

Speech by H.E. Hon. Uhuru Kenyatta, C.G.H., The President Of The Republic Of Kenya And Commander-In-Chief Of The Defence Forces During The 10th Mashujaa Day Celebrations At Mama Ngina Water Front Mombasa On 20th October, 2019.

Distinguished guests,

My fellow Kenyans,

I wish to thank the people of Mombasa in particular, and the coast region in general, for the warm welcome you have accorded me and other visitors from across the country.

To foster nationhood; a few years ago, my administration made the decision to celebrate national days on a rotational basis. In this way we celebrate the diversity of the nation and show that while we are many, we are one. One Nation - One People.

This new tradition also allows us to appreciate the rich diversity of our country, and, in particular, the positive contributions being made under our devolved structure of governance.

In addition, it gives the hosting county the rare opportunity to showcase itself on the national stage.

Today, Mombasa joins the counties of Nakuru; Machakos; Nyeri; Meru; Kakamega and Narok, who have hosted national day celebrations in the past.

It is, therefore, my great pleasure to lead the Nation in celebrating the 10th Mashujaa Day from Kenya's oldest town and her second city-Mombasa.

DEVOLUTION

Fellow Kenyans,

Mombasa and, indeed, the entire Coast region is a good example of my administration's commitment to the letter and spirit of devolution.

Over the last six years since I took office in 2013, the counties of Kilifi, Kwale, Lamu, Mombasa, Taita Taveta and Tana River, have cumulatively received close to Sh190 billion from the National Treasury.

In addition to running county governments, these devolved funds have paid for roads, schools, youth polytechnics, water projects and hospitals at the local level - development projects that make a difference and better the quality of life for millions of Kenyan families

Fellow Kenyans,

Under my administration, we have undertaken tangible steps to address the unique development needs of this region. In the six years, there has been more targeted and concerted focus on developing the coast region than any other time in the history of our country.

From Holili in Taita Taveta County to Mokowe on the shores of Lamu County; from the fishing ports of Shimoni in Kwale County to Borji in Tana River County; from the legendary Bamba shopping center in the nearby Kilifi County to the Mama Ngina Sea Front, that is playing host to today's event, the visual markers of progress are plain for all to see.

The Dongo Kundu by-pass, the road from Bamba to Mariakani, the link road from Tsavo East to Malindi from Sala Gate, the Garsen-Witu Road and the Voi to Taveta Road, are just some examples of the enabling infrastructure, built to unleash the economic potential of the towns and villages that they connect.

TRANSFORMATION

In Mombasa, the transformation continues to redefine the face of the county through the recently completed road projects: Miritini, Mwache, Kipevu New Container Link Road and Moi International Airport Access Road, Port Reitz and Moi International Airport Access Road while the following other projects are on the verge of completion, that is: Mariakani Highway and dualling of Magongo Road.

It is under this Administration that our ports and harbours have been expanded with new investment.

At Kilindini, we have more than doubled the volume of cleared cargo passing through the port annually. The significance of the port is further underscored by an 8,000-strong direct workforce hired at the facility and an even larger number of people that it supports indirectly.

Under my Administration, we are reviving the Kenya National Shipping Lines. It is my plea to all the Stakeholders to support this transformative initiative, that is geared towards cementing our place as the logistics hub for the region and the continent.

We will not turn back in our pursuit to secure our national interest in the shipping industry.

Our endeavour to localize the shipping industry and to ensure that our young men and women can, once again, sail the seven seas under Kenyan flagged vessels; is unstoppable. These opportunities will benefit everyone moved decisively to recover all fish landing sites that had been illegally acquired.

In addition, we have taken steps to stop illegal fishing by foreign trawlers, through the introduction of the region's first "National Coast Guard Service". In partnership with the leadership of the coast region, every effort will be made to sensitize the population on how to take advantage of the opportunities created by the blue economy.

MANY SHUJAAS

Fellow Kenyans,

Mashujaa Day is a National Day to collectively honour all those who participated in the Struggle for our Independence as well as those who have positively contributed towards the development of post-independence Kenya.

On this day, we celebrate those who have built Kenya with their bravery, sacrifice and fidelity. We celebrate and honour those that go above and beyond the call of duty.

By this definition, it is possible for each and every Kenyan to be feted on Mashujaa Day. Why? Because positive contributions towards post-independence Kenya do not necessarily require grand acts of heroism akin to those of the Founding Fathers and Mothers of our Great Nation.

To be a Shujaa is to be committed to going above and beyond your call of duty, whatever your station in life, in order to make Kenya a better place for all.

The Sons and Daughters of the coast region made phenomenal contribution to the Struggle for Independence. From Mekatilili wa Menza to Ronald Ngala, you gave Kenya countless men and women of iconic status, who contributed immensely to freeing our Nation from the yoke of colonial rule.

In post-independence Kenya, the coast region has given rise to Kenyan heroes across the full spectrum of our public life.

Your Sons and Daughters have brought honour and glory to Kenya as renowned businesspersons, researchers and scientists, exemplary musicians and artists, prominent political leaders and trade unionists, inspirational professionals, world-class academics and dependable military generals and civil servants.

The story of Kenya would not be as rich, dynamic or as vibrant, were it not for your Sons and Daughters.

As their descendants, I am proud to proclaim that their legacy is alive and well within you; a fact demonstrated by the continued contributions to the Kenyan Dream, being made by all the people of Pwani.

MANY CONTRIBUTORS

Fellow Kenyans,

Today, we celebrate all the men and women from every corner and community of Kenya, who helped make Kenya an Independent State.

Today, we celebrate all those who laid the foundation for the realization of our shared prosperity, for our freedoms and for a Country that is peaceful and secure.

Today, we celebrate the farmers who continue to feed the Nation through the sweat of their brow and the work of their hands.

Today, we celebrate our civil servants, who have been, for more than half a century, the engine of our State and anchors of our democracy.

Today, we celebrate our doctors, nurses and other health workers as they continue their compassionate service. These professionals, who often work tirelessly and selflessly, have been responsible for, among other milestones, increasing our life expectancy from the 35 years at Independence to 67 years currently.

Today, we celebrate our teachers, from the Early Childhood Development (ECD) instructors who receive our children when they first go to school, all the way to primary and high school, through whom, generation after generation of Kenyans, have been moulded and nurtured to realize their full potential in life. We celebrate teachers like Mwalimu Peter Tabichi, whose selfless service and excellence, led to his recognition as the World's Best Teacher.

Today, we celebrate our scholars, researchers and innovators who are constantly searching for new knowledge and instructing our university students. Scholars like the late Dr. Esther Mwangi, who dedicated her life to the study of forest conservation and management, property rights, as well as economic governance.

Today, we honour the Kenyans called to serve around the World; our Kenyans in the diaspora, who continue to be our brand ambassadors in countries far from home, and who continue to support millions of Kenyans back home.

Today, we honour our men and women in uniform serving across our various services, whose commitment to duty, sacrifice and bravery is at the heart of our freedom and security.

Today, we particularly honour and salute all those who paid the ultimate price for the sake of Kenya; all those whose actions have contributed to making Kenya, the towering island of peace and security, within a region fraught with a history of turmoil and insecurity.

We remember and treasure those who are no longer with us, and all those who continue their legacy today; all those who have built and continue to build our country. These are great Kenyans. Hawa ni Mashujaa Wetu.

HEROISM

Fellow Kenyans,

We live in a world where we are often misled to believe that our best and brightest men and women have long died.

We live in a world where we are told that the age of heroes is past and that we pale in comparison to the icons who came before us.

The modern world appears to suggest that unless one achieves truly outstanding feats of global renown, then one is not a hero, nor can he or she claim to be great. We must reject this view that Kenya's best days are behind us.

Our Nation continues to be the Home of Mashujaa, just as it was when bold men and women stood in solidarity against a world power, and won our independence and sovereignty, while only armed with courage and sacrifice.

A Shujaa is one who sacrifices greed, selfishness, personal comfort and advancement at the altar of the greater good.

Yes, one can do well and prosper, but if one does not use their blessings, privilege and opportunities to make Kenya a better place, then that is a life that is far removed from the true meaning of Ushujaa.

Of course, we are fortunate to have had very many acts of might and sacrifice that fit perfectly with the long Kenyan tradition of heroism.

The spirit of Mekatilili wa Menza lives on in the heroic women, who are fighting negative cultural practices or blazing the trail for women to venture into arenas once solely the preserve of men.

The spirit of Koitalel Arap Samoei is alive and well in the police officers who serve and protect us; and ensure that we live by the law and with order and justice.

Dedan Kimathi's spirit courses through the veins of the men and women of the Kenya Defence Forces, who, even as we speak, are deployed in a foreign land, confronting and defeating our enemies.

The heroism, patriotism and the love of country exhibited by our independence-era leadership persists to this very day, as embodied in the historic 'Handshake' through which political divides were bridged, for the sake of peace and a better Kenya.

INTEGRITY

Fellow Kenyans,

A Shujaa pays their full share of taxes; promptly, diligently, and not under coercion. A Shujaa refuses to give or receive a bribe and reports all those who do so.

A Shujaa is not an innocent by-stander, non-committal and uninvolved; instead they think, move and speak boldly.

Most importantly, a Shujaa understands that the family is the basic and fundamental unit of Kenyan society, and their acts of heroism begin at home, by being a role model and effective father, mother, son, daughter or guardian.

Mashujaa do not cheat or succumb to compromise. A shujaa does not pick soft but wrong options.

They are the judges and magistrates, who faithfully and expeditiously discharge their Oath of Office without cowering in the face of the power and ill-gotten wealth of corruption suspects.

They are the investigators and prosecutors who brave intimidation and reject inducements, so as to bring the corrupt and other criminals to face justice.

They are the first responders such as fire fighters, who rush into burning buildings to save us from the blaze; the paramedics and ambulance crews that come to our aid on the roads and in our homes.

They are the young Kenyans who are peer-ambassadors in the fight against drug abuse and other vices that have led some of our youth astray.

Mashujaa are our sportsmen and women, who bring our Nation pride and glory on the local, regional, continental and global stages; breaking records along the way and enhancing our national reputation of excellence.

Mashujaa are like our giant-slaying national team who represented our country in the just concluded World Athletics Championship in Doha. The Shujaa team finished at an impressive second position in the world ranking.

KIPCHOGE, KOSGEI

I must mention the two Shujaas of the year 2019: Eliud Kipchoge; and Brigid Kosgei, who on a weekend of global firsts smashed the women's marathon world record.

Kenya today is the global custodian of both men and women World Record Marathon titles.

Our very own Eliud Kipchoge, beyond the world title, he bagged in 2018; has further achieved the previously unthinkable feat of being the first human being to run the marathon distance in under two hours.

We are most fortunate today to have in our presence, sporting icon and living legend, Eliud Kipchoge. His world-breaking feat is an inspiration to all Kenyans and, indeed, to all the people of our planet. He has demonstrated that through integrity, hard work and commitment to excellence, nothing is out of reach. His achievements remind us that we should never limit ourselves to the ordinary.

On behalf of a grateful Nation, I honour and commend all the journalists who play their proper role as the Fourth Estate, reporting fearlessly by speaking truth to power, while rejecting brown-envelope journalism and the allure of sensationalism.

On behalf of a grateful Nation, I salute our actors, musicians, comics and artists who bring joy and laughter to our lives; who inspire and provoke thought and introspection; who chronicle our journey along the path of the Kenyan dream, in a manner that upholds our values and national identity.

PRINCIPLES

Fellow Kenyans,

The Kenya of today is the river that flows from the source of greatness, that is, those who went before us. The Kenyan story continues to be one of greatness, heroism, overcoming seemingly unsurmountable challenges, through unwavering commitment and an indomitable spirit.

From the pre-colonial generations to the generation of Kenyans just being born; ours is a tale of excellence, of honour, of unity through diversity and of love for our fellow human beings.

A tale which continues to be written and enhanced through the great and small acts of heroism and greatness of each and every Kenyan.

Today, every Kenyan should commit to being a Shujaa; to championing the principles, values and ideals that underscore the very best of Kenya. Be a good Samaritan, intervene when you see others in distress or in need of assistance.

Be a Shujaa by going out into your local community and finding ways in which you can make a difference, no matter how small it may seem to you.

Galvanize your neighbours, form local community action groups, build a better Kenya from the ground. Make our Nation an even better Home of Mashujaa.

This approach to heroism is the surest path to a better Kenya for all.

COMMITMENT

Prosperity, equity, justice and happiness requires heroes to be committed to championing and delivering the shared aspiration of a better Kenya for all.

My fellow citizens; "Kuajibika ni Ushujaa: Civic Duty is Heroism". Be a hero in all that you do, in every waking moment, in every action and in every word.

Our Home of Mashujaa needs you, now more than ever - the 45 million of us.

Kenya is at a pivotal stage in her progress. The actions and decisions that each Kenyan makes in the present day, will determine whether our Nation will achieve the Kenyan dream as articulated under the Kenya Vision 2030, and presently focused through the Big Four Agenda.

Just to remind ourselves, the Big Four encompasses: a decent roof over many more heads through affordable housing, food and nutritional security, universal healthcare and job creation through manufacturing and value addition.

Let us all remain committed to the race, to being the best and world-beaters in all that we do. In each of us lies the seeds of greatness, of heroism.

Every Kenyan should plant that seed in the fertile soils of Integrity, water it with hard work and commitment to duty, grow it only in the direction of the light of truth and justice, and reap from the tree only those fruits that have been borne from our rightful efforts.

SERVICE

Fellow Kenyans,

All world religions have a golden thread of service to fellow mankind, especially the less fortunate. They demand that we improve ourselves and that we also better the world around us.

As a prayerful and a God-fearing Nation, and one that acknowledges the supremacy of God Almighty in the preamble of her Constitution. A Nation of One People of many faiths whose diversity is our strength, we should come together and commit to ourselves and to each other that we shall look out for the welfare of our fellow Kenyans.

As a Nation of Mashujaa and in keeping with the teaching of St. Francis of Assisi: Let each one of us commit to being an instrument of peace, to sow love amidst hatred, to give hope where there is despair, to banish the darkness of our world with the light of our good words and actions.

I call upon us all to attempt to do the best with what is committed onto us. One of our greatest heroines - The late Professor Wangari Maathai, who inspired the world with her commitment to Mother Nature, often shared the story of the Little Hummingbird. When faced with a huge forest fire, all other animals, stood by and did nothing, overwhelmed and feeling powerless.

But the Hummingbird decided to do something about the fire. It flew to the nearest stream, picked a drop of water and sought to put out the fire, one drop of water at a time.

And so, Professor Maathai encouraged us to be like that little Hummingbird--to do the best we can, even though it may seem insignificant to others. Eventually, it will count for much.

Let us be a Nation of Hummingbirds, transforming our communities, one drop, one step, one initiative, one transformation at a time.

NO LIMITS

Similarly, Eliud Kipchoge has inspired the world that no human effort is futile... That we can dream and make our dreams a possibility. That we can achieve what has never been achieved before.

Eliud Kipchoge remains the Greatest of our Time. Our duty is to emulate this enviable level of discipline and determination in our pursuit for a better Kenya for all. His latest conquest will be a constant reminder that we can achieve the very best, as individuals, and as a Nation.

On my part, I commit the Government of Kenya to even greater fidelity to the principles, values and aspirations that informed the struggle for independence; and all the positive development of post-independence Kenya.

We commit to providing each and every Kenyan with the enabling environment, to be all that they can be; and to bring out the Shujaa in each and every Kenyan.

Working together, in unity of purpose, we shall defy all odds and succeed.

Thank you and God bless Kenya.

