

**SPEECH BY AMB. ROBERT M. NGESU TO MARK THE
44TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE OF THE
REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

**YOUR EXCELLENCY, HONOURABLE MAJOR GENERAL
(RTD) ALLISON MONANI MAGAYA,
MINISTER OF LABOUR, PUBLIC SERVICE AND HUMAN
RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT,
YOUR EXCELLENCIES AMBASSADORS AND
HEADS OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS,
MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS,
MY FELLOW KENYANS,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.**

AL SALAAM ALEIKUM

1. THIS DAY 44 YEARS AGO, THE HISTORY OF KENYA AS A BRITISH COLONY AND PROTECTORATE CHANGED FOREVER WHEN THE *UNION JACK* WAS LOWERED AND THE BLACK, WHITE, RED AND GREEN KENYA FLAG WAS HOISTED AT INDEPENDENCE SQUARE IN NAIROBI TO SIGNIFY THE BIRTH OF A NEW NATION.

2. ON THIS DAY, WE REMEMBER OUR GALLANT COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN WHO SACRIFICIED THEIR LIVES IN THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE. THE DAY IS A PERPETUAL REMINDER THAT ALL KENYANS BOTH AT HOME AND IN THE DIASPORA ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DESTINY AND COMMON GOOD OF THEIR MOTHERLAND. WE ALSO RECOGNIZE THE CONTRIBUTION MADE BY OUR FRIENDS IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR INDEPENDENCE.

**EXCELLENCIES,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

3. SINCE INDEPENDENCE, 44 YEARS AGO, KENYA HAS PURSUED A FOREIGN POLICY BASED ON FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE, RESPECT FOR SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, NON-INTERFERENCE IN THE AFFAIRS OF OTHER STATES, RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, RULE OF LAW AND ADHERENCE TO THE UN AND AU CHARTERS.

4. THESE TENETS HAVE ENABLED KENYA TO PURSUE PEACE MEDIATION IN UGANDA, ANGOLA, SUDAN, SOMALIA, MOZAMBIQUE AND THE GREAT LAKES REGION. WE INTEND TO CONTINUE ON THIS PATH.

5. THE SIGNING OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PEACE AGREEMENT (CPA) IN 2005 IN NAIROBI UNDER THE AUSPICES OF IGAD WAS THUS AS A RESULT OF THESE TIRELESS EFFORTS.

6. WE COMMEND THE SUDANESE PEOPLE FOR THE ACHIEVEMENTS MADE SO FAR IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CPA. WE APPLAUDE THE RESOLVE AND COMMITMENT BY THE TWO PARTNERS TO SOLVE ALL OUTSTANDING ISSUES.

7. AT BILATERAL LEVEL, BOTH KENYA AND SUDAN HAVE CONTINUED TO ENJOY WARM AND CORDIAL RELATIONS.

8. THE TWO COUNTRIES CONTINUE TO CO-OPERATE ON MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST AND CONCERN BOTH AT THE BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL LEVELS.

9. AT THE BILATERAL LEVEL, THE TWO NEIGHBOURS HAVE ESTABLISHED A JOINT MINISTERIAL COMMISSION (JMC) WHOSE 8TH SESSION WAS HELD IN NAIROBI KENYA IN AUGUST 2003. THE 9TH JMC HAS BEEN PROPOSED FOR APRIL 2008 IN KHARTOUM.

10. AS A RESULT, THE TWO SISTERLY COUNTRIES HAVE CO-OPERATED ON MATTERS TOUCHING ON AGRICULTURE, AIR SERVICES, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, METEOROLOGY, STANDARDISATION, SECURITY, LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT, REFUGEE MATTERS, SPORTS, EDUCATION, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND PEACE DIPLOMACY.

11. AT THE MULTILATERAL LEVEL, THE TWO COUNTRIES HAVE CO-OPERATED ON MATTERS OF CONCERN TO THE REGION AND AFRICA IN GENERAL SUCH AS PEACE AND SECURITY, TRADE, ICT AND TERRORISM.

**EXCELLENCIES,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

12. AT THE DOMESTIC FRONT, KENYA HAS ACHIEVED TREMENDOUS ECONOMIC GROWTH RATES OF 7.1 PER CENT THIS YEAR. THE GROWTH RATE WAS BELOW 0% WHEN THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT MWAI KIBAKI TOOK OVER 5 YEARS AGO.

13. THE TIDE CREATED BY THIS GROWTH HAS REDUCED THE NATIONAL POVERTY LEVELS FROM 56 PER CENT TO 46 PER CENT LIFTING 2 MILLION PEOPLE OUT OF POVERTY.

14. THE GOVERNMENT ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO EDUCATION AS AN INVESTMENT AND A DETERMINANT OF A COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT.

15. TO THIS END, THE INTRODUCTION OF FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION HAS BEEN ACKNOWLEDGED WORLDWIDE AS A GREAT ACHIEVEMENT AND FULFILLS PART OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGs) OF THE UNITED NATIONS. TODAY, MORE THAN 1.7 MILLION CHILDREN WHO WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN AT HOME HAVE GONE TO SCHOOL.

16. THE GOVERNMENT HAS PLANS TO EXTEND THE POLICY OF FREE EDUCATION TO THE SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL BEGINNING JANUARY NEXT YEAR.

17. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO INVESTED HEAVILY IN THE HEALTH SECTOR. ALL CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS ARE TREATED FREE OF CHARGE. MALARIA, TB AND HIV/AIDS TREATMENT IS ALSO FREE. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO WAGED A SUCCESSFUL ANTI-MALARIA WAR BY THE PROVISION OF FREE INSECTICIDE-TREATED NETS TO MOTHERS AND CHILDREN.

**EXCELLENCIES,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

18. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO LAUNCHED "VISION 2030" THAT HAS BROADENED THE DRIVERS OF THE ECONOMY TO INCLUDE PROMOTION OF REGIONAL TRADE, MANUFACTURING AND FINANCIAL SERVICES.

19. WE ARE ALSO ENCOURAGING FOREIGN INVESTORS AND PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS (PPP) IN INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT WHICH WILL CREATE WORLD-CLASS NETWORKS OF AIRPORTS, SEAPORTS, INTRA AFRICAN HIGHWAYS, RAILWAYS AND LOW-COST HOUSING.

**EXCELLENCIES,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

20. WE ARE PROUD THIS DAY TO MENTION THAT KENYA WON THE 2007 UNITED NATIONS (UN) PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD. THIS AWARD WAS IN RECOGNITION OF PUBLIC SERVICE REFORMS THAT HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED BY THE GOVERNMENT IN EVERY SECTOR OF THE PUBLIC DURING THE LAST FEW YEARS.

**EXELLENCIES,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

21. BEHIND THESE ACHIEVEMENTS AND REFORMS LIES A COUNTRY OF BREATHTAKING BEAUTY AND MAGIC, WELL ENDOWED WITH NATURAL ATTRACTIONS RANGING FROM PRISTINE BEACHES, ABUNDANT FLORA AND FAUNA, SNOW-CAPPED MOUNTAINS AND CONTINUES TO DRAW AN EVER-GROWING NUMBER OF VISITORS WITH ITS PROMISE OF MAGIC. THEREFORE THOSE OF OUR GUESTS GATHERED HERE TODAY WHO HAVE NOT EXPERIENCED THIS MAGIC SHOULD MAKE A HOLIDAY DATE WITH KENYA.

22. KENYA IS A LAND OF GREAT RUNNERS IN THE WORLD ESPECIALLY LONG DISTANCE RUNNERS. WE ARE PROUD OF THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS.

23. IN THE NEXT TWO WEEKS, WE ARE GOING TO HOLD GENERAL ELECTIONS. SINCE INDEPENDENCE, KENYA HAS HELD GENERAL ELECTIONS AFTER EVERY FIVE (5) YEARS. THE FACT THAT THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS ARE DEEMED THE MOST COMPETITIVE POINT TO THE MATURING OF OUR YOUNG DEMOCRACY.

**EXCELLENCIES,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

24. FINALLY, LET ME TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO
THANK YOU FOR COMING, AND WISH YOU BLESSINGS
DURING THE FORTHCOMING FESTIVE SEASON, AND A
PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.

THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU.