

**ADDRESS TO THE NATION BY H.E. THE PRESIDENT,
HON. DANIEL T. ARAP MOI, C.G.H., M.P.,
ON KENYATTA DAY**

20th October, 1980

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

First of all I send my warmest greetings to all Kenyans, here and abroad, as we celebrate this year's Kenyatta Day. Kenyatta Day will always remain an important national day in our Republic. This is because Kenyatta Day reminds us of our determined struggle for an independent Kenya. This national day was named in honour of a fearless and dedicated freedom fighter, a patriot and statesman who will always be remembered and respected as the founder of the Kenya nation. Throughout his long political and public life, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta always stressed that national unity is both strength and a fundamental requirement in solving problems that might confront us. Moreover, he invariably pointed to national unity as the means of achieving human dignity in freedom, and as the best means of freely pursuing country-wide economic and social development.

Today I want to refer to some of these ideas as they relate to the future development of our people and nation. In particular, I want to highlight some of the meanings of the term "independence", and some of the realities which bear upon the safeguarding of that independence. In doing this, it is proper and rewarding to think back and take pride in events and accomplishments of the past. However, we must also bear in mind that the nourishment of the spirit of a nation requires translation of the past and its events into the language of the present and the future.

As we now know, in any developing country, the first two decades or so following political independence are always extremely difficult and demanding. It is necessary first to establish the kind of constitution that is both acceptable and understandable to the citizens of the country. Then there are a number of political institutions that have to be changed, new ones established and arrange-

ments made for a new order and priorities which can then lead to new traditions. In addition, processes of localization must extend throughout all the public services and structures of the country. By all these means, a different kind of social fabric is essentially and necessarily created. In order to ensure that all these efforts are effective and reinforce each other towards the set objectives, it is necessary to embark upon comprehensive planning—a process which must, clearly, cover all political, economic and social dimensions.

What I have just said might sound theoretical. In actual fact this, in summary, is what has been happening in our country since independence. Today I want to stress that the kind of planning needed is not something which is mechanical. Furthermore, it is certainly not something which should be left to the Government alone. I realize that sometimes it is easy to think that the Government is a kind of machine—something which is remote from the lives of ordinary people. Such an attitude can lead to the false notion that the Government just has to watch day-to-day happenings in world affairs, while somehow providing endless sums of money and other forms of support required for economic and social progress. Such false thinking may make people lose the spirit of enterprise, and create a mentality in which there is a tendency to blame the Government whenever difficulties or set-backs occur.

The whole truth is very different. As we all remember, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta repeatedly emphasized that in Kenya the Government is the people. Today I want to tell you that I firmly hold the same view, namely that the Government is the people, and that the two must work together in harmony and full understanding of each other. In this connexion, my Government fully appreciates that there has to be a systematic approach, through planning, to most of the fundamental questions and needs facing us. In particular, we must give systematic attention to those questions which have a direct bearing upon the development of services and creation of opportunities and outlets for the people in every part of the Republic. Moreover, and towards that general objective, I fully appreciate that one of the important tasks of the Government

machinery is to assemble the necessary information on which to base decisions on development policies and programmes. Collection of such information, and its dissemination, is absolutely necessary in maintaining close understanding between Government and the people, and in ensuring that the two work together in harmony.

As I said earlier, one of the main subjects I would like to discuss with you today is the meaning of independence. I am sure you will remember that when we were celebrating the 10th Anniversary of our Independence, one of the main points which was stressed time and time again was that we must consolidate our independence through greater efforts to achieve economic independence.

Several years have now gone by since those celebrations, and today we are still in this same vital phase of our struggle for national independence. We have actually taken many significant steps along the road towards economic independence. However, the challenge has been made, at times, very difficult by surrounding world pressures and international economic problems. But we must not allow such challenges and economic problems to discourage us in our struggle. Therefore, as we move into the 1980s, I urge all Kenyans, each one of us, to be prepared for even greater dedication. Here I must stress that I am not calling for dedication only on the part of leaders who are prominent in political or public affairs. Kenya needs the dedication of every man and woman in the pattern and example of their daily lives.

I know that it is easy to forget the real meaning of such words as dedication because they are referred to frequently on occasions like this one. I would, therefore, now like to say something about the meaning of this important word.

First, and foremost, dedication must mean a deep love for our country. Further, this love should always be openly reflected in absolute loyalty to the nation and its institutions. Leaders who are dedicated must be positive in their outlook, ready to initiate services and programmes, and constantly looking out for improved ways of tackling various tasks. The country draws no benefit from those who sit on the sidelines, willing only to observe and then to criticize.

Leaders who are dedicated must be prepared to work hard, realizing that efficient management of national affairs demands from them far less "talk" and much more "action". The country needs "doers" and not more "talkers". Moreover, all of us must also be willing to make sacrifices, both for others here and now, as well as in the cause of coming generations.

All this is of great importance. Ten years hence, when we shall have to think about the closing decade of this century, our Republic will be whatever all of us have made it. And I sometimes wonder, while we may be grappling with the problems of today, whether we think enough about this future. With this in mind, let me put to you some questions, and which I urge you all to consider, in the context of national interest.

Do we, the people of Kenya, really understand, and care enough about the erosion and destruction of natural resources on which the coming generations must depend? Are we ready to think about conserving natural assets, instead of always exploiting them for whatever immediate gain? Then, in another field, are we saving enough from our current incomes to support an expanding economy, and to help reach the national objective of economic independence? How can this aim be secured without higher levels of saving and re-investment on a country-wide scale? And as a third and vital point, are we preparing our children adequately enough to meet the challenge of the future? We are glad to provide for them networks and systems of formal education. But can a strength of character be built without the restraints of discipline and effective teaching of morality? Furthermore, are we setting in the various aspects of our life, a good example to our children?

There are many such questions, and difficulties, which must be confronted and answered if we, the Government and people of this country, are to continue being honest with each other. But one thing is certain. Unless we go on, constantly and consciously, promoting and defending our national unity, there will be no victories. Moreover, we must realize that beneath the increasingly complex umbrella of nation building, we must never take this unity for granted. I want all leaders, especially in our Parliament and in the

ruling party, to realize that their most critical duty always, is to preserve and defend the national unity—for national unity is the single most important element in the future of our country.

But national unity should not be regarded solely as a political idea, or as a state of mind. What it must really imply and involve, throughout the Republic, is full awareness of shared interests and mutual dependence. The man who sees public money being spent, say on education in Garissa or West Pokot, should realize that the money may have come from tea production in Kericho, or coffee production in Murang'a, or customs duty paid by businessmen in Kisumu. The man who has well-paid employment in Nairobi, looking after and repairing tourist vehicles, would not have such a job unless tourist facilities were maintained and well operated in places like Samburu or Narok. The craftsman building up his business in an industrial estate in Mombasa must vitally depend on demand for his products in Machakos or Meru. I can give more examples. The man who was trained in Nairobi, for some particular industrial task, may find an outlet for his talent when some new processing plant is opened in Homa Bay or Kilifi. A doctor who was born in Embu or Eldoret may come to give devoted service to the people in Voi or in Bungoma. Productivity of mixed farming in Nakuru must have a vital impact, on supplies and prices, affecting families in all areas of our Republic. What I am attempting to show you through these examples is that national unity is also a sense of family. We must all take an interest, and a pride, in what every member of the Kenya family is doing, since it is upon the sum total of all contributions that progress depends.

At this point I want to stress that in all our affairs we must always be realistic. In this connexion, we must know that in the years to come, many stresses will arise to threaten the solid edifice of our national unity. Some of these may have roots in political ambition or personal greed. Some may spring from impatience with hardship or challenge. Yet others may be built around an imported political dogma or doctrine. And so I warn you all,

In our beloved Republic there is still much to be planned, started and accomplished. But we can do it all so long as you can say that the man standing alongside, or the man in a neighbouring district, or the man in whichever other province, is your brother. If our vigilance is ever relaxed, allowing unity to be destroyed by hatreds or suspicions or intrigues, then our nationhood will be no more. And if this is gone, nothing of worth and of strength will remain.

During the recent Leaders' Conference at the Kenya Institute of Administration, there was a fresh and unanimous commitment to national unity. At that meeting it was freely and clearly recognized that political triumphs leading into a modern era of political stability had all evolved upon the solid rock of unity. Moreover, all the points about shared interests and mutual dependence, throughout the Republic, were fully understood. And it was agreed, in addition, that our main shield against external challenge, be it from regional hostilities or international economic pressures, was national unity, underlying trust between the Government and people.

In such a context, I will now make a brief reference to the question of closing down institutions which, in the past, have had some tribal origin or flavour. Over recent weeks, this matter has been hotly debated in our Parliament and Press. I have no criticism of this fact. Indeed, it is enormously encouraging to see the extent to which people recognize and value freedom of speech and of comment in our nation. All of this is a symbol of political maturity. It says much as well for the kind of democracy we wish to preserve, in which human rights and individual interests are not simply ground into dust by the bulldozer of the State. In the event, therefore, and with regard to tribal institutions, I am happy that the air has been cleared through public debate and that decisions publicly announced will ensure that the objectives of the recent Leaders' Conference at K.I.A. are fully realized.

Finally, I wish now to mention one other important aspect of relationship between Government and people. For this purpose, we might take national food policy as an appropriate example.

Ministers and officials are sometimes quoted in newspapers as saying that the Government is determined to feed the people. But of course, in its literal meaning, any such statement does not make much sense. The Government cannot itself carry out all such tasks as ploughing, weeding and harvesting which are involved in food production. It is really the people who must work hard to feed themselves. Here I am not saying that the Government will stand aside merely watching. The Government's role is to support peoples' efforts as vigorously and as comprehensively as possible—through such measures as agricultural credit, construction of access roads and storage facilities, research, extension services, setting appropriate prices, and so on. My Government will continue to provide that kind of support and, in addition, continuously create new opportunities for farmers. But the actual production of the food, for home consumption and for the market, must be done by the people themselves.

Indeed, it is important to realize that Government programmes are basically aimed at mobilizing human resources, and equipping the people to carry out, increasingly more efficiently, all practical tasks for their development, and in this connexion we must also realize that development of the people is the development of the nation. I therefore urge all our people to respond whole-heartedly and make maximum use of opportunities which exist, and those which will arise as we continue our struggle for national development.

Summing up what I have been saying so far, I believe there are two most critical functions of a Government; one is connected with the provision of opportunities and means, and the other is an obligation to tell people the truth. Then on the other side of the coin, the people must respond creatively to all the services and incentives provided, while adapting their approaches and activities to the realities that are before them. Both Government and people have an equally vital task, and as I said earlier, there is no point in blaming the Government for such difficulties as might arise or worsen, if warnings and advices are simply ignored by the people themselves.

The whole relationship is a constantly evolving process. Economic and social circumstances which existed at the time of uhuru, in the context of world affairs, cannot be compared with the circumstances of today. We had to start building on some modest and often weak foundation, but now, Kenya has become a modern state in world society. The scale and the nature of all problems, and of all policy requirements, have vastly changed. Whether in agriculture, or in the commercial and industrial sectors, there should never be too great a dependence on Government. As a feature of our national maturity, the people themselves must always seek and work to improve their own welfare, and it is within this principle that we shall find the key which finally unlocks the door to economic independence.

I want to end this address by reminding you of the burning faith which Mzee Jomo Kenyatta had in the people of Kenya. Long before our independence, and even during those difficult days of imprisonment and detention, Mzee Kenyatta maintained his strong belief that as long as people were united and dedicated, independence would surely come. Further, he was convinced that economic reforms, underlying social justice, would then be like strong shoots springing from the inspiring soil of nationhood.

Today, as we confront the challenges and needs of this coming decade, it is fitting that we should recall such faith. In many ways, life has now become more complex, factors, possibilities and constraints have all changed, both in pace and in proportion. But other things have remained the same; faith in our nation and dedication to its purposes. We must go on now, working together for the future, and for our children's future, in the knowledge that national integrity, and social justice, must always rest upon the foundation of peace, love and unity.

H A R A M B E E ! ! !

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
HARAMBEE HOUSE,
NAIROBI.

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