

SPEECH BY H.E. HON. UHURU KENYATTA, C.G.H., PRESIDENT AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA DURING HIS INAUGURATION AND SWEARING-IN CEREMONY ON TUESDAY, 9TH APRIL 2013 AT THE MOI INTERNATIONAL SPORTS COMPLEX, NAIROBI.

- **Your Excellency Mwai Kibaki, C.G.H., M.P.;**
- **Your Excellency Daniel arap Moi;**
- **Your Excellencies, Visiting Heads of State & Government;**
- **Chief Justice Willy Mutunga;**
- **Invited Guests;**
- **Fellow Kenyans,**

Let me begin by thanking all Heads of State present and the representatives of Heads of State for choosing to be here as a symbol of your continued support and goodwill towards Kenyans.

I particularly note, with gratitude, the large presence of our brothers and sisters from across the continent. This is a clear indication of your commitment to the Pan-African agenda. You have bestowed a great honor on me and our country by being here. On behalf of the Kenyan people I welcome all of you to Kenya. *Karibuni Sana!*

Let me also acknowledge with gratitude and respect the distinguished service of my predecessors. President Mwai Kibaki, a true statesman and a great leader who over the past 10 years has laid a firm foundation for the future prosperity of our country. *Asante sana Mzee. Shukrani nyingi sana.*

I pay tribute also to former President Moi who is with us today and thank him for his years of leadership and dedication to our nation. *Asante Mzee!*

With humility and respect, I acknowledge and pay tribute to the memory of my father, the late founding father of our nation, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta. May he and his fellow architects of liberation in Kenya and Africa as a whole rest in peace with the knowledge that this generation is committed to fulfilling their dreams for our nation and our continent.

I would like to thank all my worthy opponents in the recently completed presidential election. Every one of you helped define and make stronger our democracy. Because of you, Kenyans had real choices. Because of you, Kenyans felt free to exercise their sovereign will. Thank you all.

In an open and free democracy, there is a vital role for a vibrant opposition that helps to hold the Government to account. Kenya is such a democracy, and as President I will respect that role just as I will champion the right of every Kenyan to speak their mind free of fear of reprisal or condemnation.

Fellow Kenyans,

Our nation has now successfully navigated the most complex general election in our history. Our journey began three years ago, with the promulgation of a new constitution, and ended eleven days ago, with a landmark Supreme Court decision. Ours has been an unusual story. An unconventional path. We have been praised and criticized in turn – depending on who was telling our story. Yet while some watched the unfolding national events with skepticism, resigned to what they believed was the inevitability of chaos, others, the vast majority, looked upon our nation with a tempered hope; cheering us on not only because they believed in us but because they knew that if Kenya

succeeded they too would succeed. For all that has been said of our nation, the records of history will attest to a number of undeniable facts.

They will outline the long queues we made, the long hours we waited to vote and the historic voter turnout of these elections. They will detail the decisions that the Kenyan media made - the professionalism and responsibility with which they acted. They will remind us of the fact that we embarked on a feat that few other countries have attempted, holding six elections simultaneously. They will call our attention to the fact that the youth were meaningfully engaged in the entire electoral period and that the political consciousness of Kenyans was at an all time high. They will list and honor the individuals, institutions and service organizations that played a strong role in this defining chapter of our nation's history. They will contrast our accomplishments, with the fact that Kenya ventured into multi-party politics only 20 years ago further strengthening and entrenching our democracy. When the records remind us of these truths, we will recognize that at the end of the day, it is the indomitable spirit of the Kenyan people; their commitment to peace; their desire for progress and their respect for the rule of law - that was the true headline of this election story.

Where systems failed, Kenyans did not. Where decisions were delayed and ambiguity prevailed, Kenyans were patient – seeking and waiting for clarity. Where issues arose to stir up dissent, Kenyans exercised restraint; peacefully sought redress and submitted themselves again to the constitution and the rule of law – united in the belief that God's judgment would guide that of men.

Today, I am humbled and honoured to accept the mantle of leadership that the people of Kenya have bestowed on me. I will lead all Kenyans – those who voted for me – and those who voted for our competitors – towards a national prosperity that is firmly rooted in a rich and abiding peace in which unity can ultimately be realized. Peace is not simply about the absence of violence. It is defined by the presence of fundamental liberties and the prevalence of economic opportunities. We will not settle for a perfunctory peace that is disrupted every five years by an election cycle. Rather, we are calling and working towards a permanent peace, through which democracy is glorified rather than undermined. A peace that fosters unity.

Indeed, national unity will only be possible if we deal decisively with some of the issues that continue to hinder our progress. It will come through job creation. It will be founded on economic growth. It will be strengthened by a globally competitive education system: by the building of more schools across the nation and by ensuring that we have well thought out curricula that prepares our children for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. It will be upheld when all citizens are able to access affordable healthcare and protect themselves, and their children, from preventable diseases that still wage war on our populace. It will be strengthened through the promotion of public-private partnerships and through the creation of a friendly and enabling environment for business. It will be reflected in our men and women working side by side as equals to move our country forward. It will be realized when we become a food-secure nation by investing in and modernizing the agricultural sector by equipping it with the relevant information and technology that it needs to grow. It will be confirmed when the rights of all citizens are protected through legislation that upholds the spirit of our constitution. When women and young people are both seen and heard at the decision-making table, at national as well as devolved levels of government. When all communities in Kenya are confident that they have a Government that listens to and addresses their needs.

Achieving peace and strengthening unity will be the goal of my Government. This work begins now. We welcome all Kenyans to hold us to account. Within the first one hundred days – we will ensure that maternity fees are abolished and that all citizens of Kenya are able to access government

dispensaries and health centers free of charge. **Within the first one hundred days, we will develop a framework to direct the 6 billion Kenya Shillings previously allocated for the election run-off towards establishing a new Youth and Women Fund that will be open to the youth and women from every part of this country. Within the first one hundred days, we will put measures in place to ensure that all students, joining class one next year, within the public school system receive a laptop. We made a promise to our children and we will keep it because we believe that early exposure to technology will inspire future innovation and be a catalyst for growth and prosperity.**

Fellow Kenyans,

My government will immediately begin the process of supporting devolution and enabling county leadership to carry out their constitutional mandate and fulfill the pledges they made to the Kenyan people. Let us all be clear - supporting devolution is not a choice, as some claim it to be - it is a duty. A constitutional duty. One that I have sworn to uphold. Our constitution does not suggest devolution, it demands it. I urge all Kenyans to be persistent, pragmatic, patient and non-partisan, as we pursue the promise of devolved governance.

Fellow Kenyans,

Dealing with unemployment will be a priority for my government. We are committed to creating jobs and opportunities for our people - especially our young people. We will do this, by creating an enabling environment for the private sector. We will harness the gifts and talents of our youth, in order to enable sports and entertainment providers earn a profitable livelihood and make Kenya a global leader in these areas. We will make the procurement process faster, more accessible, and transparent. We will simplify the process of starting and running a business, in order to make it friendly and cost-effective to do business in Kenya. We will expand electricity generation, extend the transmission network and ensure that electricity supply is more consistent and reliable. We will build on the accomplishments of the last administration in infrastructure, by increasing accessibility through roads and rail networks, as well as increasing digital connectivity. To the private sector, my promise to you is that we will create an enabling environment, so that you can play your part in creating employment and fostering economic growth.

Fellow Kenyans,

For too long our nation has exported jobs that should rightly belong to our citizens. We have focused on exporting primary products, instead of promoting value addition and manufacturing finished goods thereby creating jobs and improving our standard of living. Today, I pledge, that my administration will work towards diversifying our economic base. We will support the manufacturing industry and support all enterprises, both local and international, that strive to create finished goods using local labour and materials. I also pledge, that this Government, as the largest buyer of goods and services will take the lead in supporting local industry, by buying Kenyan first.

I have consulted with Parliament and on the 16th of April, I will address both Houses and announce a detailed government program and legislative agenda.

Fellow Kenyans,

One of the biggest challenges to national unity is the feeling of exclusion in the decision making process, hence our desire and need for devolution. That notwithstanding, my commitment to Kenya

is that our national Government shall and will reflect the true face of Kenya, with the clear understanding that as we bring decision making and services closer to the people, the integrity and solidarity that binds us as citizens of one nation, must not only remain, but must be strengthened. I am equally committed to ensuring that interests of women and the interests of young people are represented in my government. A department in my office will be dedicated to ensuring that the interests of these groups not only inform every decision I make as President, but also those of every department and government ministry. Our doors will always be open. We will never turn a deaf ear to the needs of any person or group. We will leave no community behind.

Fellow Kenyans

To achieve these goals and to achieve Vision 2030, we must be responsible stewards of our natural resources. In light of this - my commitment and the commitment of the Government will be to support the National Land Commission as they seek to provide the land answer. My government will strive to work with all actors to ensure that the issue of land will never again be a contentious or a divisive subject but rather that land will be seen as what it truly is, a factor of production.

I also promise that we will exploit our natural resources in a way that benefits the current generation while safeguarding the interests of generations to come. I want to assure all Kenyans that we shall use all the money that comes from natural resources for development programs.

Fellow Kenyans

We will ensure that the harmony we are striving for extends to the environment. It is our heritage. It is our duty as guardians and custodians of that heritage to protect it for future generations. Indeed, my government will strike a decisive blow against all those that threaten it. My fellow Kenyans, poaching and the destruction of our environment has no future in this country. The responsibility to protect our environment belongs not just to the Government, but to each and every one of us. We will do all this, and more. Where there is uncertainty, we will revive confidence in the government's ability to protect its citizens. Where there is disillusionment – we will restore hope. Where there is opportunity denied - we will open new frontiers, and through our actions, we will renew our faith in government as an instrument of good.

Let me reiterate that even as we work together to promote inclusion, open new frontiers and create new opportunities, we will not tolerate those who continue to threaten the peace and security of our citizens. Criminals, cattle rustlers, drug barons and agents of terror, who disrupt the peace of our society, will be met with the full force of the law and the strength of Kenya's Security Forces. On this matter, we are resolute.

To our men and women in uniform, I say, this nation is indebted to you. You continue to lay down your lives in service, protecting Kenyans from threats both external and internal. My government will continue to work with you and do all that is in its power to support you as you continue in your noble duty.

To our sister countries in the region - we understand that our future is joined to yours. Our peace is linked to the security and stability of the region. We deployed our armed forces to Somalia because terrorism and piracy affects all of us. Indeed in the last two decades, Kenya has invested immense diplomatic energy and resources in the quest for a stable Somalia. Our commitment to fight terrorism and eradicate piracy will remain a central pillar of my government's policy on peace and security.

As President, I will work with the international community to strengthen its support for IGAD and the AU peace process in Somalia because a stable and prosperous Somalia is in the interest of all nations.

My fellow Kenyans

The future of Kenya depends not only on our National Unity but also on deepening our bonds with our brothers and sisters in East Africa and Africa as a whole. It is with this unity that we will prosper and truly deliver on the promise of independence and liberation from our colonial past. My administration is therefore committed to regional trade and cooperation and will continue to strengthen ties through the free movement of people, goods and investment, including the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade within the EAC. My goal is to see the continued growth of our community towards ultimate integration.

As Kenya celebrates its Jubilee year of freedom and independence, Africa too marks slightly over 50 years since the fall of colonialism. The breakaway from colonialism has not been easy. Indeed it has been fraught with great challenges and setbacks. Without fail however, the trajectory of our recent history, in Kenya as in Africa, has been one of great hope, renewed progress and palpable determination. Africa, Ladies and Gentlemen, is on the rise. Kenya sees herself as an integral part of this exciting awakening. The great renaissance spoken of a mere 20 years ago is upon us. Across the continent evidence of renewal and growth is everywhere, built on the bedrock of rising self-confidence, a growing educated, youthful population and God given abundance of natural wealth and resources.

To the Nations of Africa and The African Union – we assure you that in Kenya, you will continue to have a partner and an ally. If we stand together in solidarity I am confident that we will find the strength to thrive and innovate solutions that work for us. Of course, we join you in continuing to insist on relating with all nations as equals - not juniors. As partners, not subordinates. In our history as nations, we have seen some of the most ardent promoters of ideals of national sovereignty and democracy sometimes fail to live by the principles they espouse, but let us remember that their failure does not justify ours.

To the nations of the world – we acknowledge that in this age of globalization, all of us are interdependent. Our economies are interconnected as indeed are our people. I pledge to continue cultivating the relationships we have had with our traditional partners and I say to all developing and developed nations who desire a deeper and more mutually beneficial relationship with Kenya: we are ready for partnerships, we are open for business and we invite you to invest in our country. I also want to remind the International Community that for the last fifty years, Kenya has been one of the most engaged members and one of the most prolific co-authors of international treaties and instruments. I assure you again that under my leadership, Kenya will strive to uphold our international obligations, so long as these are founded on the well-established principles of mutual respect and reciprocity.

Central to our continued contribution to the international community, will be the understanding that the world is made up of many countries, cultures, political experiences and world-views. We must remember that no one country or group of countries should have control or monopoly on international institutions or the interpretation of international treaties. While each state has a right to its own view, it must respect the fact that it holds just one view amongst many in the community of nations.

Fellow Kenyans,

Today, work begins. The time has come, not to ask what community we come from but rather what dreams we share. The time has come not to ask what political party we belong to but rather what partnerships we can build. The time has come to ask, not who we voted for, but what future we are devoted to. Fellow Kenyans we must move forward together. Let us remember that although we may not be bound together by ethnicity, or cultural practices or religious conviction – our kinship rests solidly upon the fact that we have all been adopted by Kenya's borders; we are all children of this nation, we are all bound to one constitution which calls us to rise above our individual ideologies and march to our national anthem. That anthem reminds us of the fundamental principles upon which our prosperity must be built. It calls us to reflect on the power of peace; to recall the supreme value of freedom; to believe, once more, in the beauty of service and brotherhood; to aspire each day, to the dignity that results from hard work, and to contend for the hope that justice brings.

Brothers and sisters; Fellow Kenyans – let us move forward, together, in the spirit of our anthem and in the spirit of our constitution being confident that if we turn neither to the left nor to the right of our national values, we, as a people, will see the promised land of prosperity that our forbearers set out for.

God bless you, God bless the Republic of Kenya and God bless Africa.