

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY HON. MWAI KIBAKI,  
C.G.H., M.P., PRESIDENT AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF  
OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
KENYA ON THE OCCASION OF MADARAKA DAY  
CELEBRATIONS ON 1ST JUNE, 2008, NYAYO  
NATIONAL STADIUM, NAIROBI**

FELLOW KENYANS,

It is my great pleasure to join all of you in celebrating the 45th Madaraka Day. Forty-five years ago, on the historic day of 1st June, 1963, we assumed responsibility as Kenyans, in managing the affairs of our Government and country.

During this period, we have made impressive gains in the fight against poverty, ignorance, and disease. Kenyans are today better off than they were 45 years ago in many aspects of our nation's social, economic and political spheres.

Further, as a nation, we have always taken responsibility in finding practical and workable solutions when faced with challenges. One such situation was the post-election violence that followed the December, 2007 general elections.

Despite this enormous challenge, we were able to overcome the crisis because as a people and in particular the leaders, we recognized that our country is greater and more important than any individual.

I want to thank you, fellow Kenyans, because we have proved to the world that when faced with challenges that threaten the social fabric of our nation, we are able to reason together and find a workable solution.

In this regard, I would like to acknowledge the support and encouragement we received from all our friends from the region and beyond.

The Grand Coalition Government is in place and working well. Its first business has been to put in place a comprehensive

development programme to be executed by the Government over the next five years. This programme is derived from the harmonization of the manifestos of PNU, ODM and ODM-Kenya, as well as the Vision 2030.

We are finalizing arrangements to launch the Five Year Plan and the Vision 2030 next week. The plan will enable us to attain higher rates of economic growth from last year's 7 per cent up to 10 per cent by the year 2012.

With this level of economic growth, we shall generate more revenue so that the country has resources to increase the standards of living for all Kenyans. For example, increased revenues will result in more jobs for our youth, expanded health services, education, water, security, housing, road construction and rural electrification.

Fellow Kenyans,

The post-election violence led to the displacement of over 350,000 Kenyans. About 250,000 of these found shelter in various camps. Over the last three weeks, the Government has facilitated more than 178,000 displaced Kenyans to return to their homes.

There are, however, over 40,000 Kenyans still living in camps in Nakuru and Eldoret. The resettlement programme is therefore continuing until all those who were forced to flee from their homes and farms return to continue with their normal lives.

During this traumatic period, the Government supported those who were displaced by providing them with food supplies and also ensuring that school-going children could continue with basic learning. I want to thank all Kenyans, and in particular, the Kenya Red Cross Society and other well-wishers who offered assistance to the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

In addition to returning the displaced Kenyans to their homes, the Government is also continuing to support them and the surrounding communities with food, and where practicable,

ploughing their land without charge, as well as providing them with free seeds and fertilizer.

Apart from resettling those who were displaced, my Government is committed to providing support to those who had their houses and businesses destroyed. To this end, the Government has set up a Humanitarian Fund and has appealed to all Kenyans and the international community to make contributions to this Fund.

I sincerely thank all those who have so far made their contribution to the Fund. I am aware that resettlement of the displaced persons is only the first step. As leaders, and as communities, we have an obligation to promote peaceful co-existence amongst all Kenyans.

The recurrence of politically instigated violence, in the period before or after a general election is a situation we must not tolerate in modern Kenya. As a society, we should reject those who incite others to violence. We should not spare them or those who recruit the gangs that cause mayhem.

Once investigations are complete, those found to be innocent will be released without undue delay. But those who committed murder of innocent citizens, engaged in reckless destruction of property or rape should not expect any mercy.

The Government is also implementing several measures to promote reconciliation, national healing and cohesion. For instance, we have established the Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence that is expected to complete its work within three months.

The findings and recommendations of this commission, together with those from the Commission on the Review of the Electoral Process, will be strengthened by the Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission whose Bill has already been published.

We are going to great lengths to establish these commissions so that, as a Government and as a country, we can deal decisively with

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We are going to great lengths to establish these commissions so that, as a Government and as a country, we can deal decisively with

the problems posed by ethnicity and impunity. We are determined to restore harmony among our people and create an environment for national cohesion to take root.

We want to build a caring nation which reaches out to those who are weak and disadvantaged. We want to build a country where all Kenyans are provided with an enabling environment to realize their full potential.

Under the National Accord, we committed ourselves to finalizing the Constitutional Review within a year. The process has started, and I am happy that the Grand Coalition gives us the best opportunity to resolve the outstanding issues in the best interest of the people of this country.

Fellow Kenyans,

In addition to the political challenges we faced early this year, we are also facing serious social challenges caused by the rapid rise in the cost of living over the last few months, and its negative impact on the lives of ordinary Kenyans. I know that you are feeling the burden of the high prices of basic commodities and services.

This situation, as many of you have observed, is a world-wide phenomenon. The prices of food in the world have more than doubled and are at their highest in over thirty years. The price of oil in the international market has also more than doubled from what it was a year ago to over 135 US dollars per barrel currently.

The projections indicate that the price of oil is likely to rise further above 200 US dollars in the near future.

In order to reduce the adverse impact of the high international oil prices on the national economy, the Government will systematically expand the market share of the National Oil Corporation to enable it play a more effective role in stabilizing fuel prices in the local market.

Furthermore, the Government will ensure that the Kenya shilling remains stable in order to reduce the adverse impact of the high

petroleum prices. It must be noted however, that inflation and the cost of living are rising not only in Kenya, but across the world.

Nevertheless, our situation has been worsened by the impact of the post-election violence and the just failed rains in many parts of the country. In this regard, the Government is importing 3 million bags of maize in the next two months, even as it continues to buy available maize stocks from our own producers.

As a medium-term measure, the Government will also increase funding for the expansion of the Strategic Grain Reserve from 4 million bags to 8 million bags in the next two years.

The imports and releases from the Strategic Grain Reserve as well as locally available maize are expected to stabilize food prices, while also ensuring that the country has sufficient food supplies for all Kenyans until the main maize harvest later in the year.

The Government is also making available cheaper fertilizer through the National Cereals and Produce Board, which will in turn lower the cost of production for locally produced maize.

Fellow Kenyans,

I will now turn to a number of issues that affect each one of us as Kenyans. These include the provision of free education, the unemployment of our young people, and matters pertaining to the ownership and administration of land.

Let me begin with the provision of free education. Over five years ago, we launched the Free Primary Education Programme in all of our public schools. As a result, millions of children who would never have had the chance of achieving a good education are now in school and face a promising future.

However, although Free Primary Education is a major achievement for a developing country, it is not enough to enable Kenya develop a globally competitive labour force. We need to ensure that as many children as possible proceed to acquire secondary education.

It is for this reason that I initiated the Free Day Secondary Education Programme earlier this year. Under this programme, children attending public day secondary schools will not pay any fees. Moreover, the fees burden for parents whose children are attending boarding secondary schools have been reduced substantially.

The Free Secondary Education Policy has resulted in an additional 300,000 boys and girls being enrolled in our secondary schools. The total number of students at this level has therefore increased from 1 million students last year to 1.3 million this year.

In addition to Free Secondary Education, my Government is offering free tuition to youth enrolled at all registered youth polytechnics countrywide. This initiative will ensure that more young people can acquire basic skills and competence for self employment.

Above all, the Youth Enterprise Development Fund, which now stands at 1.7 billion shillings will be boosted further by an additional half a billion shillings in July, this year. I am pleased that the Fund has become popular with the youth with more than 1.1 billion shillings already disbursed.

As for employment creation, the Government is in the process of developing a plan for youth employment creation. This plan will be unveiled later this year at the National Youth Employment Summit that will focus on creating more jobs in the coming one year.

At the same time, the Government is expanding public investment and encouraging private investment in infrastructure development. We will enhance partnership with the Private Sector for development of projects such as roads construction, construction of low cost rental housing, agricultural production and irrigation projects.

We are also implementing a programme for the development of markets and business parks in our urban areas in order to create more employment opportunities for our young people.



Fellow Kenyans,

The recent Safaricom Initial Public Offer attracted over 200 billion shillings. This is a good indicator of the huge potential that exists in this country for mobilization of resources for development.

With this potential in mind, we have tasked the Ministry of Finance, the Central Bank of Kenya and the Capital Markets Authority to develop appropriate instruments such as long-term infrastructure bonds to mobilize resources for the development of our national infrastructure.

We will also continue to promote Kenya as one of the region's premier investment destinations, and invite local and international investors to intensify their investments in sectors such as tourism, ICT related businesses, financial services, health services, educational services, agro-processing and fish-processing industries.

Further, the Government will commit itself to progressively reforming the business environment in order to make it easier for local and international investors to do business in Kenya. In that regard, we have created a new Ministry of Nairobi Metropolitan Development.

This Ministry is expected to undertake large-scale infrastructure projects and also enforce planning and zoning regulations in order to speed up the transformation of Nairobi Metropolitan area into a vibrant world-class metropolis.

In addition, we have created a National Urban and Metropolitan Areas Development Authority to speed up the modernization of our towns so that they are more attractive to investment and business.

Fellow Kenyans,

Land is one of the most important resources that Kenya has. Land rights which are entrenched in the Constitution and the laws of Kenya are clearly among the most important matters in the lives of all Kenyans.

There should, therefore, be no ambiguity on the security of land rights for any landowner in Kenya. Title deeds, leaseholds, and letters of allotment should be respected by all.

The processing of these documents should always be expedited by relevant Government offices, and their sanctity protected in accordance with our laws and regulations governing the administration of land.

In this regard, those who have leaseholds or letters of allotment that have expired should proceed to renew them in the normal way and there should be no reason for panic.

In concluding my remarks, fellow Kenyans, I wish to challenge every Kenyan to take it as their personal responsibility to make our country a better place for all of us. Let us each make a commitment to ensure that never again will a Kenyan be displaced from his or her home for whatever reason.

Let us all respect and uphold the right of every Kenyan to live, work and own property in any part of our country. We live in one of the most beautiful countries in the world. Our cultures and history make us a great people, who are hardworking and who are able to live together as brothers and sisters. Therefore, let us all be proud to be Kenyan.

Let us all, men and women, young and old, join together and live harmoniously as members of one great family called Kenya.

*THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU ALL.*