

**SPEECH 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
ON THE OCCASION OF MADARAKA DAY CELEBRATIONS
1st JUNE, 1990**

DEAR FELLOW KENYANS,

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Madaraka Day is a memorable occasion in the history of our country. On this day, we commemorate the attainment, twenty-seven years ago, of internal self-government, when we took the first major constitutional step towards placing the responsibility of running this nation firmly in the hands of wananchi led by a popularly elected Government.

We take pride in the challenges which these responsibilities entail in our daily lives. We are pleased that our friends from all over the world have joined us today in celebrating this important occasion. We thank all those who have sent us greetings and messages of support. We assure them that we value their friendship and will continue to do everything we can to strengthen the bonds that bind us.

Dear Fellow Kenyans,

Madaraka simply means responsibility. Since independence, we have been largely responsible for our nation's destiny. Over the years, we have faced many challenges. Through unity, we have surmounted most of them. As a result, our nation has made enormous progress. It is not for me to remind you of all the great achievements Kenya has made since independence as a result of the responsible manner in which both the Government and people of this nation have gone about managing their affairs. These achievements should be obvious for all to see and appreciate.

Unfortunately, of late, there have been those who wish to belittle this nation's achievements. There are those who seem to take delight in mocking everything this nation stands for: who indulge in lies and distortions aimed at distracting the people from the heavy responsibilities that face this nation today and in the days ahead of us. This is not the occasion to do battle with such false prophets. Ultimately truth will prevail and the people will reject the misguided attempts being made in some quarters to sow seeds of disunity in this nation and reverse the pace and direction of progress this nation has been making since the first Madaraka Day.

The truth is that during the past one year alone, our country's economy has grown by nearly five per cent despite adverse conditions of balance of payments brought about by declining prices of our major exports. This rate of growth compares favourably with growth in many countries in the world today.

Our political stability continues to attract foreign investment and assistance. In food production, we are almost self-sufficient in a continent in which food deficits and scarcity are the order of the day. Indeed, our farmers are showing the real meaning of responsibility as they continue to increase farm productivity. On the Government's part, supportive measures are being implemented to maintain attractive producer prices, timely provision of necessary farm inputs and prompt payment of farmers for their produce. We have done everything possible to feed our growing population, but we have also managed, through prudent policies, to reduce the rate of our population growth. From a growth rate of nearly 4 per cent per annum a decade ago, our population is now growing at 3.58 per cent per year, and the rate continues to fall. This ensures that we can produce the number of children that each Kenyan family can afford to take care of with love. Children are our investment for the future. Our commitment in this regard is to be seen by our initiative in promulgating the U.N. declaration on the right of the child. A world conference on the child will be convened in September this year at the United Nations headquarters in New York and Kenya intends to make its fullest contribution to the conference deliberations.

Dear Fellow Kenyans,

Kenyans in all walks of life have risen to the challenge of responsibility. Look around you in any direction and you will see a hard working neighbour or group giving meaning to the concept of Madaraka. It is responsible Kenyans, men and women, toiling away day and night in their respective stations in life who keep this great nation on the move. Most of them are unsung heroes whose contribution to nation building is unfortunately all too often taken for granted.

This year alone we have reason as a nation to take pride in the responsible manner in which our researchers and academicians have met the challenges of modern nation building. Our researchers at KEMRI have given the world what is probably the first effective treatment for the dreaded killer disease AIDS. In a few months' time, it will be my greatest honour to officially launch KEMRON, the Kenyan developed anti-AIDS drug, as commercially available, not just in Kenya, but elsewhere where millions of people face death as a result of this terrible disease.

Recently, our researchers and engineers at the University of Nairobi built the first Kenyan-made car—Nyayo car. Arrangements are well in hand to turn this feat into a viable commercial and industrial venture.

The stories of KEMRON and the Nyayo car are but the tip of a bigger story that tells of the responsible manner in which the majority of Kenyans are going about the business of building this country into a great nation. It is a story that may not grab the headlines and press publicity that irresponsible political pronouncements often get. But it is the true story of this nation and its achievements, and it is a story to be truly proud of.

One achievement of which we are exceptionally proud of is our contribution of a battalion to the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) during the process leading up to the independence of Namibia early this year. In addition we contributed greatly to the success of the pre-independence elections in that country. We consider it an honour to have been requested

to make these contributions in the form of a disciplined armed force which is even today serving to train the army of the new nation of Namibia. It is an honour the world has bestowed upon our nation before when we have been called upon to provide similar peace-keeping services in Chad, in the Iran-Iraq conflict and in pre-independence of Zimbabwe. On behalf of the whole Kenya nation I wish to thank our armed forces for the exemplary manner they have performed their duties abroad and for the glory they have brought their motherland. We thank them for helping cement brotherly relations between Kenya and Namibia and wish the people of Namibia peace and tranquility as they embark on the task of building a prosperous free nation that is a shining example of racial harmony.

We cannot, of course, rest on our laurels in any sphere of human endeavour. We live in a changing world and must adjust to the circumstances of the times. Even though we are making commendable economic progress, we face enormous challenges ahead. The cost of imported oil continues to rise. Even though we expect to get KSh. 18 billion in external loans during the next three years, KSh. 13.5 billion of that, will be paid back, to service the country's foreign debt. The result is that only 10 per cent of our total development expenditure will be effectively financed through external loans. Too many of our industries are net foreign exchange spenders, and generally there is a lot that we need to do to expand our export earnings. All this will call for a major restructuring of our industries. It will call for some painful measures aimed at making our exports competitive on the world market. We continue to face enormous problems in the management of our natural resources and the preservation of the quality of our environment. We will need to redouble our conservation efforts at home and work with the rest of the world community to strengthen measures which can ensure sustainable growth for mankind on this planet.

Elsewhere in the management of our national affairs we need increased responsibility and accountability. We in Government are servants of the people. We are responsible to the people. That is the essence of Madaraka. To be responsible to the people is to be

accountable to them. Above all it is to be responsive both to the needs of the people and the feelings of the people in everything that houses the lives of the ordinary citizen. Ours is a responsible and responsive Government, and I assure you, dear fellow Kenyans, that I intend to keep it that way as long as I am your President.

Because we are a responsible Government, we have no intention of forsaking the achievements we have made as a united people by indulging in artificial experiments on how our nation should be ruled. We carried out some of these experiments a long time ago. We examined the various ideologies that were offered to us from different parts of the world. We made our choice a long time ago. Our choice was and still is for one people, one Government, one party, and because we know from bitter experience what the alternative entails, we refuse to be enticed or intimidated away from our chosen path and national goal.

But we are also a responsible Government, and over the past few weeks in which we have had a public debate on the virtues or demerits of our political system, we have kept our ears open to all manner of proposals on how to conduct our national affairs. As you know, during the past few weeks I have travelled the length and breadth of this country talking and listening to the people, there is no doubt in my mind what the people of this country want. They want to remain one nation under one party. They want to live in peace. They want to take part in the development of this country. That is the message they are sending me. That is the message they are sending the leaders of this country. And it is a message which I hope our friends abroad, whatever their preferences regarding political parties, are listening to carefully.

Dear fellow Kenyans,

We have come this far because we have consciously steered this country along the path of peace. We have moulded one united nation of various ethnic and racial groups and diverse religious beliefs. We must now stand united under one party, one Government and as one strong nation built upon the foundations we have laid.

But let it not be misconstrued, as a few people are misconstruing that we are building a monolith. Far from it. In our ruling party there are sufficient avenues that our people can use to bring about meaningful change. Our party, Kanu is a party of the people. It reflects the diversity and complexity of our society. It is not a monolithic party and it was never meant to be. We in Kanu welcome constructive proposals on how to make the party more responsive to the needs and wishes of the people. Kanu is a pragmatic party. Its only mandate is to serve the people, therefore, it welcomes all who wish to enhance its service to the people.

My dear fellow Kenyans,

On this great occasion, I stand before you to express my gratitude for the unflinching support you have always given me in carrying out the responsibilities of my office. I thank our friends abroad whose assistance has gone a long way in lessening the burden that we have all had to shoulder in our task of nation building.

At this juncture I would like to spare some thoughts for the events now unfolding in South Africa. We appreciate the contribution which friends of Africa have made to the wind of change now blowing in that country. We know, however, that in the last analysis it is the people of South Africa themselves who will shape the destiny of their nation, and it is with the utmost of sincerity and joy that we applaud the bold and statesman-like steps taken by South African President, F. W. De Klerk in releasing nationalist leader Nelson Mandela, unbanning the African National Congress, and initiating talks with black leaders with the aim of bringing an end to apartheid. We all look forward to a day in the not too distant future when not only South Africans but the world at large will celebrate the birth of a free multi-racial and dynamic South Africa.

I know I speak for every Kenyan when I say we look forward soon to welcome A.N.C. leader Nelson Mandela in Kenya. He has waged a struggle against injustice which the people of Kenya understand only too well, for they too waged a similar struggle against racial injustice and minority rule to free themselves and recover their national dignity.

With the coming to an end of apartheid and all the suffering it has inflicted upon Africa, it is our hope that all areas of conflict on this great continent—Mozambique, Ethiopia, Sudan, Angola, will see peace also in the not too distant future, thereby realizing the resources, both human and material, that are necessary for the development of Africa. We have it within our power to bring peace and prosperity to this continent and Kenya stands ready to join our brothers and sisters elsewhere on the continent to lay down a firm foundation for the future welfare of our children and our children's children.

I thank the almighty God for the blessings He has seen fit to bestow upon our nation. I ask Him to continue to guide us in Love, Peace and Unity in the years ahead.

THANK YOU.