

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT, HON.
DANIEL T. ARAP MOI, C.G.H., M.P., ON THE OCCASION OF
MADARAKA DAY CELEBRATIONS, ON
SATURDAY, 1st JUNE, 1991**

MY FELLOW KENYANS,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

We assemble here today to celebrate the 28th Anniversary of the day we attained internal self-government. Madaraka Day is an important day for us and I am glad that, many of our friends have sent us messages of best wishes and goodwill. I convey our deep appreciation to them all.

Madaraka Day commemorates the turning point in our nation's history from domination by a foreign power into freedom. On this occasion many Kenyans draw diverse and fond memories of that struggle for our independence. But the central theme of this day is our long and bitter war for our right to be free. We were not disheartened by the heavy loss of human life and property. But we knew all along what lay ahead of the great sacrifices we were making. It is as a result of this commitment to our cause that on 1st June, 1963, we won the right to manage our affairs.

The best tribute we can pay to the great sons and daughters of this land, who lost their lives so that we may be free, is to manage our affairs in a mature manner and with a high sense of patriotism. We must respect ourselves and be nationalistic in order to be respected by others. We also need to protect our hard-won freedom. But above all, we should be steadfast in pursuing the noble objective of building a strong, independent and prosperous nation, for the pride of our children and the generation to come.

We may as a country have had shortfalls in our development targets, but so have other nations. Indeed, we may not have accomplished our original objectives of eliminating ignorance, poverty and disease, but we have nevertheless made great strides in combating these social ills. We have put in place the necessary infrastructure for rapid economic development. However, we have many challenges to overcome and in unity and with determination I know we shall

succeed. We must, therefore, embrace and practice a work ethic characterized by discipline, initiative and dedication. It is out of hard work and confidence in ourselves that this nation will prosper.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you know, our economy has grown steadily over the years despite the economic upheavals that have been experienced in other parts of the world. We have achieved considerable progress in areas such as tourism, industry and commerce. There are problems, however, but I am encouraged to note that we have been able to identify these problems and their possible solutions.

These include, the Government's decision to restructure the state corporations sector mainly to avoid further dependence on public funds. The corporations have, therefore, been classified into strategic and non-strategic. Some of the non-strategic corporations will be considered for sale to private enterprise. In this connection, appropriate arrangements will be made to give Kenyans an equal opportunity of ownership through shareholding in these corporations.

We are also looking into the problem of unemployment which continues to plague our country due to the rising population pressure. This is compounded by the fact that the world is facing an economic recession aggravated by the recent devastating war in the Gulf region. Adverse effects on the economy have been very high. For instance, our tourism industry was dealt a heavy blow through cancelled hotel bookings. Other external economic factors include loss of foreign exchange earnings, diminished exports and escalated prices of imports. All these have made worse the unemployment situation.

We should also direct our efforts more vigorously towards the full exploitation of the agricultural sector. I am, however, aware of the factors which militate against the farmers' efforts in this direction. Such constraints include the erratic rain patterns, rising market prices for agricultural products and the escalating costs of farm inputs. My Government will continue to do everything possible to minimise the effects of these unfavourable factors.

On road transport, statistics indicate that every year we lose an average of 1,500 lives in traffic accidents. We have already lost nearly 1,000 people in only five months into the year. This may, therefore, turn-out to be the worst year if this trend continues. Without a change in our driving attitude, no amount of traffic rules, road-blocks or other punitive measures could erase the current spate of carelessness on our roads. It is, therefore, up to us as pedestrians, passengers or motorists to exercise caution on the roads. It is through courtesy, proper maintenance of our vehicles and strict observation of our traffic rules and regulations that we shall reduce the loss of life and property.

My Fellow Kenyans,

Today, the world is rife with upheavals and violence. Of immediate concern to us is the situation in some of our neighbouring countries. The uncertainties in these countries have occasioned an exodus of refugees into our country. We have done everything possible to accommodate these people despite our scarce resources. A number of friends have assisted us and we are grateful to them. I hope that those accorded refuge here will not abuse our hospitality. More importantly, we expect them to refrain from engaging in activities of political nature against authorities in their countries of origin or in criminal acts against our people.

Kenyans have many lessons to learn from the plight of these displaced people. As I have often said, it is the ordinary mwananchi who is the worst victim when a chaotic situation emerges in any country. As a result of the turmoil in the neighbouring countries, there are many innocent children, women and men who are now homeless. They have suddenly been turned into poor people with no food, no shelter and no hope. Indeed, this is a life of misery that I would not wish any Kenyan to experience.

I know that the majority of Kenyans are with me in the desire and prayer for continued peace and security. However, there are those who would wish otherwise. I urge these few people to synchronize their thinking with those of the majority of Kenyans;

to value the well-being of Kenyans and to recognize their yearning to live in harmony as a united people. It is, therefore, the primary responsibility of every Kenyan to always defend our nationhood and to jealously protect the sanctity of our constitution and the laws of the land.

Elsewhere in Africa, the current black-on-black violence in South Africa continues to disrupt any process towards majority rule. I once again appeal to all parties involved in the violence not to lose sight of the original objective --to establish a non-racial democratic South Africa. The leaders of A.N.C. and the Inkatha Movement must, therefore, come to grips with reality that the attainment of this noble objective is as much their responsibility as it is to the other people of South Africa.

My Dear Kenyans.

As we celebrate this day, we should remind ourselves that the Kenyans who fought for our independence displayed a remarkable degree of discipline and self-denial. Those of us who are now enjoying the achievements of those gallant sons and daughters of our land must protect the dignity of the African people and our continent.

You all have heard the Kiswahili proverb which says *Umoja wa fisi umemlaza simba na njaa*. We should, therefore, bear in mind the fact that those who divided and ruled Africa for many years may not have abandoned those colonial tactics. Consequently, it is our duty to maintain and further strengthen our unity in order to defend the sovereignty of our nation. We should not allow narrow tribal or personal interest to divide and mislead us.

It is now, more than ever before, when the machinations of outsiders are causing havoc in young and fragile nations, that we need to rekindle the flame that gave us the courage, strength and determination to fight successfully against formidable odds to win the right to manage our affairs.

Finally, I wish to remind Kenyans that if we allow ourselves to be pushed off-course or to sing and dance to the tune of others, then we shall be betraying the many gallant and heroic Kenyans who shed their blood for the freedom that we today enjoy and celebrate.

GOD BLESS YOU ALL.

GOD BLESS KENYA.

THANK YOU.