

PRESIDENT KIBAKI'S SPEECH TO THE NATION ON HIS INAUGURATION AS KENYA'S 3RD PRESIDENT ON 30TH DECEMBER, 2002

I feel extremely happy to address you today. I am overwhelmed by your love. I am emboldened by your support and enthusiasm. I am thrilled by your sense of dedication and commitment to this country. You have renewed my hope and strengthened my belief in the greatness of this country. Now, all of us, both young and old, men and women, Kenyans of every ethnic group, race or creed, have embarked on a journey to a promising future with unshakeable determination and faith in God and in ourselves.

I would like, on behalf of myself, my family and the entire leadership and supporters of the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC), to express my sincere appreciation of all Kenyans for giving me the mandate to preside over the affairs of this great country for the next five years. I am greatly honoured for the confidence you have extended to me and I promise not to let you down. You have asked me to be your chief servant and I accept it with humility and gratitude. I would like to congratulate all our elected Parliamentary and civic leaders who will also be servants of the people.

The National Rainbow Coalition represents the future of Kenya politics. NARC is the hope of this country. Our phenomenal success in so short a time is proof that working together in unity, we can move Kenya forward. Look around you, see what a gorgeous constellation of stars we are, just look at this dazzling mosaic of people of various ethnic backgrounds, race, creed, sex, age, experience, and social status. Never in the history of this country have its leaders come together and worked so hard together as on indivisible entity with one vision. It is the love of Kenya that has brought us together. We chose to let go our individual differences and personal ambitions in order to save this nation.

Some prophets of doom have predicted a vicious in-fighting in following this victory. I want to assure you that they will be disappointed. When a group of people come together over an idea or because of a shared vision, such a group can never fail or disintegrate. NARC will never die as long as the original vision endures. It will grow stronger and coalesce into a single party that will become a beacon of hope not only to Kenyans but to the rest of Africa. This is a critical moment in the history of our country. The task ahead is enormous, the expectations are high, the challenges are intimidating. But I know that with your support and co-operation, we shall turn all our problems into opportunities.

You have asked me to lead this nation out of the present wilderness and malaise onto

the promised land. And I shall. I shall offer a responsive, transparent and innovative leadership. I am willing to put everything I have got into this job because I regard it as a sacred duty. I offer our competitors a hand of friendship. We have been through a long and sometimes bitter electioneering campaign. Now, the elections are over, there should be no bitterness. Let us all unite in forgiveness, reconciliation, and hard work to rebuild Kenya. Nation building requires joint efforts of all Kenyans. Let us work for our common destiny; and advance our common aspiration to bequeath a better country to our children.

I salute the efforts of the gallant freedom fighters and builders of modern Kenya. I salute my worthy predecessors for their contribution to this nation. The mistakes people have made in the past should not distract us from confronting the enormous challenges ahead. One would have preferred to overlook some of the all too obvious human errors and forge ahead, but it would be unfair to Kenyans not to raise questions about certain deliberate actions or policies of the past that continue to have grave consequences on the present. We are, however, not going to engage in witch-hunting. Our task will be to advance Kenya's interests and ensure they are well served.

We want to bring back the culture of due process, accountability and transparency in public office. The era of "anything goes" is gone forever. Government will no longer be run on the whims of individuals. The era of roadside policy declarations is gone. My government's decisions will be guided by teamwork and consultations. The authority of Parliament and the independence of the judiciary will be restored and enhanced as part of the democratic process and culture that we have undertaken to bring to foster.

Fellow Kenyans, I am inheriting a country which has been badly ravaged by years of misrule and ineptitude. There has been a wide disconnect between the people and the Government, between people's aspirants and the government's attitude toward them. I believe that government exists to serve the people and not the people to serve the government. I believe that government exists to chart a common path and create an enabling environment for its citizens and residents to fulfill themselves in life. Government is not supposed to be a burden on the people, it is not supposed to intrude on every aspect of life and it is not supposed to mount roadblocks in every direction we turn to in life. The true purpose of government is to make laws and policies for the general good of the people, maintain law and order, provide social services that can enhance quality of life, defend the country against internal and external aggression and generally ensure that peace and stability prevails. These will be the aims and objectives of the Government under my leadership. My Government will provide the creative

potential of the Kenyan people. My government will adhere to the principles and practice of the rule of law in a modern society. My government will conserve national environment, develop Kenya's resources and protect national heritage. Corruption will now cease to be a way of life in Kenya and I call upon all those members of my government and public officers accustomed to corrupt practice to know and clearly understand that there will be no sacred cows under my government.

The economy, which you all know has been under-performing since the last decade, is going to be my priority. There is deepening poverty in the country. Millions of our people have no jobs. School enrolment has been declining. In fact the education sector, like all other sectors, is steadily deteriorating. Millions of our people do not have access to basic and affordable health services. Our roads and other infrastructures are dilapidated. Most of our institutions are falling and basic social services are crumbling. There is growing insecurity in our cities and towns. The list is endless.

My government will embark on policies geared to economic reconstruction, employment, creation and immediate rehabilitation of the collapsed infrastructure. We shall restructure public institutions to match them with demands of modernising society. A new Development Plan will be produced soon in order to give expression to the promises we made in our Election Manifesto. Provision of free primary education for all our children will be immediate goal. Other areas to receive our immediate attention include:

- Provision of greater access to affordable healthcare, Reform in the delivery of social services,
- Refocus on agriculture and tourism as growth drivers of the economy,
- Privatisation of non-performing public enterprises in a transparent manner and Improvement of security through the restraining, re-equipping and re-orientation of the security and armed forces of our country.

My government will work closely with the private sector and with our external partners to fulfill these promises. We need the support and understanding of the international community to succeed in the task we have embarked on to recreate our beloved country.

On our part, my government will use tax revenues transparently, effectively and efficiently. We shall streamline procurement procedures and close all loopholes that have in the past led to massive wastage of national public resources. My government will continue to play a leading role in East Africa, Africa and the world. It will support

and facilitate all positive efforts to resolve the conflicts in Somalia, Sudan, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, and other trouble spots in Africa. Kenya continues to bear a heavy burden of these regional conflicts with hundreds of thousands of refugees in our land. As a country which has suffered two devastating terrorist attacks, we shall work closely with others to root out causes of terrorism in the world. We desire to live in a peaceful world, united by a common sense of purpose in pursuit of a safe common future.

Once again, I call on all Kenyans to work with my government to realise the enormous potential of this country. We invite all those who have been hounded out of our shores by repressive policies of our predecessors to come back home and join us in nation-building. Kenya needs to genius of its citizens wherever they are. It is time for healing and we need every hand on deck. I was woken up this morning by rays of sunlight, which had bathed my room in such brilliance that it felt completely new. I began to notice things around me in great details. It was as if the room had been given a facelift. I looked out of the window and, behold a cloudless sky. The trees danced lazily enjoying the early morning breeze. I looked far into the horizon and the beauty of what I saw around me stirred my soul. It was as if I was standing atop Mount Kenya surveying the landscape. I said to myself "Oh, what a beautiful country!"

Indeed, we are so blessed, so endowed. Poverty, skepticism and despondency are not supposed to be our lot. Ours is a land of unparalleled beauty and promise. It is a land of laughter and hope.

My fellow Kenyans, I will strive to lead you to create a country you can be proud of again. Let us join hands and remain united for the sake of our country. That way Kenya will be a happy place for all of us. That is my dream.

God bless you all. God bless Kenya.

Thank you