

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 54th Madaraka Day Celebrations at Kabiru-Ini Stadium, Nyeri on 1st June, 2017.

Fellow Kenyans

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today, we celebrate our right to govern ourselves. That right was not given to us; we fought for it. Nyeri, this county of heroes, gave us some of our most valiant warriors. Our monumental victory in the war of liberation from the colonial government was achieved because we had men and women who, on their own volition, sacrificed their lives so that we would be free to govern ourselves.

Today, Mukami Kimathi joins us. On behalf of the people of Kenya, I pay tribute to her, and to every other veteran of the Mau Mau war. And, indeed, to all other patriots from all corners of this country, who fought so that we could be free. Our elders won that bitter war because they were united in a common goal, to liberate our nation. We have built on their legacy, building a country that has been an island of peace and stability in this region and, indeed, in the continent of Africa. There have been challenges on our journey so far. We have suffered attempts to take political power by force, resulting in the loss of life and property of great value.

These actions were not just criminal; they betrayed our freedom fighters' sacrifice and sinned against our sacred nationhood. Fellow Kenyans, I call upon you to always be careful and not allow those who would wish to destroy our peaceful nation. We must distinguish between a genuine and legitimate desire for change from its exploitation by short-sighted and cynical leaders who use us for their own selfish ends. A peaceful and prosperous nation needs to be nurtured and protected by a united people. We must learn from our past, and shun those who would divide us on ethnic or religious lines. Fellow Kenyans,

Our forefathers knew that political independence, though necessary, was insufficient to guarantee our prosperity and peace. Equally vital, they knew, was economic independence. We, their sons and daughters, have sought to build the social and economic institutions under which our people will prosper. In the decades since we attained self-rule, there is real progress to show for our efforts. Our welfare and livelihoods have improved sharply since June 1963. We live almost twice as long; far more of our children are in school; far fewer of our mothers die in childbirth. But we have a lot more to do to fulfill the dreams of the independence generation. When I took office four-and-half-years ago, my task was to sustain and speed up the momentum of our development journey; mine has been to lay the foundation for a prosperous Kenya; prosperity accessible to each and every

Kenyan willing to work. That is why we have improved our roads and built new ones; that's why we have modernized our hospitals by installing modern diagnosis equipment; that's why we have connected thousands to electricity; and that's why we

have the Madaraka Express, which I had the honour of riding into Nairobi yesterday. Madaraka Express, Ladies and Gentlemen, is a true living symbol of the journey we are undertaking together. It is the foundation for better incomes for our farmers, manufacturers and other businesses. On it rests our dominance as a regional hub, opening up opportunities for new markets for our goods and services, and letting us compete against other ambitious countries for the manufacturing investments that will bring jobs for our sons and daughters. As an alternative to our roads, the Madaraka Express will greatly reduce the incidences of disability and death from accidents involving public service vehicles; and will move goods across East Africa quicker, cutting delivery times, and cutting corruption, that has dogged users of roads for transportation along the northern corridor.

Our investors will profit from the hotels and lodges, the shops and kiosks, and the smallholder farms, schools and dispensaries targeted at newly migrating workers and settlers. You can now get from Mombasa to Nairobi in 4 hours, half the time it took as recently as Tuesday. That's the work of an Administration that has the courage and ambition to cut by half the time taken to achieve an industrialized, job-rich and secure Kenya. Our expanded and modernized ports and airports will be the logistical centres for the region, and hundreds of thousands of jobs in logistics and services will arise from them, and the companies that they serve. For those who live between Nairobi and Nyeri, and those travelling north, our plan is to extend the Thika highway. We will also push for the development of agri-business and value addition along that transport corridor, to transform your hard work into higher incomes and jobs. Taken together, these investments mean that the 60 major global corporations, which make Kenya their regional and continental headquarters, will be joined by hundreds more of their counterparts. Young Kenyans will move into the professional ranks in their thousands, effectively competing with the best from around the world. These initiatives are giving birth to a new Kenya; that Kenya which our founding fathers yearned for.

A country in which the basics of a decent life are securely within the reach of our people. A nation whose children will find the jobs and livelihoods their achievements deserve, without waiting in line for years or requiring ethnic or family connections. A Kenya whose people won't have to attend weekly harambees, or spend family savings, to send relatives and friends abroad for modern health services. Wazalendo Wenzangu, We will be citizens of a country that can feed itself and the region, without regard to the weather. That is why we have worked to escape the persistent problems of rain-fed agriculture. We have developed irrigation schemes that will free us, once and for all, from the life-threatening risks of climate change and adverse weather. Our continuing vulnerability is felt in every home as drought ravages crops and livestock.

The cost of food has risen here in Kenya; our neighbours, facing full-blown emergencies, are obliged to call for humanitarian intervention. I am well aware the lives and livelihoods of many of our people are threatened by this drought. We have quickly responded taking a number of measures, including subsidizing unga until the next harvest season. We have waived import duty so that milk and other foods remain affordable. We will protect our people, both consumers and producers as

well. My Administration, with the support by the World Bank, has put in place livestock insurance, therefore protecting our pastoralist communities from losses to drought. We are taking steps to link livestock farming to markets to make it a more profitable business. We dared not rest content with measures to meet the immediate drought; we had to look at every possible means of raising the production of every farmer and herder in Kenya. That is why – to choose just a few examples – we have subsidized fertilizer for some; we have waived debts for others; and we approved the recommendations of the Coffee Sector Implementation Committee.

I asked the Committee to make a plan for the revival of our coffee sector. It was an urgent matter: we needed to think again about the rules that govern the coffee industry, and we had to think afresh about our production, our marketing and our value addition. The Committee wasted no time: we quickly agreed a debt waiver for coffee-farmers' SACCOS and unions amounting to KSh 478 million, and KSh 1.7 billion on STABEX funds, through the Cooperative Bank of Kenya. Consequently, title deeds once held as collateral by the Bank have been returned to cooperative societies and individual farmers. Currently, the Committee, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, and the Council of Governors (COG) have together earmarked the upgrading of the Nairobi Coffee Exchange and the rehabilitation of 500 coffee factories in 31 coffee-growing counties.

Fellow Kenyans, The state of our Nation is strong. We have transformed our government and politics to give the greatest voice to the people: our democracy today is stronger than it has ever been. We have become the biggest economy in our region, and one of the largest in Africa. Our people compete with the best in the world in many fields of endeavour. Our country anchors the region's peace and security, and we are a necessary partner in regional and global decision-making. Our achievements have raised our appetite for greater success in the war against poverty, ignorance and disease. Our desire has been sharpened, aiming for the day when every Kenyan has a decent job, a full education and security in his person and property. Our economy is growing; services are being delivered to Kenyans better than ever before. But there is more to do if we are to lift every Kenyan out of poverty into prosperity. We must find jobs for all our sons and daughters who have met their part of the bargain by diligently going to school.

Fellow Kenyans, For over 50 years after independence, a majority of us lived in darkness, because of lack of planning, and the arrogant perception that "stima sio ya watu wanaishi nyumba za nyasi"! My Government understands that every corner of Kenya matters; every Kenyan deserves basic services. I am proud today to report that in the last four years, we have added more than 2 million homes to the electricity grid. Our streets have been made safer by the street-lighting programme. Traders now sell their wares far into the night without fear, benefiting from extended business hours. Connection by connection, we are developing into a 24-hour economy. Yes, we have worked to connect every home to electricity, so that our children learn better and more equally, no matter what part of the country they are in. It is a matter of basic fairness and equality. Our efforts have ensured that 23,000 primary schools across the country have electricity. We did it because we strongly believed that our education system should not leave some of our children behind based on the

incomes of their parents, or their being born in distant rural areas as opposed to a large city. And that's why we have also fully committed to free secondary education and full transition from primary to secondary school. That is why we have scrapped exam fees, and will ensure that secondary school is free from January 2018. Future generations will get the education they need to continue transforming our great nation. We want every part of Kenya, and every Kenyan, to be fairly included in development. That's why we have ensured that 60,000 public facilities – just under 70% of the total, most in rural areas – are connected to electricity.

My promise to you is that every remaining area will be connected in the next 3 years. In the off-grid Counties of Wajir, Turkana, Garissa, Mandera and Marsabit, we are installing 25 solar hybrid stations. Once complete, these stations will open up opportunities in these regions, while improving security and protecting the environment. In the last four years, my Administration has raised the ratio of our people with access to clean water to 60%. That means, Ladies and Gentlemen, that 5.7 million Kenyans who did not have clean water in 2013 have it today. Notable progress has been made in providing clean water. New water schemes have been constructed in Nairobi, Kisumu, Mombasa and Nakuru. In addition, medium sized water supplies have been developed in Narok, Maua, Homa Bay, Kitui, Lamu and Nyahururu. We have also increased access to sanitation: an additional 1.75 million Kenyans are now covered. Better sanitation and clean water prevent diseases; raise our productivity, and more importantly they mean dignified lives for our people. To improve access to clean water, my Government has laid plans for the construction of the Northern Collector Tunnel, which will supply water to Nairobi and its metropolitan area; the Mzima II Pipeline for additional water to Mombasa; the Siaya-Bondo Water Project; and the Thwake Dam to provide water to Ukambani. Chemususu Dam, I am glad to say, is also in progress.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Kenya will soon become an oil-exporting country. Even before a single barrel has been sold, the spending by investors is transforming Turkana and neighbouring counties. We will see oil pipelines, new roads and new railways that will criss-cross our country, carrying the products that will raise the incomes of every Kenyan. Oil revenues will be joined by earnings from the rising numbers of manufacturers taking advantage of our new and improved infrastructure. Already, car manufacturers, the iconic emblem of an industrialising economy, are re-establishing themselves in Kenya. Diverse manufacturing investors, all excited to play a part in a vibrant and developing country, will follow them. As we grow the industries of the future, we are also reviving sectors that have suffered neglect. Our measures have saved jobs in companies like Pan Paper, and are creating others, as businesses establish themselves in regions that once felt left out of development. We will need healthy workers and families to ensure that these investments find a productive workforce.

For years, Kenyans had only 3 referral hospitals, all built in colonial times. Now, after the efforts of the past 4 years, we have 92 referral hospitals across the country. The welfare of the people should be the first priority of every President. I am proud that under my Administration, my Government has unveiled programmes such as "Linda Mama", saving thousands of young lives every year, and protecting women in

childbirth. Just as we have brought modern medical equipment to hospitals nationwide, we have also expanded NHIF to cover catastrophic illness, so that those already facing tough personal battles can focus on recovery free from financial fear. We have expanded access to hundreds of thousands of vulnerable Kenyans – the orphaned, the elderly and the disabled – so that we can lighten burdens none of us would ever wish upon another. If a grandmother in Busia lacks care in her final years, the nation has abandoned its parents. We will not. We will honour our mothers and fathers by making sure that they live in comfort and dignity. That's why, from January 2018, my Administration will expand the monthly stipend programme to cover all our mothers and fathers, of 70 years and above. At this point, I would like to express my personal gratitude and that of the Kenyan people to the government of Hungary for providing funds to construct a cancer hospital in Nyeri.

This Hospital will serve the people of Nyeri, Kirinyaga, Muranga, Meru, Laikipia, Isiolo and other parts of our country. Alongside this, we will expand and upgrade the Nyeri Provincial General Hospital and Othaya District Hospital. My Fellow Kenyans, Our nation remains at risk. Our people must be secured against the threats from terrorists, politicians seeking to spark confrontation, and criminals. We have made far-reaching investments in our security system, increasing the numbers of personnel, adding sophisticated technology and stepping up our training and coordination. We are also working to ensure that citizen engagement, and innovative tools to disengage, rehabilitate and reintegrate criminals and extremists, will complement our security system. The world has learnt from the catastrophes in the Middle East and parts of North Africa that the terrorists who seek the destruction of democracies like Kenya can quickly exploit vacuums in governance and government. That is why we will continue with our stabilisation mission in Somalia, keeping to the commitments we have made, alongside our neighbours and the international community, to support Somalia for the sake of its security and ours.

My Fellow Kenyans, The most vital element in all our efforts to transform our country is to ensure that we are governed well. Here too, there are successes to mention. In establishing devolution, we embraced the most effective way of managing our diversity, and of holding our leaders to account. Devolution, and the democracy on which it rests, have freed our peoples' energies and enabled robust citizen participation in decision-making. Since you entrusted my government with the responsibility of forging our new constitutional order, we have continuously ensured the effective implementation of devolution. We have kept to the timelines agreed, providing the needed administrative support, and going far beyond the constitutional threshold in financing counties. This is a historic achievement that all Kenyans should be very proud of. My Brothers and Sisters, A New Kenya is here. We must continue to dream big, and boldly implement our vision, so that every Kenyan can share in this country's bounty. The work my Administration has undertaken is a foundation for that transformative change, which will benefit Kenyans for generations to come. A transformed Kenya calls for a new politics. We need politics that look forward not back; we need to leave behind leaders obsessed with using the conflicts of the past to divide us, rather than leading us forward in unity. Let every Kenyan remember the history of our country, and what it has taught us of the dangers of

divide and rule – of breaking the people apart, all for the gain of the few. We should commit to redouble our efforts to instill in our youth a deep sense of patriotism and an appreciation of the gift to be a Kenyan. We must use every tool at our disposal to banish ethnicity and discrimination in any form. I know that there is far more to be done, but I have immense faith in the greatness of our people. After all, we have already overcome challenges greater than any that lie before us. I am proud to be a Kenyan in 2017. How privileged I feel to be your President in this period of promise; how blessed to be a Kenyan as our nation rises to the heights our forefathers foretold. Remember that Kenya is a young nation, with great potential and opportunity for all of us.

This is a moment for boldness: henceforth, our politics must be shaped by a desire to take Kenya forward to prosperity for all. Brothers and Sisters, On Monday, I submitted my application to serve you for another term, in preparation for that day in August when the future of your motherland will lie in your hands. Many things have been said; you have heard many promises. I urge you to listen carefully and choose wisely. As government, we will protect your right to exercise that choice. Our security apparatus will remain vigilant, ready to deal with acts of lawlessness and disorder. All I ask of you is that you reject the politics of division and conflict; that you vote in peace. That way, no matter the outcome, we will all win. We are 45 million strong, united as one Kenyan family. Elections will come and go; we must remain one. Protect the house we have built and are building. Keep faith that we will renew this nation, for we are a people of faith, and we believe that justice will prevail; that peace will prevail; and that the people of Kenya will prevail.

Thank you and God Bless Kenya.