

**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 MADARAKA DAY  
CELEBRATIONS, 1ST JUNE, 2007**

**DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,  
FELLOW KENYANS,**

It gives me great joy to join you in marking the 44th Anniversary of Madaraka Day. On this occasion, I convey my greetings to all Kenyans wherever they are gathered.

I also express, on behalf of all Kenyans, our appreciation to our friends who have joined us in celebrating this occasion today, as well as those who have expressed solidarity with us through messages of goodwill.

Madaraka Day commemorates an important milestone in our national history. On this day forty-four years ago, we assumed the responsibility of managing our internal affairs.

This day is a call to all Kenyans to renew their commitment to carry forward the agenda of our founding fathers of building a free, just and prosperous nation.

It is also a reminder to all of us that the well-being of our society now and in the future depends on our individual and collective actions. To succeed in this, we must all focus on strengthening our unity and sense of nationhood.

**Fellow Kenyans,**

Four years ago on my first Madaraka Day as President, I shared with you my vision of a new Kenya. It was a vision of a Working Nation in which all our people would become productive once again, and enjoy increased economic prosperity as well as civil and political liberties.

I pledged that our national institutions would get working again for the common good of all of us. Looking back, I am glad to note that we have steered our national affairs in the right direction. Indeed, things have become better in all spheres of our national life.

On the economic front, the economy grew by 6.1 per cent last year. This means we are better off both socially and economically for the fourth year in a row.

All key sectors of the economy registered improved performance, with Manufacturing and Agriculture growing by 6.9 per cent and 5.4 per cent respectively, while Wholesale and Retail Trade expanded by 11 per cent. Transport and Communications also expanded by 11 per cent.

Similarly, Building and Construction grew by 6.3 per cent, while Hotels and Restaurants expanded by 15 per cent. The sustained economic growth over the last four years has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of Kenyans living below the poverty line from 56 per cent to 46 per cent.

The Government is also aggressively implementing rural electrification schemes in order to transform the lives of our rural communities. Electric power is not a luxury, but a necessary requirement for the development of the rural areas.

In this regard, over the past one year, 377 grid extension rural electrification schemes covering trading centers, secondary schools, youth polytechnics, health centres and public water supplies have been completed across the country. A further 340 schemes are scheduled for completion by September this year.

In addition, another 608 schemes are scheduled to commence soon and be completed by December, 2007. We are working towards the day when majority of Kenyan homes, in every corner of our country will have electricity.

In the Health sector, the number of health facilities increased by over 1000. Today, we are progressively reducing the distances covered by Kenyans, especially mothers and children in search of health services. Wananchi are enjoying better medical care, including free treatment for children under the age of five.

The Government is also providing free medicines for Malaria, HIV/AIDS and T.B. for everybody. Our aim is to make sure that all Kenyans have easy access to public healthcare services.

We have also successfully revived strategic institutions which support Agriculture, such as the Kenya Meat Commission, the Agricultural Finance Corporation and the Kenya Co-operative Creameries.

In the public sector, we have implemented major reforms that have streamlined the operations of parastatals and transformed them into profit-making enterprises.

We have also continued to improve governance by enhancing accountability and efficiency in the Public Service. For example, the introduction of Performance Contracts and Service Delivery Charters has greatly improved efficiency and accountability in the use of public resources.

This reform programme is being expanded to embrace all public offices.

It is gratifying that our efforts have been recognized internationally. The United Nations has awarded our country the prestigious 2007 United Nations Public Service Award.

I congratulate all public servants for earning this award and I urge them to work even harder to improve the quality of services to our people.

In the political sphere, we have entrenched the democratic culture and Kenyans now exercise their civil and political rights freely and without any fear or hindrance.

In this regard, I wish to emphasize that political parties are free to campaign anywhere in this country. That is what democracy is all about.

The media also enjoy greater freedom today than at any other time in the history of our country. Protection of freedom of expression and the press is very important to me. Let me assure members of the media fraternity that my Government has no intention of curtailing press freedom.

We will continue to work with media to ensure that press freedom is respected and entrenched in our society. This is essential not only because it is a basic right, but also because it is vital for the development of our democracy.

Fellow Kenyans,

Looking back at where we started, it is clear that we have made a major leap forward. We have made this remarkable progress not just because of the prudent management and focus of my Government, but also because of the working spirit embodied by all Kenyans.

We Kenyans have shown that when we put our minds and energies to something, we can be successful. Truly, things have become better for the majority of our people and I want to assure you all that they will continue to get even better.

Let us therefore continue to work hard because this is the best way we can create wealth for ourselves, our children and for our country. Those who have land on which to farm, should utilize it fully and also apply new farming methods to improve productivity.

Tree-planting should be a part of our farming culture. I encourage everyone to plant trees every planting season, every year. We cannot have enough trees in this country.

In addition to being vital for the environment and beauty of our country, trees are now also a very important source of income because of the high prices timber and wood materials are fetching.

Fellow Kenyans,

As the Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation comes to an end this year, we have developed a new economic blueprint for transforming our country into a dynamic and internationally competitive country, with high standards of living for all our people.

The Kenya Vision 2030 provides a roadmap for the development of our country over the next 25 years. However, to start with, the Vision will be implemented on the basis of a five-year plan beginning next year at a cost of 500 billion shillings.

My appeal to all Kenyans is to embrace this roadmap which will guarantee present and future generations a high quality of life.

Fellow Kenyans,

One area that has raised concern amongst Kenyans is the issuance of national identity cards. The Government has put in place measures to increase production of national identity cards from 5,000 to 25,000 per day.

The national identity card is an important document that is a right for every Kenyan who attains the age of 18. There should not be any excuse whatsoever for failing to provide this document to a Kenyan in a timely manner.

Those who have been most severely affected by delays in issuance of identity cards are the youth. Some of them have lost valuable opportunities as a result of not having this vital document.

The Ministry of State for Immigration and Registration of Persons should therefore put in place clear guidelines to ensure that both the applications and processing of identity cards is done within clearly defined time-frames.

Possession of identity cards will enable the youth to take advantage of various Government initiatives such as the National Youth Enterprise Development Fund. It will also allow them to discharge their civic duties, including participating in elections.

Moreover, the economic measures we are implementing are increasing employment opportunities for the youth. To provide skills to the youth, the Government has started a process where a model youth polytechnic is being put up in each district throughout the country.

Under this programme, 16 youth polytechnics are currently under construction. Funds for construction of an additional 25 youth polytechnics will be provided in the coming financial year.

The women of Kenya have also been at the core of development of our society. Despite lack of adequate support mechanisms, Kenyan women have continued to be enterprising and highly innovative.

My Government is committed to tapping the enormous energy and potential of our women by removing all obstacles, whether cultural or legal, that constrain their contribution to the development of our society. This financial year, we will be launching the Women's Enterprise Fund following my Jamhuri day announcement last year.

Fellow Kenyans,

My Government's programme of devolving funds to constituencies has been very successful. Last year, for example, the Government disbursed over 54 billion shillings to constituencies to enable Wananchi implement projects of their choice.

Through the Constituency Development Fund programme, Wananchi have built health centres, schools, boreholes and many other development projects.

Furthermore, the implementation of Free Primary Education has raised the current enrolment of students at this level to 8 million pupils. We are now focusing on secondary school education.

Towards that end, I recently announced that starting January next year, the Government will pay tuition fees for all secondary school students in public schools. The implementation of this policy is going to increase student enrolment in secondary schools.

I, therefore, encourage communities to focus C.D.F. resources towards the construction of more classrooms in secondary schools.

As a result of these policies in education, the future of our young people is assured. We are progressively expanding opportunities for our children regardless of their economic or family backgrounds.

The removal of tuition fees from secondary schools will make it possible for children from low-income families to enroll in secondary schools.

This policy, coupled with bursary funds, will bring us closer

enable us to develop the skilled and adaptive labour force that is essential for the growth of the economy.

Fellow Kenyans,

Security for all Kenyans is very important. Kenyans should be able to undertake their daily activities without feeling insecure. Those who are bent on criminal activities must be dealt with firmly by our security agencies.

Some of these criminals have taken away lives of police officers who are in the frontline in the protection of Wananchi. We will not allow criminals to get away with wanton acts of violence.

Although unemployment has sometimes been cited as a cause for the rise in crime, it cannot be used to justify violent crime. On the contrary, there are many low-income earners who are honest and law abiding.

I thank members of the public for assisting the Government to apprehend criminals. Information received from members of the public has enabled the Government to apprehend some of the most wanted criminals and bring them to justice.

Once again, I would like to emphasize that criminals are known people who live in our homes and communities. It is our individual and collective responsibility to report them to the authorities, including your own Members of Parliament and councillors. The Government will protect the identity of anyone who provides information on criminals.

Fellow Kenyans,

Madaraka Day is an embodiment of our individual and collective responsibility to build this nation. At the time of independence, we appreciated that as individual communities



and tribes, we could achieve little, but together, nothing could stand in our way.

However, over the years, that confidence has been undermined by tribal tendencies. Tribalism is a dangerous social and political ill with the potential to tear our nation and its people apart. We must fight tribalism from all fronts.

Leaders have a special responsibility to nurture national cohesion and to condemn those who encourage tribalism in order to achieve their selfish interests. It is a shame that some political leaders have taken to whipping up tribal sentiments as a tool for pushing their own political agenda.

I urge wananchi to reject such leaders. After all, we are all members of one community and one nation. Let us be proud to be Kenyan.

In this regard, I am encouraged by the youth of Kenya for largely disregarding tribalism. Their generation gives us hope that the vice of tribalism can be eliminated from our society.

I wish to conclude by making a few remarks on the East African Community. The negotiations on the protocol of the free movement of persons, labour, services and right of establishment have at last begun.

Once concluded, this protocol will enable the people of East Africa to move freely and settle and do business and work anywhere within the Community. I call upon Kenyans to take advantage of new opportunities emerging in our region.

Finally, Fellow Kenyans,

As we celebrate yet another year of self-governance, we should all ask ourselves what kind of Kenya we desire. Over the last four and a half years, we have rediscovered ourselves.

We now know that it is possible for us to rise above hopelessness and that our dreams can in fact now be transformed into reality and prosperity for all of us. We need to continue on this assured path of stability and progress.

I urge you to join me in relentlessly pursuing the goal of making Kenya the great country that it is, and a place we can all proudly call our home.

*THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU ALL.*