

REMARKS BY AMB. JEAN N. KAMAU, CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I., AT THE KENYA EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON DC, DURING THE RECEPTION HELD TO MARK THE 50TH JAMHURI DAY AND THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE KENYA @50 CELEBRATIONS.

13TH DECEMBER, 2013, HILTON CRYSTAL CITY, ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA, USA

YOUR EXCELLENCIES AMBASSADORS,

HEADS OF MISSIONS,

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT,

MEMBERS OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY,

FELLOW KENYANS, FRIENDS OF KENYA,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

50 YEARS AGO, ON 12TH DECEMBER 1963, KENYANS GATHERED AT THE FAMOUS *UHURU* GARDENS IN NAIROBI TO CELEBRATE THE TRIUMPHANT ACHIEVEMENTS OF A PROLONGED STRUGGLE FOR SELF-DETERMINATION AND INDEPENDENCE. THAT DAY MARKED THE BIRTH OF A NEW NATION AS KENYA JOINED THE SPHERE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AS A PROUD SOVEREIGN COUNTRY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I WISH TO THANK YOU FOR ACCEPTING OUR INVITATION TO JOIN US TODAY TO COMMEMORATE THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THAT GOLDEN MOMENT.

DEAR KENYANS, FRIENDS OF KENYA,

EVERY YEAR SINCE 1963, JAMHURI DAY HAS GIVEN US THE OPPORTUNITY TO PLEDGE ETERNAL REMEMBRANCE, GRATITUDE AND RESPECT TO ALL THOSE WHO SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES TO MAKE THE DREAM OF SELF-DETERMINATION A REALITY. WE REMEMBER THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS WHO GAVE UP THEIR LIVES TO DELIVER THIS CHERISHED FREEDOM, AS WELL AS THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF OUR

NATION; INCLUDING OUR FIRST PRESIDENT, MZEE JOMO KENYATTA, WHO WAS IMPRISONED AND DETAINED FOR NINE (9) YEARS, YET NEVER LOST THE WILL, DESIRE AND DETERMINATION TO OVERSEE THE YOUNG NATION'S TRANSITION FROM OPPRESSION TO FREEDOM.

WE HAVE ALSO TRADITIONALLY USED THIS OCCASION TO REMIND OURSELVES OF THE DUTY THAT ALL KENYANS HAVE TO DEFEND THE FREEDOM AND SOVEREIGNTY THAT OUR HEROES SECURED AT SUCH GREAT COST. JAMHURI DAY REMINDS US OF OUR COLLECTIVE DETERMINATION AND COMMITMENT TO MAKE KENYA A PROSPEROUS, PEACEFUL AND UNITED NATION. WE OWE OUR LIBERATION HEROES THIS MUCH AT THE VERY LEAST.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

FROM 1963, THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA HAS GROWN TREMENDOUSLY FAST TO STAKE ITS CLAIM AS A PROUD MEMBER AND CONTRIBUTOR IN THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS. WE HAVE OVERCOME MUCH TO BECOME A MODERN, OPEN, DEMOCRATIC NATION, DOING ITS BEST FOR ITS CITIZENS AND ITS NEIGHBORS. OVER THE YEARS, WE HAVE STRENGTHENED OUR INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS, CONSTANTLY SOUGHT TO IMPROVE OUR SYSTEMS OF GOVERNANCE, AND FORGED AN UNSHAKEABLE CONSENSUS TO USE THE RESOURCES OF OUR LAND TO IMPROVE OUR LIVELIHOODS AND LIVING STANDARDS.

IT HAS NOT ALWAYS BEEN EASY. WE HAVE HAD OCCASION TO LEARN LESSONS – SOME OF THEM INCREDIBLY PAINFUL. HOWEVER, WE ARE HAPPY THAT MOMENTARY SHORTCOMINGS HAVE ONLY SERVED TO RAISE OUR DETERMINATION TO BETTER OURSELVES. AS I STATED BEFORE, WE ARE AWARE THAT, AT VERY LEAST, WE OWE THIS TO THE MANY PEOPLE WHO MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE TO AWARD US THE FREEDOM WE CURRENTLY ENJOY. INDEED, OUR NEWLY PROMULGATED CONSTITUTION IS A CLEAR TESTAMENT OF THE STRIDES THAT KENYA HAS MADE TO SECURE INDIVIDUAL LIBERTIES, DEMOCRATIC RULE, AND ADHERENCE

TO THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS DECLARATION.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

KENYA COULD NOT HAVE MADE THESE ADVANCES WITHOUT THE SUPPORT AND FRIENDSHIP OF OUR INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS. WE CHERISH THE PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE AND BENEFICIAL ALLIANCES WE HAVE FORMED OVER THESE 50 YEARS WITH OUR FELLOW EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY MEMBERS - BURUNDI, RWANDA, TANZANIA AND UGANDA – WHO HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THERE TO CELEBRATE OUR ACHIEVEMENTS AND TO SUPPORT US THROUGH DIFFICULT MOMENTS. OUR GROWING PARTNERSHIP WITH OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE REST OF AFRICA ALSO GIVES US GREAT HOPE FOR THE FUTURE.

WE ALSO TREASURE OUR FRIENDS FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD - *IN EUROPE, ASIA, MIDDLE EAST AND THE AMERICAS* - WHO HAVE ALWAYS GIVEN US THE SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE THAT HAS ENABLED US GROW AS A NATION. WE WISH TO LET YOU KNOW THAT **50-YEAR-OLD KENYA** RECOGNIZES AND APPRECIATES YOUR GOODWILL, FRIENDSHIP AND SUPPORT.

WE ARE PARTICULARLY PROUD OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, WITH WHOM WE SHARE SIMILAR IDEALS OF FREE MARKET ECONOMICS, DEMOCRATIC RULE, AND RESPECT FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES. IT IS OUR SINCERE BELIEF THAT, EVEN AS WE MOVE FORWARD TOWARDS THE NEXT 50 YEARS, KENYA AND THE UNITED STATES SHALL CONTINUE TO ENJOY THIS BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIP.

IT IS SIGNIFICANT, AND **DELIBERATE,** THAT THIS CELEBRATION COMES ON THE EVE OF THE THIRD KENYA DIASPORA CONFERENCE IN THE UNITED STATES. OVER THE YEARS, MANY KENYANS HAVE CHOSEN THE UNITED STATES AS THEIR PREFERRED DESTINATION FOR FURTHER STUDIES, SKILLS ENRICHMENT AND CAREER ENHANCEMENT. MANY HAVE FOUND JUSTIFIABLE REASON TO REMAIN IN THE UNITED

STATES AND START NEW LIVES HERE. THE MEMBERS OF THE KENYAN DIASPORA IN THE US HAVE BEEN EXEMPLARY REPRESENTATIVES OF THEIR COUNTRY AND HAVE STAKED A REPUTATION AS A KNOWLEDGEABLE, HARDWORKING, AND TRUSTWORTHY GROUP OF PEOPLE. AS AN EMBASSY, WE ARE VERY PROUD OF THE KENYAN DIASPORA IN THE UNITED STATES.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

FELLOW KENYANS, FRIENDS OF KENYA,

WITH THOSE FEW REMARKS, IT IS MY GREAT JOY TO, ONCE AGAIN, WELCOME ALL OF YOU TO CELEBRATE AND REJOICE WITH US, AND TO REFLECT ON THE DISTANCE WE HAVE TRAVELLED TOGETHER SINCE 12TH DECEMBER 1963.

GOD BLESS YOU