

**Speech by His Excellency Hon. Uhuru Kenyatta, C.G.H. President of The Republic of Kenya And Commander-In-Chief of The Defence Forces During The 56th Jamhuri Day Celebrations on 12th December 2018**

Distinguished Guests,

My Fellow Kenyans,

Fifty-five years ago today, our beautiful flag was hoisted for the first time; announcing our pride in the independence we had won. It embraced our identity as a free people, recalled the sacrifices that had been made to win our freedom, and laid claim to our blessed land.

Our national anthem was heard for the first time, praying for unity, peace, justice, and liberty; and then calling us to serve and defend our motherland.

**NATIONAL ANTHEM**

Fellow Kenyans,

As we go about our daily routine building our nation, let us always remember those visionary words of our National Anthem. In particular, our young Kenyans must know that our freedom was not given to us on a silver platter. It was fought for and we must continue to defend it at all times.

Men and women, most of whom are no longer with us, and some whom you see here today quite elderly now, fought to free us from the oppression and indignity of colonialism. They endured immense cruelties and indignities, but they remained strong and united in the struggle.

Their movement changed the world. They struggled forward as Africans, united to their brothers and sisters in the different colonies by the desire to forge a free and prosperous Africa.

My challenge to our youth is to keep the flame of our freedom fighters movement burning, keep Kenyans united and bring Africa together. You have in you the spirit of the great men and women who fought to bring to life an independent Kenya. Always remember them and do not betray their cause.

## **NEW THREATS**

Fellow Kenyans,

We are, Yes, independent but we must remember that our nation has new enemies and our freedom faces new threats. We have men and women in uniform today who are standing in harm's way away from home to safeguard our liberties.

We salute those who have fallen in the line of duty; we honour their sacrifice; and we thank them and their families from the bottom of our hearts.

My Fellow Kenyans,

The first generation of independent Kenyans knew political independence was important but not sufficient to build a free, secure and prosperous country. They knew we needed to be free from poverty, ignorance and disease.

To forge ahead, they introduced economic and development plans that sought to build sufficient prosperity for the country to be able to defeat poverty, ignorance and disease.

Their policies helped us develop the biggest and most diverse economy in East and Central Africa. We went from having one referral hospital in 1963 to six public ones, today, in addition to a host of private ones.

With better health and nutrition, Kenyans today are living nearly twice as long, on average, as their fathers did at independence. Moreover, far fewer mothers die in childbirth. We have cut child mortality to a quarter of what it was in 1963, and in the last few years we have greatly accelerated this progress.

From a handful of graduates from a single university, at independence, millions of Kenyans are today graduates of more than sixty (60) universities. From being required to have passes to move from one place to another, Kenyans have, in millions, traveled to every part of the world and won respect for their hard work, honesty and ambition.

We are building new and modern roads, connecting every part of our country. The days of road journeys that took a week in vehicles that kept getting stuck in mud, are fast falling behind us. Our port is the busiest in the region and the fastest improving.

From our international airports, you can journey directly to dozens of destinations on four continents.

## **POVERTY**

Fellow Kenyans,

Transforming a nation from poverty to prosperity requires more than a single generation or the term of one set of leaders. Those countries that started out as poor as we were in the 1960s and today are prosperous, most of them in Asia, did so because they focused on development and did not entertain misappropriation of public resources.

Even when their leaders changed, their development plans were sustained. They were united and committed to good governance and achievement of their national aspirations.

We celebrate today that we are a free people able to chart our destiny and build a better future, together. We, however, need to use better our hard-earned freedom to build our economy, create jobs for our young people, conquer hunger and improve access to quality education and healthcare. Success in this regard calls for unity of purpose around the national development plans already in place such that every leader who comes to power sustains the effort.

From Sessional Paper Number 10 of 1965 to Vision 2030 of 2008 and the 2010 Constitution, Kenyans have produced excellent plans that have been adopted by other countries to transform their economies and achieve prosperity that we envy today. We need to do better to implement our plans and make their results responsive to the ideals enshrined in our Constitution, we all have a part to play and in a responsible and respectful manner.

The political class has to step up and focus on the people, and on keeping them united by practicing politics of uniting Kenyans against our common enemy: that is, poverty, ignorance and disease.

Our job as leaders is very simple; it is to work for the people of Kenya every single day, to rebuild the bonds of brotherhood between our peoples and to weave a new

and stronger fabric of patriotism and nationhood that we, as a country, so desperately require.

## **BIG FOUR**

My Fellow Kenyans,

Last year on Jamhuri Day, I unveiled the “Big Four” Agenda in response to what I heard Kenyans wanted their Government to do for them. You expressed very clearly during the election season, and in the previous years, the growing frustrations of joblessness amongst our youth, the high cost of basic foods, scarcity of affordable housing and limited access to affordable healthcare.

The “Big Four” Agenda responds to these needs. It is an accelerated development agenda designed to help us achieve the social and economic pillars of our Vision 2030 and the 2010 Constitution.

We decided to have manufacturing as one of the four pillars of the “Big Four” Agenda in order to grow a larger national cake. Our aim is to sharply raise the contribution of manufacturing to our national income as a means to achieve shared prosperity.

That is why my Administration will continue to push the “Buy Kenya, Build Kenya” philosophy. And I expect all Kenyans to support this strategy. To attract investors, both local and foreign, we, as a government, have been investing heavily in power generation, modern roads and railway, education and health. It is also the reason we are working hard to make it easier for business to be conducted in Kenya.

If we cannot compete effectively, our dreams of a prosperous country with decent jobs for all, will not happen.

A single example of the kind of ambition we have brought to this task is reflected in the World Bank Ease of Doing Business rankings. The latest report identified five key reforms we undertook in the past year to improve the business climate for small and medium-sized businesses. We are now in position number 61 globally, from a rank of 80th last year, making us one of the most improved countries in the world.

This is still not good enough, especially with regard to small and medium size businesses, which still have to contend with far too much red tape and corruption.

With the deepening of Huduma Mashinani, we remain hopeful to see better progress in cutting the red tape and corruption. But I must make it clear, it is important and urgent that those in our regulatory agencies, at both national and county levels, start to shed their gate-keeping mentality and instead embrace the role of being facilitators for business and trade.

For those who continue to treat their public offices as toll-stations to harass wananchi, the broom that is sweeping across the nation, will soon find its way to your door steps.

## **KEY SECTORS**

As a government, we remain committed to do more for our micro- sized manufacturers in the “Jua kali” sector, as it is a major employer of our people.

We are currently working with the banking sector on redesigning the Micro & Small Enterprises Authority Fund so that we can unlock much needed affordable credit for our small businesses.

We will strengthen legislation that enables, rather than hinders, their efforts; and offer access to affordable technology that will help them improve their productivity and competitiveness.

Our efforts are translating to foreign and domestic investors realizing, with every passing day, that Kenya is one of the best destinations in which to build their enterprises.

My Administration will keep its foot on the pedal in making Kenya more and more open to good and honest entrepreneurs.

Turning to the housing pillar, this initiative is anchored under the Affordable Housing Programme that will, among other benefits, deliver 500,000 affordable homes.

In the last 12 months, we have laid an appropriate legal and policy foundation that provides the platform to transform our housing sector for the better. This is the first

time that private public partnerships will be so instrumental in the provision of affordable homes.

As promised one year ago, we have established the Kenya Mortgage Refinance Company, whose sole remit will be to work with the banking sector and the cooperative movement through SACCO's, to make available affordable mortgage finance for those wishing to own a home.

The Kenya Mortgage Refinance Company will help to extend the tenure of housing loans from the current average of seven (7) years to at least twenty (20) years. It will also assist in driving interest rates on mortgages to single digits.

Further, after extensive debate, we finally received approval by the National Assembly to establish the Kenya Housing Development Fund. I thank you, our Members of Parliament, the trade unions and the Kenya Federation of Employers for your support to this Fund.

The Housing Fund is the anchor of our Public Private Partnership led housing model; it is the fund that will be the primary off-taker of approved building developments designed and implemented under this programme.

I hope to launch the first of the many housing developments in a week's time from today. In parallel to these efforts, the private sector shall, by subscribing to the new housing development framework guidelines, be able to develop housing projects for the off take by the Housing Fund. With all of us working at full steam, the dream of creating half a million new home owners is attainable.

The benefits of this programme will extend beyond the home owners and will benefit thousands of households by creating jobs for workers in the construction industry and associated sectors.

To guarantee affordability and promote domestic industries, the government will further encourage construction companies to use locally produced building materials. Inputs such as doors, windows, hinges, sand, and cement should be sourced domestically.

**FOOD, HEALTH**

Fellow Kenyans,

The third pillar of the “Big Four” is Food Security. There is no reason that Kenya cannot feed itself and make food affordable to all. My Administration is taking every step to ensure that farming goes beyond subsistence, and that every farmer is running a profitable business. We will reform our approach to input subsidies by introducing greater transparency in their funding and ensuring that subsidies benefit the farmers and not unscrupulous middlemen and brokers.

We are taking measures to reduce post-harvest losses, and promoting crop and livestock insurance. Through the accelerated construction of water pans and the rehabilitating of old dams, we will sharply raise the total land under irrigation and begin to overcome the unpredictability of rain-fed agriculture.

I want to say to our youth today: far too many of you have learnt to regard farming negatively. But it does not have to be the case.

You have acquired knowledge and have access to much useful information that can help transform the farms of your parents.

In this regard, I urge our youth to seek support from various commercial banks such as the Kenya Commercial Bank Foundation programme, named, 2Jiajiri.

During the graduation ceremony that I graced last week, the Foundation committed to set aside annually Sh10 billion for the next five years to support youth micro businesses in agriculture, manufacturing and services.

The fourth pillar of the “Big Four” Agenda is Affordable Healthcare for all.

I am very pleased to announce that I will be in Kisumu County tomorrow for the launch of the Universal Health Care pilot programme, which is a key milestone in our journey towards Universal Health Coverage. The residents of Isiolo, Kisumu, Nyeri, and Machakos counties will receive free health care services in all health facilities from their local health centres all the way to the referral facilities.

We will use the lessons learnt from this pilot to refine and scale up the programme to the rest of the country over the next 18 months.

## **INVESTMENT**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since I took Office in 2013, it has been my Administration's singular focus to position Kenya as a preferred gateway to Africa for domestic, regional, and international investment.

We are succeeding but there is far more that we can do together. First, we cannot continue to have electoral cycles that bring business investment to a halt every four years. Ninety nine percent of Kenyans wake up every day thinking about their livelihoods, and, therefore, how to grow our economy. It is not right that electoral politics, which occupies such a small part of their daily lives, should have such far reaching impact on their economic well-being.

I also believe that the private sector, which employs 90% of our working population, must actively seek to become more regionally and globally competitive. We in Government will work with you to facilitate you realise this aspiration. Through our frequent round table interactions, we have taken on board the pressing needs of our private sector and will continue to work together to address emerging issues.

We have started the process of improving import and export logistics through port and rail, we have reigned in the once rampant businesses of illicit trade in counterfeits, we have commenced the inter-governmental process necessary to streamline taxes and levies at county level. On your part, you must now show greater commitment to upholding acceptable business codes of ethics, shun corruption, and pay your taxes as you should.

At the regional level, Kenya is ambitious to be an attractive destination for all innovative and entrepreneurial East Africans. We also encourage Kenyans to invest and trade in the other East African countries, which are our most important partners. Kenya is a strong supporter of deeper regional integration in the East African Community and in Africa.

I am particularly excited by the signing of the African Continent Free Trade Area Agreement in March this year by 44 countries, including Kenya. Integration in trade,



investment and the free movement of people are steps to building that prosperous, united and secure Africa that we embarked on fifty five years ago.

## **SECURITY**

My Fellow Kenyans,

Security is a key enabler for us to achieve the Agenda we have set for ourselves. It is for this reason we have remained focused on steps to defeat the Jihadist terrorists. We have disrupted many of planned attacks by our enemies, and have prosecuted and jailed their operatives. An ever larger group of Kenyan citizens is standing up to prevent and reverse radicalisation. Through our diplomacy and our military, as part of the African Union force, we will continue to support the stabilisation of Somalia.

I wish to call upon all Kenyans to remain vigilant. The enemy lives and walks amongst us and it is every citizen's duty to protect our motherland. Do not be silent when you see them scheming to kidnap our youth for use as child soldiers, or when you see them planning to ambush and attack our homes and villages. We must unite and work together, as the Government and citizenry hand in hand, to help those who can be helped to reform and to flush out those elements that remain determined to cause us harm.

As we have done for decades, we will continue to support peace building and conflict resolution in South Sudan. We are encouraged by growing peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and for the dropping of international sanctions against Sudan. We will work with every one of these countries to strengthen the peace, to eliminate any havens of terrorists and extremists, and to replace bullets and grenades with trade and investment.

Two years ago, Kenya undertook to host the first ever-global conference on harnessing the world's maritime resources in a sustainable manner.

Last month, we successfully held the first ever "Sustainable Blue Economy Conference", which was attended by some 17000 registered participants from 183 countries, out of the 206 countries in the world.

Without doubt this conference was a turning point for Kenya, Africa and many other parts of the world in that new investments in the blue economy will lead to enormous growth in Kenya's economy, create thousands of marine related jobs and increase food and nutrition security and enhance environmental sustainability.

As a country we will adopt the recommendations made at the conference and turn them into opportunities to advance Kenya's development.

## **CORRUPTION**

Fellow Kenyans,

We will not realize our vision for a better Kenya for all Kenyans unless we, as a people, work together to conquer this monster of corruption. It is for this reason that we have deepened the war against corruption.

As part our anticorruption strategy, we have signed bilateral mutual legal assistance agreements with a number of countries in the western world, which is making the world a very small place for corruption kingpins.

There is almost nowhere left for them to hide the ill-gotten wealth robbed from Kenyans. Once proven it is stolen money, the agreements provide for the assets to be returned to the Kenya Government.

In the same breath, we shall continue our cooperation with foreign investigative agencies to counter the dangers of trans-national crimes particularly drug and child trafficking.

We shall not allow Kenya to be a base of operation for drug lords and our resolve on this matter should not be tested.

Kenya will also push hard to lead in urging the multilateral financial and political system to take more action to stop corporations from illegally avoiding taxes, disregarding environmental responsibility and acting with cruelty and contempt against citizens of countries in which they are invested.

## **IMPUNITY**

Here at home, I remain committed to strengthening governance institutions, entrenching the rule of law and stamping out corruption.

Through the efforts of our investigative agencies and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, individuals who may have thought they were untouchable, are now facing the full force of the law. These individuals deserve fair trials but nothing more. I am again calling for the Judiciary to ensure that its procedures are not used to protect impunity.

Kenyan spirits are dampened when we witness suspects released on ridiculously low bail terms, interference in legislative processes, and the use of the court process to delay justice. All arms of Government must work together to ensure our nation gets rid of this menace.

To those engaging in fraud and abuse of office, please listen to me keenly: you can run but you cannot hide.

## **WHISTLEBLOWERS**

We will catch up with you, and make you pay dearly for every coin stolen from Kenyans. And to you, the people of Kenya listening to my address today, please, it is time for you to stop watching from the sidelines. It is time for you to become active participants in this war, it is time for you to say enough is enough, be it to a policeman or a governor, a clerk or a Cabinet Secretary, a judge or a politician.

Nobody entrusted to hold public office has the right to demand a bribe from you or to squander what you and I have earned from our hard work. I have shown you my unshakeable resolve on this matter, now I need you to show me yours.

Report incidents of corruption to your local directorate of criminal investigations office.

If they don't listen, report it to your nearest Ethics and Anti-Corruption Office; if they don't listen, give the information to the media and to civil society actors to unmask these people. Do not tire of doing the right thing.

Early in January next year I hope to attend a national anti-corruption conference organized by stakeholders from the private sector, religious leaders and civil society.

I remain hopeful this Conference will come up with a roadmap that we can adopt to further this war and get rid of this cancer.

## **EDUCATION**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While still on the matter of corruption, I am proud that once again this year, we frustrated the criminal cartels that had laid siege to our education system in the years past. We delivered yet another credible set of national examinations for our Class 8 and Form 4 students.

As those who completed class 8 proceed to Secondary School, remain committed to working hard, behave decently, love your country and protect it from its enemies, and most importantly embrace integrity. We are counting on you to take over from us and lead this country to the next level of development.

In our continuing efforts to develop an education sector that empowers Kenyans to be engaged citizens and competitive entrepreneurs, my Administration is increasing investment in free and compulsory primary and secondary education.

We shall continue to improve the quality of teaching and the infrastructure of our learning institutions.

Fellow Kenyans,

With government providing free education at the basic level, there is no reason for any child not to be in class.

I expect all National and County Government officials to shoulder full responsibility—personally and collectively—towards the achievement of our Basic Education Policy Goals, especially the one hundred percent transition from primary to secondary schools.

Following the conclusion of the selection of Form One students for 2019, I will hold education officials, Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs accountable for enforcing full compliance of this policy.

Each of them must keep track of learners who sat for this year's KCPE within their respective jurisdictions and ensure that all of them report to secondary schools.

Let me now turn to our policemen and women. Building on the last five years of strengthening the National Police Service, from recruitment, training to equipment, we have made a quantum leap in the hardware of our security services.

However, for us to see a complete transformation of our police, we must also focus on the software. My Administration has prioritised the improvement of the personal welfare of our Police Service.

I wish to assure Kenyans that we are firmly on course. Our new housing policy for uniformed officers has commenced, with disbursement of housing allowances underway. This will enable general duty officers to gain decent accommodation.

The goal of these reforms is to create a renewed policing regiment with a new generation of officers who are dedicated and motivated.

## **NATIONAL ANTHEM**

Fellow Kenyans,

Let me end my address today urging our youth to embrace the wisdom of our National Anthem. Take the path of becoming patriots who work hard in unity to grow our country's leadership in every field of human endeavour. I promise to continue walking this journey with you. Do not allow yourselves to be allured to promises of wealth from fraud and corruption.

Our founding fathers of this nation built businesses, farmed hard, sought new knowledge, and practiced politics of unity and democracy, even when they argued among themselves. They built us a foundation upon, which we are standing today.

Learn from their triumphs and learn also to avoid their pitfalls, and you will build a Kenya that is a catalyst for the renaissance of Africa.

We can only reach our destination as a united people who see in their challenges not a call to cynicism but an opportunity to contribute solutions.

Let all with one accord; In common bond united; Build this nation together; And the glory of Kenya; The fruit of our labour; Fill every heart with thanksgiving. Let us love and honour our precious heritage

Thank you and have a Merry Christmas. May God bless you and May God bless Kenya.

