic Department of the Kenya Police to embark on major road safety operations around the country. This must go beyond the routine operations to round up defective vehicles. We want to see in place a sustainable long term program involving both the police and the general public.

Fellow Kenyans,

At the regional level, I am happy to note that the East African Community Common Market Protocol is expected to come into force next month. My Government is cooperating fully with other sister states in the East African Community to make operational, all aspects of the Protocol. The Protocol will enable our people to establish enterprises, trade, work, and reside anywhere within East Africa. The Protocol presents an opportunity for increased wealth creation, job opportunities and poverty eradication. I once again urge Kenyans to take advantage of the opportunities arising in the region. I also appeal to the Kenyan people to welcome our brothers and sisters from Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda who will in turn be coming to our country in search of opportunities. This is the reciprocal nature and spirit of the East African Community.

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Fellow Kenyans,

We are marking this year's Madaraka Day at a time when our country is at the threshold of unveiling a new constitution. As you are aware, the road to a new constitution has been long and bumpy. We have, however, covered much ground and what now remains is the

referendum vote on August the 4th. I wish to remind Kenyans that a new Constitution means change, in the personal lives of each one of us. The constitution will usher in a new order of social, economic and political interactions. As the referendum date approaches, therefore, I urge Kenyans to make an effort to read and understand the proposed law carefully.

I also advise Kenyans to attend civic education forums where matters pertaining to articles in the proposed constitution will be explained. This will enable us to make informed and independent decisions during the referendum. An informed citizen is an empowered voter who will not be misled by falsehoods that may be peddled on the proposed constitution. As debate on the proposed constitution continues, the rule of law must also be upheld. Campaigns have to be conducted within the law. The Government will provide security to all Kenyans, irrespective of their affiliation in the constitutional debate.

I direct the National Integration and Cohesion Commission and all security agencies to take firm and decisive action against those who may engage in acts of violence, hate speech or other forms of lawlessness regardless of one's status in society.

Similarly, I call upon the media and civil society to play their role of promoting the public interest. In particular, I challenge media houses to play an objective watchdog role by naming and shaming those people who may engage in hate speech, lies and negative ethnic persuasion.

I must, however, reiterate the need for peaceful co-existence if we are to achieve our social and economic development targets. I am also confident that conclusion of the twenty-year constitution debate that we have engaged in, will allow our national energies to be focused on the urgent work of employment and wealth creation that lies ahead. The proposed constitution is a good road map to the New Kenya of greater opportunity for our people. It is the path to devolving power to the people and an avenue for equitable distribution of national resources to the grassroots.

The passage of a new constitution will permanently entrench the reforms that majority of Kenyans have long desired. This is why I have given it my full support because I am confident that it is good for our country.

As we approach the referendum, I urge Kenyans to conduct themselves with decorum, uphold the rule of law and tolerate each other's opinion. After all we are all Kenyans. God meant us, to all live in this beautiful land and heritage of splendour that we call our home.

Finally, I urge Fellow Kenyans to work hard so that we can achieve an annual growth rate of 10 percent as envisaged in VISION TWENTY THIRTY. This is possible as evidenced by the high growth rate of 7 percent we registered in 2007.

ASANTENI NA MUNGU AWABARIKI.