

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT, HON.
DANIEL T. ARAP MOI, C.G.H., M.P., ON THE OCCASION
OF JAMHURI DAY, ON THURSDAY,
12th DECEMBER, 1991**

MY DEAR KENYANS,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

As we celebrate this memorable day, I wish to send a message of goodwill to all Kenyans wherever they may be. I also extend our appreciation and gratitude to ambassadors and high commissioners accredited to Kenya and to all our friends who have sent us greetings. Kenyans value your friendship and we are grateful for your support.

Today we mark the 28th Anniversary since Kenya became an independent nation. I wish to pay tribute on behalf of every Kenyan, to all men and women who sacrificed their lives and liberty so that we may be free from colonial domination. The freedom we enjoy today is as a result of the struggle by many towards independence. Those who lost their lives during the anti-colonial struggle did so, so that Kenyans could regain freedom to determine their own destiny.

Since we attained independence, the country has registered remarkable progress in many vital spheres of national life. Indeed in the face of world-wide economic hardships, and severe limitations of resources, Kenyans can be proud of their performance. Our growth rate in all sectors of the economy is best exemplified by the fact that we have always honoured our foreign debt obligations. Since 1986, my government has implemented the adjustment programme as articulated in Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1986, on economic management for renewed growth. Pragmatic and deliberate policies have been introduced to ensure a sustainable economic growth and to attract both local and foreign investments.

The effect of these policies can best be seen in the area of output, exports, employment and diversification. For instance, the Investment Promotion Centre has processed 230 new projects with an investment value of ten billion shillings and potential employment opportunities for 23,200 people since 1988. Indeed employment opportunities in the manufacturing sector have been on the increase since 1988, indicating that the new policies are realizing their objectives. It is notable that since 1986 manufactured exports have increased by 70 per cent compared to 7 per cent for overall exports. Growth of Government employment has slowed down considerably resulting in a cut down on the Civil Service wage bill. That, together with the parastatal reform programme currently in place, will lead to a further reduction of the overall budget deficit.

Although we have done quite well in the overall management of our economy, there are certain areas where our performance should be improved. This is particularly true of Government revenue collection. Some officers and departments charged with the responsibility of collecting revenue have relaxed in their work. Today, there are individuals and organizations which owe the Government large sums of money in form of taxes and other levies. Indeed, some Government officials have been reluctant to collect revenue from certain quarters for reasons outside the national interest.

People involved in this unpatriotic behaviour, should now be warned that my government will deal with them firmly and in accordance with the law. If the Government is to deliver services to wananchi, then all those who owe it money must pay now or risk prosecution. Similarly, individuals and organizations who owe money to State-owned organizations must follow suit. As you already know, the Government is currently studying the performance of all parastatals with a view to taking appropriate action to remedy the situation in the sector. Already a number of these parastatals have been identified and advertised for sale to the public. Members of the public, co-operative societies and companies are encouraged to bid for them.

In addition to these measures, those individuals who may have mismanaged some of these parastatals will be held responsible for their action. I am therefore directing the Attorney-General in liaison with the relevant departments of Government to peruse all the audit reports of the ailing parastatals and take action against anybody who may have misappropriated public funds. At the same time, the Parastatal Reform Action Plan must be executed with diligence and speed to obviate further drainage of the Exchequer.

As I have said before, no country can claim to be independent if it cannot feed its people. My government will, therefore, continue to assist farmers through provision of technical advice and necessary inputs to ensure that our country is self-sufficient in food. The government will also continue to pursue appropriate agricultural policies so as to sustain the dynamic growth of this sector.

MY FELLOW KENYANS,

In 1988, the Government authorized local authorities, and in particular the Nairobi City Commission and the municipalities to levy a service charge to expand their sources of revenue. At that time, the local authorities had complained that inadequate resources were frustrating their efforts to provide quality services in the urban centres and other areas of their jurisdiction. But to date, these services have not improved and the roads in our towns are in an appalling state although the local authorities continue to receive service charge.

Rather than utilizing the service charge for the intended purposes, some local authorities have diverted these funds to other uses. It has been noted, that revenue collection has slackened since the introduction of the service charge in various local authorities. Service charge was not meant to be an easy option of collecting money to run the authorities. In this respect, therefore, local authorities must justify the collection of service charge by providing quality service to the public. Meanwhile, the Government will be monitoring closely the performance of each of the local authorities in the country.

Another area of importance to us is the tourist industry. Tourism has become a major player in our economic development. It is one of the fastest growing industries, that has created employment opportunities for many of our people besides earning the country foreign exchange. This is an industry that is extremely sensitive to disruption in social order. Kenyans must therefore exercise utmost restraint in their behaviour, lest they jeopardize this industry and all its benefits.

Ladies and gentlemen, the recent Kanu delegates conference demonstrated quite clearly that Kanu is not opposed to change. What I have always said is that we must be the initiators and managers of change that serves the interests of our people. I wish to remind Kenyans that self-serving interests, will not help this country. Unity has remained a valuable asset in our development. It is therefore our unity of purpose and direction that we must continue to safeguard in order to effectively overcome the challenges ahead of us.

The political changes taking place in our country are intended to enhance our democratic practices—the mainstay of Kanu administration. The Kanu government has since independence been receptive and responsive to the needs of Kenyans. Despite unfavourable international economic conditions, our record of development speaks for itself. No magic brought about this development and no magic will ever do so. We now intend to introduce more changes in an orderly and a transparent manner. We will always go for reforms that carry the mandate of Kenyans and reforms that will improve the welfare of Kenyans in real terms, not mere rhetoric or unattainable promises.

As we continue to work out our political future, we should therefore guard against any excesses which may destroy what we have painstakingly built for the last 28 years of our independence. Our children and the generations thereafter look to us to create a peaceful and a stable environment on which they will build their future. We have no better gift for them.

THANK YOU AND MAY GOD BLESS YOU.