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Speech

by

His Excellency
Hon. Mwai Kibaki, 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 Fourth Session of
the Ninth Parliament

on

Wednesday, 16th March, 2005



**His Excellency Hon. Mwai Kibaki, C.G.H., M.P
President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces Of
the Republic Of Kenya**

**HOTUBA YA MHESHIMIWA RAIS MWAI KIBAKI,
C.G.H., M.P. ALIYE PIA AMIRI-JESHI MKUU WA
MAJESHI YA KENYA, WAKATI WA UFUNGUZI
RASMI WA KIKAO CHA NNE CHA BUNGE LA TISA
TAREHE 16 MACHI, 2005**

BW. SPIKA,

Leo, Bunge la Tisa la Jamhuri ya Kenya linaanza kikao chake cha nne baada ya mapumziko ya sikukuu ya Krisimasi. Naamini Waheshimiwa wabunge walichukua fursa hiyo kushauriana na waakilishi wao kuhusu mahitaji yao ya kimaendeleo. Waheshimiwa wabunge hivi sasa wako na nguvu tele za kuwajibikia maswala ya Bunge katika muda wa miezi ijayo.

Bw. Spika,

Wakenya wamelipa Bunge wajibu muhimu na wako na matarajio makubwa kutoka kwake. Likiwa chombo kikuu cha nchi, Bunge linatarajiwa kutoa mwongozo katika kukabiliana na changamoto zinazoendelea kutukumba sisi. Baadhi ya majukumu hayo ni ufufuzi wa uchumi, maongozi bora na hali bora ya maisha ya wakenya.

Upo msemu maarufu ambao unasema kwamba Ulimwengu sasa umekuwa mdogo sawa na kijiji ambapo wote sharti tushindanie raslimali haba na masoko. Kutokana na hali hii ipo haja ya kuwaandaa wafanyi kazi wenye ujuzi, uwajibikaji bora wa taasisi zetu na kutoa taratibu za sheria muafaka ambapo shughuli za kiuchumi hufanyika, kwa minajili ya kudhibiti ushindani wetu kama taifa.

Bw. Spika,

Ufufuzi wa uchumi bado ni ajenda kuu ya serikali. Maendeleo ya taifa letu ni ya kiwango cha chini ikilinganishwa na viwango vya kimataifa. Juhudi zetu za kuimarisha ustawi wetu unahitaji kuwepo kwa umoja wenye mwelekeo wa uongozi wa kubuni mazingara ya kuwawezesha watu wetu kuwajibika ipasavyo.

Tumeweka kiwango cha juu cha kufikia ukuaji wa uchumi wa kiwango cha aslimia saba. Hii inawezekana ikiwa tutakuwa na mwelekeo na kutumia nguvu zetu kwa shughuli za kiuchumi, badala ya kuzingatia tu siasa duni za migawanyiko.

Tangu kutwaa hatamu za uongozi wa taifa hili miaka miwili iliyopita, Serikali yangu iliwasilisha kwa Bunge hili maongozi yake kuhusu mpango wa ufufuzi wa uchumi, ikifuatiwa na miswada muhimu kuhusiana na usimamizi wa maswala ya uchumi na utawala. Miswada hiyo ambayo tayari imekuwa sheria ni pamoja na sheria ya ufasadi na uhalifu wa kiuchumi, sheria za maadili mema ya utumishi wa umma, sheria ya uhasibu wa kitaifa, utaratibu wa uekezaji na sheria ya usimamizi wa kifedha. Nalishukuru Bunge kwa kupitisha miswada hiyo muhimu na kuwa sheria.

Isitoshe, serikali yangu imechukua hatua muhimu kuhakikisha kuwepo kwa uthabiti katika biashara ndogo ndogo pamoja na kuimarisha uchumi. Hatua hizo zimezaa matunda. Sasa naweza kuripoti kufikia mwisho wa kipindi cha matumizi ya pesa za serikali cha mwaka uliopita, sekta ya kilimo na ufugaji ziliimarika na Wakenya wameanza kuvuna matunda ya kuimarika kwa sekta hizo.

Kwa mfano sekta ya majani chai ilikua kwa kiwango cha aslimia 17, huku kiwango cha uuzaji wa mazao ya matunda na mboga kikikua kwa aslimia 10. Katika sekta ndogo ya sukari, kiwango cha miwa kiliongezeka kwa aslimia 15 huku kahawa ikiongezeka kwa aslimia 4.5.

Katika sekta ya Kawi, matumizi yake yaliongezeka kwa aslimia 8. Sekta ya utalii ambayo ilikuwa imeangamia katika muda wa miaka kadhaa iliyopita, hivi sasa imeimarika kwa aslimia 24 mwaka huu. Isitoshe, huduma ya simu za rununu iliongezeka kwa aslimia 58. Mizigo iliyopokelewa katika bandari ya Mombasa iliongezeka kwa kiwango cha aslimia 7.7

huku utengenezaji wa saruji ukiongezeka kwa aslimia 8 ambapo magari yaliyoundwa humu nchini yaliongezeka kwa aslimia 47

Katika sekta ya kifedha, jumla ya milki iliongezeka kwa kiwango cha aslimia 14. Kiwango cha ukopeshaji katika sekta ya kibinafsi kiliongezeka kwa shilingi bilioni 31 huku pato la Jumla La Taifa, likiongezeka kwa aslimia 2.4 mwaka uliopita ambacho ndicho kiwango kikubwa tangu mwaka wa 1997. Tunatarajia kiwango hicho kukua na kufikia aslimia 3 mwisho wa mwaka huu.

Ustawi huo ukiandamanishwa na uhibitaji wa ulipaji wa kodi umeongeza mapato yetu kwa aslimia 24.5 ikilinganishwa na miaka iliyopita. Faida ya ongezeko hilo itawafikia wale walioko katika ngazi za mashinani, ambapo serikali itatumia kati ya shilingi milioni 50 na 70 kwa mwaka kwa kila sehemu ya uwakilishi bungeni kufadhili miradi ya maendeleo. Raslimali hizi zinatolewa kupitia kwa: Hazina ya ustawi wa maendeleo ya maeneo ya uwakilishi bungeni, Hazina ya mabaraza ya miji, hazina ya misaada ya masomo ya sehemu za uwakilishi bungeni, hazina ya utengenezaji wa barabara na kampeini dhidi ya ugonjwa wa Ukimwi. Ukweli ni kwamba hili ndilo Bunge lenye uwezo mkubwa katika historia ya Kenya.

Lakini raslimali hizi ni za maendeleo ya wananchi. Nawasihi Waheshimiwa Wabunge kuwaelezea barabara wananchi mnaowawakilisha kwamba hizi ni pesa zao. Hivyo basi hawana budi ya kuhakikisha kwamba zinatumiwa ipasavyo kufadhili miradi mingi ya kimaendeleo. Mhasibu mkuu wa serikali atakagua kwa makini matumizi ya pesa hizo ili kuweza kutambua mapema mno utumizi wowote mbaya wa pesa hizo kwa lengo la kuchukua hatua zifaazo.

Bw. Spika ,

Katika muda wa majuma machache yaliyopita tumeshuhudia visa vya ghasia kuhusiana na mizozo ya ardhi. Ardhi ni raslimali haba ya kiuchumi na yenye kuzua hisia kali nchini. Kutokana na

utambuzi huu, serikali imeanzisha maongozi mapya ya ardhi yatakayowasilishwa Bungeni kujadiliwa kama maongozi ya serikali.

Na wakati huo huo, nawahimiza wabunge kuzingatia mashauriano wanaposhughulikia maswala ya ardhi. Tukiwa viongozi, kamwe hatupaswi kuwachochea watu kufanya ghasia wanaposhughulikia maswala ya ardhi. Hakuna chochote kisichoweza kusuluhishwa kisheria. Utaratibu wa kisheria na utawala ulioko wapaswa kutumiwa katika kusuluhisha mizozo ya ardhi.

Kutokana na hayo, nafurahi kuona kwamba Serikali ya NARC imeimarisha upimaji wa mashamba katika wilaya za Kwale, Meru Kaskazini na Mwingi. Hizi ndizo sehemu ambako shughuli hii imekuwa ikijikokota kwa muda wa miaka 40 iliyopita. Katika muda wa miaka miwili iliyopita, maelfu ya familia katika wilaya hizo wamepokea hati zao za umiliki wa mashamba. Shughuli hizo za upimaji wa mashamba zitaendelea kuimarishwa hadi zikamilike.

Swala lingine sawa na hilo ni lile la misitu, ambapo katika muda wa miaka iliyopita imeharibiwa vibaya mno. Nchi hii kwa sasa hivi iko na eneo la misitu la kiwango cha chini cha aslimia 2 cha eneo lote la misitu huku kiwango cha eneo la misitu kinachopendekezwa kimataifa ni aslimia 10. Hivyo basi serikali imeanzisha mpango wa kuondolea mbali makaazi yasiyo halali katika sehemu za misitu.

Ilibidi kufanywa maamuzi magumu ambayo yalisababisha dhiki kwa wanaohusika. Hii ni gharama ndogo ambayo sharti tuilipie. Hata hivyo muda usio mrefu sana, Wakenya wataanza kunufaika kutokana na maongozi hayo. Natoa wito kwa viongozi wote kuunga mkono shughuli hiyo na kujiepusha kuingiza siasa kwenye swala hilo. Tushirikiane kurejesha misitu rasmi ya serikali pamoja na ardhi ya misitu iliyotengwa.

Bw. Spika,

Vita dhidi ya ufisadi vinapewa kipau mbele na Serikali yangu. Nitaendelea kuongoza vita dhidi ya ufisadi wa aina yoyote ile, iwe unahusisha uelekezaji pesa kwingineko au kuchelewesha utekelezaji wa miradi. Vita dhidi ya ufisadi kamwe havipaswi kuhujumiwa na maswala duni ya kisiasa.

Hatupasi kukubali mgawanyiko katika mapambano ya kuangamiza maovu hayo ya ufisadi. Ufisadi ni wizi kutoka kwa kila mmoja wetu. Ufisadi huhujumu maendeleo ya taifa na kudunisha kiwango cha maisha cha watu wetu. Ni dhahiri kwamba tunapiga hatua kubwa katika vita hivyo. Kwa mfano tumeangamiza kabisa unyakuzi wa ardhi ya umma.

Bw. Spika ,

Kuhusu utaratibu wa utungaji wa sheria wakati wa kikao hiki, Serikali itawasilisha mswada kadhaa inayonuiwa kuharakisha utekelezaji wa ajenda za marekebisho ya kiuchumi na utawala. Mnamo mwezi Julai mwaka wa 2003, Serikali ilibuni Tume ya kisheria ya uchunguzi wa unyakuzi na utoaji usio halali wa ardhi ya umma iliyojulikana kama “Tume ya Ndung’u”. Serikali ilikubali mapendekezo yaliyowasilishwa na Tume hiyo na itawasilisha mswada kuhusu utekelezaji wa mapendekezo hayo. Ili kudhibiti utaratibu wa kisheria wa kupambana na ufisadi, serikali itawasilisha mswada wa marekebisho ya sheria ya maadili ya utendaji kazi wa umma.

Marekebisho hayo yanatarajiwa kusaidia kufichua habari kuhusu mali na utajiri kwa umma.

Bw. Spika,

Ili kushughulikia barabara swala la ununuzi wa bidhaa za umma, Serikali yangu itawasilisha mswada uliofanyiwa marekebisho wa ununuzi na uuzaji wa bidhaa za umma wa mwaka wa 2005. Mswada huo unakusudiwa kuweka utaratibu madhubuti wa ununuzi na utoaji huduma za umma. Wakati

utakapopitishwa kuwa sheria, sheria hiyo mpya itaharakisha utaratibu wa utoaji huduma na ununuzi wa bidhaa za umma. serikali haitakubali kuwa mateka wa utaratibu mrefu wa ununuzi wa bidhaa. Ucheleweshaji wa utekelezaji wa miradi ni kuwanyima wananchi uajiri na maisha bora. Tutaendelea kuhakikisha kwamba wananchi wanapata thamani ya kodi wanayolipa kwa Serikali. Mswada huo unashirikisha huduma maalum za ununuzi wa vifaa vya kudhibiti usalama.

Bw. Spika,

Ustadi wa mabaraza yetu ya wilaya ndio unaotathimini ustawi wa taifa lote. Hali ya mabaraza yetu ni ya kusikitisha. Hivyo basi tunahitaji kushughulikia kwa makini shughuli na usimamizi wa mabaraza ya Wilaya. Tuna fedha na maafisa wa kutosha kufanya miji yetu safi na ya kupendeza kwa raia wetu kuishi.

Serikali yangu inanuia kuwasilisha miswada ambayo itaimarisha mabaraza ya Wilaya. Tayari Serikali imekamilisha miswada ya kuanzisha Halmashauri ya usimamizi na uthibiti wa kifedha. Halmashauri hii itatarajiwa kurejesha uthabiti na usimamizi bora wa kifedha kwa mabaraza ya wilaya yalioathirika.

Kadhalika serikali inakamilisha mswada wa kubuni Mabaraza ya Wilaya. Mswada huu unanuiwa kutoa fursa ya kubuni Jiji Kuu la Nairobi.

Bw. Spika,

Wakati wa kikao kilichopita cha bunge, mswada uliopendekeza kuanzisha Hazina ya Afya ya Jamii ulipitishwa. Sababu kuu ya mswada huo ni kusambaza huduma za afya kwa raia. Serikali inatilia maanani na kutoa kipau mbele kwa swala la afya ya wananchi wetu na hivyo basi inaunga mkono kikamilifu jitihada hizo. Hata hivyo mswada huo utaleta gharama kubwa ambazo hazitaweza kutimizwa katika hali iliyoko ya kifedha nchini wakati huu. Hivyo basi Serikali yangu

itarejesha tena Bunge mswada huo ukiwa umefanyiwa marekebisho ili kutoa nafasi ya kutekeleza mpango wa hazina hiyo kwa awamu kulingana na utaratibu wa kifedha ulioko wakati huu.

Kuhusu Elimu, Serikali yangu itaendelea kutekeleza mabadiliko makubwa katika sekta hii kote nchini. Serikali imeratibu maongozi kuhusu “Jinsi ya Kukabiliana na Changa moto za Elimu, Mafunzo na Utafiti nchini Kenya karne ya 21” ambayo yatawasilishwa Bungeni.

Bw. Spika,

Katika kikao kilichopita, Bunge lilipitisha mswada wa marekebisho ya sekta ya benki mwaka wa 2004. Hata hivyo, kufuatia uchunguzi mkali uliofanyiwa mswada huo, baadhi ya vipengele vilipatikana na kasoro ambazo zahitaji kurekebishwa. Serikali itawasilisha tena mswada huo uliofanyiwa marekebisho ili kushughulikiwa na Bunge.

Kubuniwa kwa mazingara bora ya uekezaji ni moja wapo wa majukumu yanayozingatiwa sana na Serikali yangu. Hata ingawa sheria muhimu zimetungwa kuhusiana na sekta hii, ipo haja ya kutunga sheria nyingine zaidi ili kubuni mazingara bora zaidi ya uekezaji. Kutokana na hali hii. Serikali itawasilisha bungeni Mswada unaohusu Makampuni ili kutoa utaratibu wa kisasa wa kufanya biashara nchini. Sheria zisizostabili pamoja na masharti yasiofaa kuhusu makampuni yamekuwa kikwazo kikubwa kuafikia usimamizi bora wa makampuni.

Sambamba na hayo, serikali imeratibu mswada wa mwaka huu wa Akiba za Biashara Ndogo ndogo ambao utawasilishwa Bungeni kwa mjadala na hatimaye kupitishwa kama sheria. Mswada huu utashirikisha utoaji wa mikopo kwa wafanyabiashara ndogo ndogo na kuiwezesha sekta hiyo kustawi ambayo kwa wakati huu imewaajiri zaidi ya watu milioni 2.3.

Bw. Spika,

Wakati wa kikao kilichopita, Wabunge walijadiliana kuhusu mswada wa uuzaji mashirika ya umma na kutoa mapendekezo ambayo yalipaswa kujumuishwa katika mswada huo. Mswada huo uliofanyiwa marekebisho sasa uko tayari na utawasilishwa tena Bungeni. Utakapopitishwa, mswada huo utatoa utaratibu wa kisheria ambao utatoa mwongozo kuhusu shughuli za uuzaji mashirika ya umma kwa njia wazi na uwajibikaji. Sheria hii mpya itasaidia katika kubuniwa kwa Tume huru inayohusika na Uuzaji wa mashirika ya Umma ambayo itasimamia shughuli ya uuzaji wa mashirika yote ya umma.

Bw. Spika,

Udumishaji wa maendeleo hauwezi kuwepo bila usimamizi bora wa mazingira. Kutokana na hali hii, serikali itarejesha mswada kuhusu misitu ambao haukupitishwa na Bunge katika kikao kilichopita. Mswada huu umefanyiwa marekebisho na maoni ya Bunge na washika dau wote yamejumuishwa.

Inayohusiana na mswada huo ni mswada wa marekebisho wa Uhifadhi na usimamizi wa mbuga za Wanyama Wa Pori ambao ulipitishwa na Bunge mwezi Disemba mwaka uliopita. Baada ya kuuchunguza kwa makini mswada huu, Serikali ilionelea kuwa ipo haja ya kuandaa na kuwasilisha Bungeni maongozi kabambe na mswada ambao utashughulikia kikamilifu Uhifadhi na usimamizi wa mbuga za wanyama.

Kadhalika katika jitihada zetu za kufufua kilimo na ufugaji, Serikali yangu inanuia kuwasilisha miswada kadhaa na maongozi kwa Bunge. Miongoni mwa miswada na maongozi yatakayowasilishwa Bungeni ni:

- Maongozi ya serikali na mswada kuhusu ustawi wa kilimo cha pamba;
- Maongozi ya serikali kuhusu ukuzaji wa zao la pareto ambayo yananiwa kufufua sekta ya kilimo hicho;

Maongozi ya serikali kuhusu ufufuzi wa kilimo cha miwa na maongozi ya serikali na mswada kuhusu ustawi wa sekta ya ufugaji ng'ombe wa maziwa.

Mbali na hayo na kama njia ya kuthibiti demokrasia serikali pia itawasilisha Bungeni mswada kuhusu vyama vya kisiasa. Mswada huu unanuiwa kutoa utaratibu wa usajili wa vyama vya Kisiasa, usimamizi wa kidemokrasia na ufadhili kutoka serikalini.

Bw. Spika,

Kuhusu maswala ya kanda hii, Serikali inazingatia utaratibu wa ushirikishi wa kiuchumi na kisiasa wa eneo la Afrika Mashariki. Muungano wa Forodha wa Afrika mashariki ulianzishwa na ulianza kutekelezwa tarehe mosi mwezi Januari mwaka huu. Mswada unaohitajika unanuiwa kushirikisha Muungano huo wa forodha kuwa sheria iliyojumuishwa katika sheria za taifa la Kenya utawasilishwa katika Bunge hili. Maongozi ya serikali kuhusu utaratibu wa kuharakisha kuanzishwa kwa shirikisho la Afrika Mashariki pia utawasilishwa katika Bunge.

Bw. Spika,

Utaratibu wa amani ya Somalia ulifaulu na kukamilika mnamo mwisho wa mwezi Oktoba mwaka jana na kusaidia katika kubuniwa kwa serikali ya mpito ya Somalia. Raia wa Somalia sasa wana fursa ya kuwa na amani na maendeleo. Tunawahimiza wakubali serikali hiyo kwa moyo mkunjufu.

Kuhusu eneo la Kusini la Sudan, kutiwa saina kwa mkataba wa amani ulileta enzi mpya ya amani katika eneo la Kusini mwa Sudan.

Nawahimiza wafanya biashara wa Kenya kutumia fursa ya kuchipuka kwa nafasi za kibiashara kufuatia kupatikana kwa amani katika nchi za Sudan na Somalia.

Bw. Spika,

Serikali yangu ikishirikiana na Serikali za Ethiopia na Sudan inaimarisha ustawi wa barabara za lami na kujengwa kwa reli ili kuyaunganisha mataifa hayo na Kenya ndiposa tuweze kutumia kikamilifu mali nyingi ya kiuchumi iliyoko katika nchi hizi tatu. Tutafaulu kwa kujumuisha raslimali tulizo nazo katika nchi hizi tatu, kuomba ufadhili kutoka kwa washirika wetu wa kimaendeleo na pia kupitia ufungamano wa umma na sekta ya kibinafsi

Serikali ikishirikiana na Serikali ya Uganda pia inatafuta jinsi ya kupunguza gharama katika reli inayounganisha nchi hizi mbili ambayo ni ya muhimu sana kwa uchukuzi katika eneo hili. Hatua hii itaungwa mkono na mpango wa Serikali wa kufanya mabadiliko makubwa katika bandari ya Mombasa na kuwa bandari ya kukodisha, ambako huduma nyingi zitaendeshwa na wahudumu wa kibinafsi. Tumejitolea kuifanya bandari ya Mombasa kuwa moja wapo wa bandari bora zaidi katika ufuo wa Pwani ya mashariki barani Afrika.

Bw. Spika,

Nikigusia marekebisho ya katiba, Ningependa kuwahakikishia wabunge kwamba ukamilishwaji wa marekebisho ya katiba ni moja wapo wa swala ambalo serikali yangu na mimi binafsi nimelipa kipau mbele. Wabunge wanaelewa barabara juhudi kubwa zimefanywa kushughulikia maswala yanayozozaniwa katika kongamano kadhaa. Maridhiano kuhusu maswala hayo yataafikiwa hivi karibuni. Kufuatia kupitishwa kwa kifungo cha marekebisho ya katiba, sasa tupo katika utaratibu wa kuwasilisha mswada wa Katiba kielelezo iliyopitishwa Bomas kwa majadiliano Bungeni.

Sheria inahitaji Bunge kuafikiana makubaliano kuhusu yale yalioko katika mswada huo kupitia kamati teule ya Bunge. Matokeo ya maoni hayo yatawasilishwa kwa wakenya kuyakubali kupitia kura ya maoni. Nawahimiza Wabunge

kutupilia mbali maslahi yao ya kibinafsi na badala yake kushirikiana kama wakenya ili kukamilisha utaratibu wa marekebisho kwa muda mfupi iwezekanavyo. Ningependa kuongeza kusema kwamba Katiba sio kuhusu maslahi ya kibinafsi au ya makundi fulani. Ni kuhusu hali ya wakati huu na ya baadaye ya Kenya. Hivyo basi nawahimiza Wabunge wajiepushe na siasa za kimakundi wanaposhughulikia swala hili muhimu la Katiba. Kama taasisi, Bunge linawakilisha wakenya wote.

Bila shaka hakuna mtu anayepaswa kushuku mamlaka ya Bunge letu. Nalihimiza Bunge hili kama mtunzi wa ari na maono ya wakenya kushughulikia maswala mengine yaliosalia kwa ukakamavu na kwa ustadi.

Nikitamatisha, ningependa kuelezea kuridhika kwetu kwa msaada mkubwa ambao tumekuwa tukipata kutoka kwa washirika wetu wa kimaendeleo. Msaada huu umekuwa wa manufaa katika kuchangia juhudi zetu za kuimarisha maisha ya watu wetu. Tunatazamia kuendelea kupata msaada huo hasa katika ustawi wa muundo msingi, afya na elimu.

Hatimaye nawasihi Wabunge kuchukua muda kuchunguza na kushughulikia miswada hii na mingine itakayowasilishwa Bungeni kwa makini. Tukiwa Wabunge tunafahamu nchi hii ina vijana waliojaliwa na vipawa, wenye ujuzi na wanaofanya kazi kwa bidii. Kile kinachohitajika ni kuwapa shime kwa kutoa mazingara na maongozi bora ya kuwawezesha kujinufaisha. Hatupaswi kupoteza maono kuhusiana na jukumu hili muhimu.

Na kwa hayo, ni fursa yangu kutangaza kufunguliwa rasmi kwa kikao cha nne cha Bunge la tisa.

AHSANTENI NA MUNGU AWABARIKI NYOTE.

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY HON. MWAI KIBAKI,
C.G.H., M.P. PRESIDENT AND COMMANDER-IN-
CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC
OF KENYA, DURING THE STATE OPENING OF THE
FOURTH SESSION OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT,
WEDNESDAY, 16TH MARCH, 2005**

MR. SPEAKER,

Today, the Ninth Parliament begins its Fourth Session after the Christmas recess. I believe that Honourable Members took advantage of this opportunity to consult with their constituents on their development priorities. Honourable Members are now fully energized and equipped to deal with the business of the House in the coming months.

Mr: Speaker,

The Kenyan people place considerable responsibility and high expectations on the institution of Parliament. As the supreme organ of the State, Parliament is expected to provide leadership in tackling the challenges that continue to confront us. Some of these challenges include revival of the economy, governance and social well-being of the Kenyan people.

There is a common saying that the world has become a global village in which we must compete for limited resources and markets. In these circumstances, building human capacity, efficiency of our institutions of governance and providing modern legal frameworks for economic activities to take place, are critical to the enhancement of our country's competitiveness.

Mr. Speaker,

Economic recovery remains on top of the Government's agenda. The development of our country remains low by

international standards. Our effort to improve on the performance index calls for unity of purpose of our leadership and creation of an enabling environment to unleash the energies of our people. We have set ourselves a high economic growth rate of 7 per cent. This is achievable if we can focus more of our energies on economic activities, rather than dwelling on divisive and non-productive politics.

Since coming to office two years ago, my Government presented to this Parliament the Sessional Paper on the Economic Recovery Programme, followed by important Bills on economic management and governance. These Bills, which are now part of our laws, include; the Anti-Corruption and Economic Crimes Act, the Public Officer Ethics Act, the Kenya National Audit Act, the Investment Code and the Financial Management Act. I thank the August House for enacting these important laws.

In addition, my Government has taken specific measures to ensure macro-economic stability and revamp the economy. These measures have borne positive results. I can now report that at the end of the last financial year, the agricultural and livestock sectors were on an upward trend and Kenyans are beginning to reap the fruits of the improved situation. For example, the tea sub-sector grew by 17 per cent, while horticultural exports increased by 10 per cent. In the sugar sub-sector, cane deliveries increased by 15 per cent, while coffee deliveries rose by 4.5 per cent.

In the energy sector, consumption of electricity increased by 8 per cent. The tourism sector, which had been depressed for years, improved by 24 per cent. In addition, mobile telephone services increased by 58 per cent. Cargo at the Port of Mombasa expanded by 7.7 per cent. Cement production rose by 8 per cent and locally assembled vehicles increased by 47 per cent.

In the financial sector, the balance sheet of the banking sector expanded with total assets increasing by 14 per cent. Net lending to the private sector increased by 31 billion shillings. On the aggregate, GDP growth rate improved to 2.4 per cent last year, which is the highest since 1997. We expect to achieve at least 3 per cent growth by the end of this year.

This growth, together with intensified tax compliance, has increased our tax revenues by 24.5 per cent over the previous year. The benefits of the increased resource flows will be realized up to the grassroots level, where the Government is spending between 50 and 70 million shillings annually per constituency to support development projects. These resources are being channelled through the constituencies in the form of the Constituency Development Fund, Local Authorities Transfer Fund, Constituency Bursary Fund, the Roads Maintenance Fund and the HIV/AIDS campaign. Indeed, you Honourable Members stand out as the most empowered Members of Parliament in Kenya's history.

But these resources are for the development of the people. I urge Honourable Members to explain to your constituents that this is their money. They should, therefore, ensure that the money is used properly and efficiently. The Controller and Auditor-General is also alert, and will ensure that irregularities are detected early in order to effect appropriate corrective measures.

Mr. Speaker,

In the last few weeks we have witnessed incidents of violent disputes over land. Land is a limited economic resource, which attracts intense emotions in this country. In recognition of this, the Government has formulated a new land policy to be presented to the House as a Sessional Paper.

At the same time, I urge Honourable Members to pursue dialogue in dealing with land matters. As leaders, we should not

incite people to violence every time land issues arise. There is nothing that cannot be resolved through the law. The existing legal and administrative mechanisms should be employed fully in tackling land disputes.

In this regard, I am pleased to note that the NARC Government has accelerated land adjudication in Kwale, Meru North and Mwingi districts. These are areas where the process has been frustrated for the last 40 years. Over the last two years, thousands of families in the three districts have been issued with title deeds. Land adjudication will be intensified until it is completed.

Related to this is the precarious situation of our forests, which have over the years been depleted to a dangerous level. The country has less than 2 per cent forest cover, while the internationally recommended minimum forest cover is 10 per cent. The Government has, therefore, embarked on a programme of removing illegal settlements from the forests.

Some difficult decisions had to be made, that have caused suffering to the affected people. These are short-term costs that we have to pay. In the long run, this policy will benefit all Kenyans. I call on all leaders to support the exercise and avoid politicising the issue. Let us work together to restore the Government gazetted forests and trust land forests.

Mr. Speaker,

The fight against corruption is being accorded priority by my Government. I will continue to lead the fight against corruption in all its forms, whether it involves diversion of funds or inefficiency in the implementation of public projects. The fight against corruption should not be undermined by partisan politics.

We should not allow ourselves to be divided in our efforts to fight corruption. Corruption steals from all of us. It undermines

the development of our country and erodes the well being of our people. Indeed, I am glad to note that we are making good progress. We should maintain a united front in this fight. For example, we have totally eliminated grabbing of public land.

Mr Speaker,

Turning to the legislative programme for this Session, my Government will be tabling various legislations to speed up the implementation of the economic and governance reforms agenda. In July 2003, the Government set up a Commission of Inquiry into the Illegal and Irregular Allocation of Public Land, also known as the "Ndung'u Commission". The Government accepted the recommendations presented by the Commission, and will be tabling a Bill on implementation of these recommendations.

To further strengthen the legislative framework for combating corruption, the Government will be tabling a Bill seeking to amend the Public Officer Ethics Act. The amendment is intended to facilitate disclosure of information from wealth declarations to the public.

Mr. Speaker,

To comprehensively address the issue of public procurement, my Government will table a revised version of the Public Procurement and Disposal Bill, 2005. The overall objective of this Bill is to establish a sound legal framework for Public Procurement. When enacted, the new law will accelerate procurement procedures in Government.

The Government cannot allow itself to be held hostage by lengthy procedures. Delayed implementation of projects is a denial of jobs, services and better life for the people. We will continue to ensure that the Kenyan public gets value for the taxes they pay to the Government. The Bill also includes

specific provisions to govern procurement of security-related projects.

Mr. Speaker,

The performance of Local Authorities has a direct bearing on the rhythm of development of the entire country. The state of our urban centres is pathetic. We, therefore, need to pay special attention to the operations and management of Local Authorities. We have both the financial and human resources to make our towns clean and pleasant for our people to live in. My Government intends to table legislations, which will strengthen Local Authorities.

In this regard, the Government has already finalized a Bill for the establishment of a Financial Management and Control Board. The Board will be expected to restore the financial and management health of affected Local Authorities. In addition, the Government is in the process of finalizing the establishment of the Local Authorities Bill. This Bill is intended to provide for the creation of a Metropolitan City of Nairobi.

Mr. Speaker,

During the last Session of Parliament, a Bill proposing the introduction of National Social Health Insurance Fund was passed. The primary focus of the Bill is to increase access to healthcare services. The Government regards the health of our people as a top priority and, therefore, fully supports this initiative. However, this Bill has far reaching cost implications, which cannot be met under our current financial circumstances. My Government will, therefore, re-submit the amended Bill to Parliament. The amended Bill provides for the phased implementation of the scheme in line with the current fiscal framework.

With regard to education, my Government will continue with its sector-wide reform of education in the country. The

Government has also developed a Sessional Paper on “Meeting the Challenges of Education, Training and Research in Kenya in the 21st Century” to be tabled before the House.

Mr. Speaker, during the last Session, the House passed the Banking (Amendment) Bill, 2004. However, following in-depth scrutiny of the Bill, some of the clauses were found to contain ambiguities that needed to be rectified. The Government will be re-tabling an amended Bill for consideration by the House.

The creation of an enabling environment for investments is a key commitment of my Government. While key legislation in this area has already been enacted, there is need for further legislation to make the investment environment more hospitable. In this connection, the Government will table the Companies Bill to provide a modern framework for conducting business in this country. Outdated company laws and regulations have been a major obstacle to effective management of companies. Closely related to this, the Government has drafted the Deposit Taking Micro-Finance Bill (2005), which will be tabled before this House for debate and enactment. The Bill will facilitate credit to the micro enterprises, currently employing over 2.3 million people, and enable them to grow.

Mr. Speaker,

During the last Session, Honourable Members deliberated on the Privatization Bill and made recommendations that were to be incorporated in the Bill. A revised version of this Bill is now ready and will be tabled afresh. When enacted, the Bill will provide a legal framework to guide the privatization process in an open, transparent and accountable manner. The new law will also create an autonomous Privatization Commission to manage the privatization process.

Mr. Speaker,

Sustainable development cannot take place in the absence of prudent management of the environment. To this end, my Government will bring back the Forest Bill, which was not passed by Parliament during the last Session. The Bill has been reviewed and the contributions of the House and all stakeholders have been incorporated.

Related to this is the Wildlife Conservation and Management (Amendment) Bill which was passed by Parliament in December, last year. After detailed examination of this Bill, the Government concluded that there was need to prepare and table before the House a comprehensive Sessional Paper and a Bill which would adequately address wildlife conservation and management in its totality.

Furthermore, in our effort to revitalize agriculture and livestock, my Government intends to present several Bills and policy papers to Parliament. Among the Bills and policy papers to be tabled are:

- The Sessional Paper on cotton development and an enabling Bill;
- A Sessional Paper on pyrethrum aimed at revitalizing the pyrethrum industry;
- A Sessional Paper on revitalization of the sugar industry, and
- A Sessional Paper on the dairy industry and an enabling Bill.

Besides the above, and as part of our efforts towards entrenching our democracy, the Government will also table the Political Parties Bill. This is intended to provide an appropriate registration system for Political Parties, their democratic management and State funding.

Mr. Speaker,

Regarding regional issues, my Government remains focused on the process of the economic and political integration of the East African region. The East African Community Customs Union came into force on 1st January, this year. The necessary Bill aimed at facilitating the domestication of the Customs Union Law into the National Laws of Kenya will be tabled before this House. A Sessional Paper on the fast tracking of the establishment of the East African Federation will also be tabled.

Mr. Speaker,

The Somali Peace Process was successfully concluded at the end of October 2004 and culminated in the formation of the Somali Transitional Government. The people of Somalia now have a chance at peace and development. We encourage them to fully embrace the new government.

On Southern Sudan, the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement brought a new era of peace to Southern Sudan. I encourage the Kenyan Business Community to take advantage of the emerging business opportunities following realization of peace in Sudan and Somalia.

Mr. Speaker,

My Government in collaboration with the Governments of Ethiopia and the Sudan is promoting development of tarmac roads and railways to link Kenya with the two countries so that we can exploit the enormous economic potential that exists in our three countries. We will achieve this through mobilization of internal resources, external financing from development partners and through public-private partnerships. My Government, together with the Government of Uganda, is also concessioning the Kenya-Uganda Railway, which is a vital transport system for this region. This will be complimented by the Government's plan to transform the port of Mombasa into a

landlords port, where most of the services will be conducted by private operators. We are determined to make Mombasa one of the most efficient ports on the Eastern Coast of Africa.

Mr. Speaker,

Turning to the review of the Constitution, I want to assure Honourable Members that the completion of the constitutional review process remains my personal priority and a priority of my Government. As members are aware, significant efforts have been made to address the contentious issues in several forums. Consensus on these issues is certainly within reach. Following the passage of the Constitution of Kenya Review (Amendment) Act, we are now in the process of bringing the Bomas Constitutional draft bill to Parliament for debate.

The law requires Parliament to develop consensus on the content of the Bill through the Parliamentary Select Committee. The outcome will be presented to the Kenyan people for adoption in a referendum. I urge Members to put aside personal interests and to work together as Kenyans to complete the review process in the shortest time possible.

I would like to add that the constitution is not about individual or sectarian interests. It is about the present and the future of Kenya. I, therefore, urge Honourable Members to avoid sectarian politics while dealing with the important issue of the Constitution. As an institution, this House represents the entire Kenyan people.

Accordingly, nobody should doubt the sovereign authority of our Parliament. I urge this House, as the custodian of the common will and vision of the Kenyan people, to deal with the remaining issues in a sober and objective manner.

As I conclude, I would like to express our appreciation for the immense support we have continued to receive from our Development Partners. This assistance has been very useful in

augmenting our own efforts to improve the livelihoods of our people. We look forward to continued support especially in the areas of infrastructure development, health and education.

Finally, I appeal to Honourable Members to take time to critically, but positively, consider the Bills that will be tabled for discussion throughout this Session. As Honourable Members are aware, this country has many talented, skilled and hard-working young people. All that is needed is to empower them by providing an enabling legal and policy environment.

With these remarks, it is now my honour and pleasure to declare the Fourth Session of the Ninth Parliament officially open.

THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU ALL.