

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY  
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CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA ON  
THE OCCASION OF THE 46TH ANNIVERSARY OF KENYATTA DAY  
TUESDAY, 20TH OCTOBER, 2009**

FELLOW KENYANS,

I am pleased to join you as we observe this year's Kenyatta Day. This occasion reminds us of the great personal and collective sacrifices our independence heroes made, so that Kenya would be an independent and sovereign nation.

Our heroes left us with a legacy of the courage, commitment, dedication and sacrifice they showed in the fight for independence. They had the courage to fight against the overwhelming power of the British Empire.

They displayed unwavering dedication to the cause of Kenya's freedom, and were willing to sacrifice everything including their own lives and property, to ensure that Kenya attained its independence.

Forty six years into our independence, we, as a people, are at the crucial moment of nation building. We are called upon, once again to show the same level of commitment our founding fathers displayed, in making Kenya a cohesive, peaceful and prosperous country.

As a nation, we find ourselves at a unique moment in history. Despite the challenges we face, we see within our grasp the opportunity to transform Kenya into a new country, with strong democratic and economic institutions for the good of our people.

We must, therefore, not lose sight of this vision. Nor should we lose sight of the progress we have made so far.

Indeed, the Grand Coalition Government has, in the last one year, embarked on implementing some of the most far reaching reforms in our country's history.

Fellow Kenyans,

The first step towards the birth of a new Kenya involves the search for a new Constitution. A year ago, we re-affirmed our commitment to constitution review, and immediately created the legal framework for establishment of the necessary institutions to spearhead the task.

That is why today we have the Committee of Experts, to spearhead the effort to give our country a new Constitution.

Similarly, we now have in place the Interim Independent Constitutional Dispute Resolution Court that has exclusive and original jurisdiction over disputes related to the constitutional review process. I am confident that we are on the path to having a new Constitution next year.

However, those charged with the responsibility of drafting a new Constitution must know that Kenyans desire a Constitution that satisfies and reflects a broad national consensus. That is, a Constitution that represents the aspirations of the majority of Kenyans and one that can withstand the test of time.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At this time last year, Kenyans were still debating the kind of electoral system the country required. The outcome was the establishment of the Interim Independent Electoral Commission. This Commission has gone through the first test in the just concluded by-elections.

The Commission is now in the process of preparing a new voters roll ahead of the referendum on the new Constitution. Meanwhile, I am hopeful that the new constitution will provide for the establishment of a new electoral body that will have the competence and integrity required to win public confidence for generations to come.

The question of a fair electoral process is related to the issue of putting in place a mechanism to ensure fair and equal representation in parliament and civic authorities.

The need to apply the principle of one person one vote led to the establishment of the Interim Independent Boundaries Commission in accordance with the Kriegler Report. It is charged with the responsibility of curving out electoral and administrative boundaries.

At the end of its work, the Boundaries Commission will hopefully give the country what the people have been looking for, namely providing the electoral body with approximately equal size constituencies demographically.

This will give the country the fair representation our forefathers fought for, it will give Kenya the political and social stability she requires for fair management of public affairs.

Fellow Kenyans,

The new Kenya we envisage can only be born of a people who consciously made decision to create a strong, united national identity, where they view themselves first and foremost as Kenyan, while other identities are increasingly relegated to secondary importance.

To create such a country requires great courage and commitment, persistence and to consistently desire to be Kenyan above all other forms of identity.

This is why, with last year's event, we must give priority to the agenda of national healing and reconciliation, as well as to the need to put an end to the culture of impunity. To undertake this responsibility, the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission has been put in place.

The Commission will help our nation and people to deal decisively with past injustices, so that we can move forward as a united and cohesive Kenya. I appeal to all Kenyans to give this Commission all possible co-operation for the sake of our nation.

We know that old habits of ethnic, racial, sexual, and religious stereotypes take a long time to wither.

We have therefore established a new body, this year, to ensure that we put in place laws and rules that will criminalize hate speech, profiling, discrimination and all other negative practices that perpetuate ethnic tendencies and other divisive social behaviour.

The noble goals proposed under the above reforms will be achieved more rapidly if we safeguard the right of all Kenyans to live, work, and settle anywhere they choose. The Government has finalized all issues pertaining to internally displaced persons born out of post election violence last year.

All the remaining IDPs are expected to go back to their farms shortly. The Government has assisted many to re-start their lives.

In this regard, I ask you, my fellow countrymen and women, to ensure that all those coming to settle near your homes are reassured of their safety and security. Help them settle, and support them to feel free to recreate their homes, farms, and businesses.

As all IDPs are finally settled, let us commit ourselves, individually and collectively, to ensure that never again in our nation's history will anyone be forced to be an internally displaced person.

Fellow Kenyans,

You are all aware of the terrible drought and subsequent food insecurity, water shortage and energy crisis we have faced this year. This is in addition to the battering our economy took from last year's post-election violence.

You may recall that in 2008, the economy grew at a rate of 1.7 per cent, down from 7.1 per cent in 2007, it is expected to grow at between 2 and 3 per cent this year.

Faced by these enormous challenges, the Government has acted decisively in dealing with the challenges by allocating nearly 24 billion shillings of its own resources to alleviate the suffering of the vulnerable members of our society.

We have also set aside more funds to procure strategic grain reserves from our local farmers. And to ensure that food remains affordable, the Government has lifted import duty on maize imports until June next year.

To provide vulnerable groups with a source of income, the Government introduced the countrywide Kazi kwa Vijana programme, and the cash transfer programme to the urban poor and elderly persons.

In the meantime, the Government has mobilized the Army, Administration Police and National Youth Service to provide logistical support in the provision of food to hardest hit parts of the country.

In addition, the Government has also intervened and bought animals from pastoralists under the Emergency Livestock Off-take programme, just to alleviate their problems.

More has been done in the areas of water supply, with key efforts being directed at drilling of boreholes, excavating dams and pans, providing water tanks to communities and schools, and availing water through water bowsers to various urban and rural communities.

Despite these short term programs, we have not lost sight of the long term measures we need to undertake to make Kenya a food secure nation.

With regard to expanding food production during the current short-rains season, the Government will distribute subsidized fertilizer and relief seeds.

The Government has enhanced food production by putting 40,000 acres under irrigation by the end of last month. The target is to have an extra ONE million additional acres of land under irrigation.

Equally important is the Government effort to import enough supplies of fertilizer that is currently being sold at affordable prices of about 2,000 shillings per 50 kilogram bag.

With the onset of short rains, we are confident that there will be enough food for all at affordable prices next year. We will continue in our efforts to ensure that we do not undergo such food crisis again in the future.

Hence, the new programmes of subsidized fertilizer and seed prices, together with the expanded irrigated food production, should ensure that Kenya becomes self-sufficient in food within the next two years.

Fellow Kenyans,

We are further aware of the possibility of heavy rains during this current short rains season and the potential impacts the floods could have on our country.

In anticipation of possible negative outcomes, various Government departments are pre-positioning food, drugs, water treatment chemicals, vaccines and other relief supplies in flood prone areas to ensure continuity in relief efforts.

Additionally, the Government is desilting a number of dams, rebuilding dykes on flood prone rivers of Nyanza and Western provinces. Plans are also underway to construct a number of mega dams in several parts of the country.

To add efforts to conserve water, the Government is encouraging wananchi to establish as much water storage capacity as possible so that we do not waste the opportunity for water harvesting granted by the heavy rains.

Efforts are equally underway to establish a public information and communications system to deal with emergencies and keep wananchi sensitized of any impending danger if any.

However, much of these efforts may go to waste unless they are supported by clear determination to restore and conserve our water towers. The Prime Minister and others charged with this responsibility will do good to forge ahead and see to the full restoration of the Mau Forest, as well as other forests at the Aberdares, Mount Kenya, Mount Elgon and Cherangany Hills.

Fellow Kenyans,

I wish to reiterate the Government's commitment to reviving the economy, creating employment and providing the best environment for every Kenyan to be gainfully employed.

This will enable each of our citizens have a place to call home, and have the opportunity to provide education and healthcare to their families.

However, I am fully aware that we cannot achieve these goals, or the objectives set out in VISION TWENTY THIRTY, unless we prudently direct our national resources and consolidate the fight against corruption.

I am happy to note that today there are fewer incidents of grand corruption reported by the National Audit Office. This is due to the tougher procurement laws, the oversight role of Parliamentary committees, and scrutiny by the civil society and the media.

The positive development can also be attributed to greater observance of financial regulations by public officers and state institutions.

Nevertheless, one must acknowledge that the war against corruption and waste is far from won. The Government wants more effective investigations and prosecutions involving corruption.

This will help regain and retain public confidence in public institutions.

In this regard, I direct accounting officers to institute sanctions, including prosecution and sacking of any officers serving under them who commit acts of corruption.

I am also asking the public to fearlessly expose all officers who solicit bribes from them, so that we can tame and eventually eradicate corruption. The private sector must also play its part and stop inducing public servants with bribes in order to win favours.

The Grand Coalition insists on fighting corruption and the culture of impunity because we know that integrity in the management of public institutions is critical to the attainment of the VISION TWENTY THIRTY goals.

As Kenyans know, a sound judicial system is a key pillar for our social and economic growth. In this connection, the Grand Coalition Government is determined to carry out the required reforms in the judiciary for justice to be done timely and effectively.

Fellow Kenyans,

Ladies and Gentlemen, I now wish to comment on issues of human induced climate change and international security.

As we reflect on the realization of a new Kenya in the emerging environment of unpredictable climate change and the changing face of insecurity and terrorism, we must have the courage to make some fundamental changes in the way we live, and the way we conduct ourselves.

At the international level, Kenya will join other African countries in seeking compensation for bearing the greatest burden of climate change.

At the local level, it is important that we seize this opportunity posed by climate change to adapt our livelihoods as well as the economy and society to the new reality. This is where 80 per cent of our country is expected to become drier, and 20 per cent wetter, due to erratic weather patterns.

For the better part of our history, Kenya has been a rural-based economy, with a few cities and towns. These lifestyles and livelihoods cannot sustain us much longer under the double pressure arising from relentless rapid population growth and the changing climate.

This reality will make it very difficult for the bulk of our people to draw their sustenance from farming or livestock keeping.

We have no choice but to plan for rapid urbanization and rural eco-cluster settlements. We must plan for several large metropolitan areas in various parts of the country which will serve to hold the bulk of the population. We must also plan for a highly effective rural cluster eco-programme for both agricultural and pastoral communities.

In addition, we have to accelerate plans for an economy based on services and industry through special economic zones and the creation of a second transport corridor.

This is why the Government has given a green light for construction of the new Lamu Port and the development of a railway line from Lamu to Southern Sudan and Ethiopia. This will open up the whole of Northern Kenya as a new economic frontier for the overall development of the country.

Kenyans are therefore advised to prepare and take advantage of the new economic opportunities that the new railway and port will offer.

On the issue of security, I urge Kenyans throughout the country to rethink the way they live and conduct themselves. It must be remembered that Government security forces can only succeed in keeping us safe and secure if we observe and uphold the rule of law wherever we live.

Thus, citizens cannot arm themselves, raid their neighbours, kill and maim others, and then accuse the Government of not providing security. Nor can citizens harbour known criminals and criminal gangs, protect them as community members, and then complain of extortion, murder and other serious crimes.

It is time for all to own up their mistakes. I, therefore, urge all Kenyans to co-operate with security forces to end crime. I invite every Kenyans to support Government's plan for disarmament.

Let us all discourage arms buying in families and our villages, and let us report any arms merchants and dealers to the security forces.

Let all Kenyans identify and report all criminals in their midst to the police, and refrain individually or collectively from protecting or condoning organized crimes and criminal gangs in their midst.

These are the hard standards and basic features of a society that truly seeks to be and remain secure. Let all play their part; the Government will play its full part always.

As I conclude, I urge us all to have the courage and commitment to build a new Kenya, a country blessed with a hardworking and youthful population. Let us direct our energies to the creation of the wealth for Kenyans as a basis for expanding employment and higher living standards for all our citizens.

To do this, we must recast our national discourse and focus not on the things that divide us, but on the many issues and similarities that unite us.

It is no accident that we were born Kenyans. God meant us to be one peaceful, prosperous, working, united and caring nation.

This is the true meaning of the words of our national anthem; when we say,

*May we dwell in unity,*

*Peace and liberty*

*Plenty be found within our borders.*

Finally, Fellow Kenyans, I wish to convey my best wishes to all students who will be sitting for their exams this year. My prayers are with you and may success come your way.

***THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU ALL.***