

SPEECH BY H.E. 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 THE PROMULGATION OF THE NEW CONSTITUTION, FRIDAY, 27TH AUGUST, 2010

EXCELLENCIES,
FELLOW KENYANS,

Today is a great day for Kenya. I salute all Kenyan citizens wherever they are. I feel honoured to be your President at this moment because this is the most important day in the history of our nation since independence.

Through a referendum, on 4th August, the year Two Thousand and Ten, we, the people of Kenya, on the basis of our own free will, overwhelmingly voted to renew our nation and usher in the Second Republic.

I have today, as President of this great republic, appended my signature on Kenya's New Constitution, as an affirmation of the endorsement of the basic law of the land. I thank the Almighty God for guiding us through the peaceful referendum and for enabling us to witness this historic moment.

On your behalf, I wish to appreciate all those who have contributed intellectually as well as through sheer hard work and commitment to the realization of our New Constitution. I also wish to pay tribute to all those patriotic Kenyans who suffered injuries or lost their lives, freedom and property in the struggle for the New Constitution. We thank them and salute them.

Fellow Kenyans,
This moment marks the decisive conclusion of the TWENTY-YEAR journey in search of a new constitutional order. This New Constitution is an embodiment of our best hopes, aspirations, ideals and values for a peaceful and more prosperous nation.

The New Constitution gives us renewed optimism about our country and its future. Some of us were present at the birth of the First Republic. As young leaders, we envisioned turning our newly born country into a prosperous, healthy, and developed nation in a generation or two. A lot has been achieved towards this goal, but much more work remains to be done.

The New Constitution gives our nation a historic opportunity to decisively conquer the challenges that face us today. It provides us an avenue to renew our fight against unemployment and poverty; an opportunity to work and become a developed people and nation.

As Kenyans, we should be proud for making history, as one of the few nations in the world that have successfully replaced their Constitution in an atmosphere of peace. I salute the Kenyan people for their courage, patience and determination during this long and sometimes painful journey.

This Constitution will fundamentally transform our nation politically, economically and socially. Some of the changes will be immediate and we must be ready to support them. Other changes will take time. We must remain resilient and focused as we work towards their fulfillment.

The changes envisaged in the New Constitution will present some challenges along the way. However, the New Constitution gives us better structures of governance to address the challenges more efficiently. Our resolve to complete the journey of our nation's transformation must remain firm.

As we embark on the journey of national renewal, I ask all of us to keep in mind the vision of the NEW KENYA. A New Kenya, where we will no longer have people living in absolute poverty, or facing unemployment. A New Kenya where food insecurity will be a thing of the past.

We are on the march towards a New Kenya where there will be more opportunities for employment and business. A New Kenya where there is better housing, healthcare and education for our people. A New Kenya where all citizens will lead productive and dignified lives. This is the promise of the New Constitution.

This promise is possible because we are blessed to have a talented and hard working population. The New Constitution is also a promise that every Kenyan, young and old, man or woman will unleash their full potential.

This is more so because we are a people with a diverse range of cultures, languages and other sources of human inspiration. The New Constitution accords each person, group of persons and cultures a place in the process of unprecedented social cohesion and national integration.

From this day on, the people of Kenya should embrace a new national spirit; a spirit of national inclusiveness, tolerance, harmony and unity. I appeal to Kenyans, individually and collectively, to build a nation that will be socially and economically inclusive and cohesive where all have equal access and opportunities to realize their full potential.

To the youth of our nation, I wish to assure you that the New Constitutional dispensation will create opportunities that will lead to the attainment of your goals and dreams. I see in the youth of Kenya a lot of promise, energy and creativity. As a country, we have to invest in our youth to enable them to harness their potential. It is the empowered youth that will make this country globally competitive.

Fellow Kenyans,

With the promulgation of this Constitution, we must change our approach to politics. We must enhance the role of truly competitive ideas and methods of getting the country to be a developed society in the shortest time possible.

The new institutions that will come with the national and county governments need the support of all Kenyans. More importantly, let us use the opportunities being offered by the county governments to develop all corners of the country. The devolved governments must be adequately anchored in readiness to make their contribution to the attainment of VISION TWENTY-THIRTY.

The New Constitution will also usher in new ways of conducting public affairs, particularly in the elected and appointed state and public offices. This Constitution's leadership code and values makes it clear that people who will present themselves for public or state offices will have to be individuals of

integrity, willing to be held accountable by the people and the institutions and laws of our country.

The New Constitution ensures that current and future leaders entrench integrity and fairness in the justice system, build a world-class public service, and promote politics of issues and ideas. The leaders must guarantee that the Bill of Rights is enforced, and establish the framework to enable the national and county governments work harmoniously.

These leaders will be expected to facilitate the success of Kenyan businesses and industries as well as put in place land ownership and use systems that promote equity and productivity.

The Grand Coalition Government has provided the required leadership for delivering the New Constitution. We are ready and fully committed to providing continued leadership in the implementation of this Constitution. We have a unity of purpose in enacting all the laws required to give full effect to the New Constitution.

In conclusion, I once again salute the Kenyan people for peacefully ushering in the New Constitution. I also thank our international friends for their support and encouragement when we sought a New Constitution. I most sincerely thank the Heads of State and Government and all other distinguished foreign guests for honouring us with their presence to witness the ushering in of our New Constitution and the birth of our Second Republic.

I am confident that this Constitution will endure and stand the test of time. The dawn of a new era is upon us. Let us seize the moment with courage because the birth of the Second Republic holds great promise for the Kenyan people.

THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU ALL NA MUNGU AIBARIKI KENYA.