

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL REPORT

Seventh Parliament - Fifth Session - First Day

*(Seventh Parliament established by Proclamation -
Legal Notice No. 57 of 1993)*

Tuesday, 26th March, 1996

STATE OPENING OF A NEW SESSION

The National Assembly met at thirty minutes past Two O'clock at Parliament Buildings on Tuesday, 26th March, 1996, it being the first day of the Fifth Session.

ARRIVAL OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT

*[His Excellency the President (Mr. Daniel arap Moi)
escorted by the Deputy Speaker and accompanied by the Mace
of the National Assembly, entered the Chamber at
forty-five minutes past Two O'clock]*

*[His Excellency the President (Mr. Daniel arap Moi)
took the Chair]*

(The Mace of the National Assembly was placed on the Table)

PRAYERS

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Your Excellency, hon. Members, may I call upon the Spiritual Leaders to offer prayers for the new Session.

(Prayers were then said by the following: The Rt. Rev. Bishop David Gitari; Archbishop N. Kirima; Shiekh N.M. Nahdy; The Rt. Rev. Bernard. Muindi, Mr. Siopin Lekoolool)

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

WELCOME TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Your Excellency, the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kenya; on behalf of Mr. Speaker who is indisposed and on behalf of all hon. Members of this House, it is my great pleasure and privilege to welcome Your Excellency to Parliament Buildings for the State Opening of the Fifth Session of the Seventh Parliament.

Your Excellency, it is our pride and honour to be with you today on this auspicious occasion, not only in your capacity as Head of State but also as one of us. Your record of unsurpassed continuous service to Parliament for more than 40 years is a source of great inspiration to us all. We feel esteemed for your immeasurable wealth of experience in our midst and at our disposal to draw from in our endeavour to enhance the welfare of our people.

Your Excellency, today is exactly three years and two months since the formal inauguration of the Seventh Parliament on 26th January, 1993. There is need therefore, for all hon. Members to reflect on their programmes and activities, achievements and failures during the period which has passed. As it was said on previous similar occasions, a Parliamentarian's career usually begins with great visions and hopes of success; often, as time passes, some of these visions and hopes are shattered by realities. Success or failure depends on how one reacts to these realities. As I have said in the past, hon. Members should set examples of hard work and integrity through constructive debates in pursuit of what is good and fruitful for all Kenyans. It behoves everyone

of them to take the functions of Parliament as an august institution seriously; and as much as possible to put those functions above party interests and loyalties.

At this juncture, let me reiterate Members of this House the sentiments expressed by renowned legislator, Edmund Burke, and I quote:-

"Parliament is not a Congress from different and hostile interests, which interests each must maintain as an agent and as an advocate against other agents or advocates. But Parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation with one interest, that of the Whole, where not local purpose, not local prejudices ought to guide, but the general good resulting from the general reasoning of the Whole. You choose a Member indeed, but when you choose him or her, he or she is not a Member of the constituency demarcated by your electoral boundaries. He or she is a Member of Parliament".

I, on my part, pledge to continue earnestly to preserve the Speakership and its traditions, upholding and jealously protecting Members' individual rights and privileges, ensuring that the voice of the minority is also accorded a fair hearing and otherwise enforcing the rules and regulations in strict compliance with the Standing Orders.

Hon. Members, without any further ado, it is my greatest pleasure and honour to invite His Excellency to address the House, which as you can attest is anxiously awaiting to receive a considered assessment of the state of our Nation, as well as an outline of the Government's major policies to be brought before this august House during the new Session.

Thank you.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

His Excellency the President (Mr. Daniel Arap Moi): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, my first and very pleasant duty this afternoon is to welcome all hon. Members to the Fifth Session of our Seventh Parliament. I believe that you have had adequate time to consult and exchange ideas with your constituents and that you are now better prepared to represent their views and aspirations during this Session.

As we assemble here today, we do so in the absence of four of our dear colleagues, who have departed from our midst, through the misfortune of death. These colleagues are hon. Paul Ruto Chepkok, hon. Amin Sadrudin Walji, hon. hon. Patrick Ejore and hon. Nicodemus Khaniri. In honour of these Patriotic sons of Kenya, may I request you to rise and observe a minute's silence.

*(Hon. Members stood up and observed
a minute's silence)*

Thank you all.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, this session of our Parliament convenes at a critical stage when our economy is undergoing remarkable transformation. Hon. Members are aware of the reform process which my Government undertook on the economy. The aim of the reform was to stimulate growth and bring about prosperity. I am happy to say today that some of the measures we have taken are beginning to bear fruit. The results from last week's consultative group meeting in Paris are an affirmation that the direction our economy has taken has been the right one. However, we must not be complacent; let us even work harder. The results of the Paris Club meeting signals to leaders that Kenya is a reliable borrower. In this respect, therefore, the burden is still on the shoulders of our people. A lot waits to be done to guarantee that every investment translates into poverty reduction by means of job creation and growth in domestic earnings. Already, my Government has announced key economic policy measures, the central one being the Presidential Economic Commission to oversee the implementation of the various policies. That this Commission is under my own chairmanship testifies to the seriousness of our commitment to create a strong and vibrant economy which will bring prosperity to the Kenyan people.

To qualify to be a good borrower is not a guarantee to prosperity. The economy still cries out for investment, especially from overseas investors. Promotion of foreign investment is another central component of my Government's economic policy. In this connection, hon. Members will recall the high-level investment missions I personally spearheaded in Great Britain, Germany, Malaysia and Singapore. More recently, we hosted in Nairobi an investment symposium directed particularly at the American investors. This symposium was addressed by a distinguished member of the Government of the United States of America among other important speakers from the business community. More such missions will be encouraged both at Government level and the Kenya Chamber of Commerce and Industry level and other outlets. Nearer home, hon. Members can recall the

efforts of we have made to promote regional co-operation with the objective of expanding our market base so as to attract more investments. The efforts of the leaders of the three East African countries culminated in forging of meaningful co-operation and in our successful launching of the East African Co-operation Secretariat at Arusha, Tanzania, recently. With this new mile stone, business community both local and foreign can take advantage of yet another avenue for investment.

To achieve our objective of attracting investments and building a strong economy, the house cleaning exercise we have embarked on will continue to form the basis of our reform programme. While my Government continues to register tremendous success in the fight against corruption, we should not lose sight of the root of this malignancy. Often, people have tended to highlight corruption to the extent that they ignore its origin in tribalism. Tribalism today stands out as the principal cause of corrupt practices in our country. Until we direct all our energies, as leaders and custodians of the security and prosperity of the Kenyan people, towards this dangerous enemy, Government efforts alone can be rendered desolate and ineffective. In actual fact, all of us, members of this august assembly, serve Kenyans on the basis of what is written on the door, namely: "For the welfare of society and the just government of men".

There are other dangers to social order and stability, to which we should direct our attention. In recent weeks, the police have had to battle thuggery, robberies and car-jackers with firm resolve, and they have registered remarkable success. This fight, apparently, appears to be far from over. While I commend the police for the manner in which they are tackling this menace, members of the public equally deserve credit for their alertness and promptness in responding to the threats. Public awareness continues to be the number one crime buster in our country. I call upon leaders to give the necessary support, encouragement and education. I would like to urge all of you hon. Members to know that the total sum of our activities will reflect what Kenya can be. Therefore, we should unite to build a better Kenya for everyone. This can come about if all of us can be nationalists and patriotic to serve our land. By serving our land better, we will reflect what will happen in the years to come. What we, as Members of Parliament do today, will be revealed by history when time for that comes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, during this session of the House, hon. Members will be called upon to deliberate on a number of Bills which my Government will table. The Bills will be wide ranging and are designed to enhance development and promote sound management of the economy. When debating the Bills, I urge hon. Members to place the general interests of our people above party interests and loyalty. On reading different manifestos of parties represented in this House, I recognise that unity is the goal for each one of us. This means that there are more factors which unite rather than divide us. Because we have the responsibility to work for the betterment of our Kenyan people it is time we cultivated those principles which we share and shunned those which drive us apart. I hope that this Fifth Session of our Seventh Parliament will distinguish itself as the one which laid the foundation for a prosperous Kenya.

With these remarks I wish hon. Members success and a very rewarding session, which I now have the pleasure to declare officially opened.

Thank you.

NOTICE OF MOTION

THANKS FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Vice-President and Minister for Planning and National Development (Prof. Saitoti): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to give notice of the following Motion:-

THAT the thanks of this House be recorded for the exposition of public policy contained in His Excellency's Presidential Address from the Chair on 26th March, 1996.

DEPARTURE OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, it is now His Excellency's pleasure to take his leave.

*(His Excellency the President, in
procession, left the Chamber)*

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, the House is now adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday 27th March, 1996, at 9.00 a.m.

The House rose at 3.30 p.m.