

A MOMENT TO RELECT, A MOMENT TO UNITE AND FORGE A NEW FUTURE FOR KENYA

Yesterday, the Court of Appeal settled emphatically the recent controversial constitutional amendments proposals and processes. This marks the second time that our courts have pronounced themselves on this matter. On both occasions, our courts were bold, clear and unmistakable. Without any doubt, the court brought the voice of Wanjiku to life, and called on us to move on to the most pressing needs of our citizens and the nation.

The court decision reaffirms that Kenya is a country governed by the rule of law, not the rule of men, where the Constitution and sovereignty of the people are supreme, and not the political elite. However, no one has **won or lost**: It is a **win-win** for the people and the Constitution: The people have won, the Constitution has won and the rule of law has prevailed. I laud the courage of the judges who have bravely defended the Constitution. God bless you.

This is, therefore, a moment of reflection and appreciation. We thank the Almighty God for giving us this unique day to celebrate our progress as a

people, and as a nation. We celebrate our institutions, which have come of age, foremost our Judiciary. Our Constitution continues to reveal itself anew, day after day, as the living expression of the sovereign will of Kenyans. We rejoice in the timeless spirit of freedom that remains alive in our land. We delight most thankfully in the vigilance and civic engagement that pervades our country, and the commitment by Kenyans of all walks of life to rise and defend their liberty.

We may now live our lives and build our nation with the confidence that the brave patriots of our Judiciary stand ready, capable and courageous to secure the promise of our National Anthem that Justice be our Shield and Defender.

In this spirit, it is time for us, especially the political class, to set down our battle standards and shed our partisan armour, and unite in actualising the aspirations of ordinary citizens. It is time for us to join hands and pursue the priorities of wananchi with the same urgency and vigour that had been dedicated to the BBI. We must make up for all the time lost, resources spent and opportunities foregone in the

knowledge that time is of the essence. For truly, it is never too late to do the right thing.

I, therefore, plead with all leaders to harness the spirit of bipartisanship and direct our minds and energy towards efforts that positively affect the well-being of our citizens. I strongly urge that our starting point in this endeavour be to apply our best collective efforts, mobilise and commit adequate resources towards the decisive management of the Covid-19 crisis in order to free up the country, return our people to work and restore our economy to its full flight. We must agree that rolling out a vaccination programme to cover the entire population is imperative if our nation is to have any hope of recovering lost time and catching up with a world that is quickly recapturing its rhythm. Nothing can stop us from achieving full success if we are all united in purpose, and pursue this goal with the resolute momentum, energy and resources previously earmarked for the Constitutional changes.

Together with this, we must urgently retrace our path to the Big 4 Agenda, which packaged a comprehensive raft of policy interventions, programmes and projects aimed at creating millions

of jobs for our young people, rejuvenating our agriculture for food security, agro-processing, value addition and manufacturing- securing the health of millions of our citizens through Universal Health Care.

I have held discussions with legislators and we have agreed to fast-track the long-delayed amendments to the NHIF Act in order to unlock the dream of achieving Universal Health Coverage.

We have agreed on a similar initiative of re-introducing amendments to the Housing Act to establish the framework for the actualisation of the Housing Fund that is a prerequisite for unlocking the housing programme envisaged in the Big 4 plan. This will set the stage for the achievement of the Housing Pillar of the Big 4 Agenda. The housing plan's two-fold promise of making affordable houses available and creating millions of jobs for young Kenyans is the sort of intervention this country needs at this critical point in time.

We should work with Parliament in its full bipartisan strength to create the legislative framework required to facilitate mobilisation of resources necessary to radically transform agricultural production. This

would enable Kenyans achieve food security and nutrition self-sufficiency and create a surplus for diversified agro-processing and manufacturing under the Industrialisation plan. We must finally rise to the challenge of moving over 2.5 million families from nutrition poverty and perennial dependency on food relief.

Going forward, we shall need to focus on strengthening and re-calibrating our economic policy to deal with the most pressing, most urgent and most consequential needs, beginning with a deliberate, thorough and purposeful reckoning with the chronic problem of youth unemployment. We must figure out a way of enhancing productivity and competitiveness while creating millions of job opportunities as a matter of priority.

A related and urgent intervention that will help in this effort will be to re-organise and consolidate financing of micro, small and medium enterprises to liberate them from the chokehold of shylocks and an exorbitant interest rate regime that presently stifles the promise of meaningful growth and stalls the possibility of enterprise development and wealth creation.

As a nation, we must commit to creating opportunities for every enterprising Kenyan to thrive and make a living. Furthermore, we must strongly commit to collective efforts to fashion a new future for Kenya based on a new socio-economic and political paradigm. It is time for us to imagine together a new society that gives priority to the greatest number of its citizens. This new society must choose the welfare of all people, not just leaders; prefer the realisation of empowerment of the masses to the naked pursuit of power-sharing among the political elite; pursue the creation of millions of jobs, not the mere sharing of political positions.

The nation we envision is focused on success through enterprise, not largesse from patronage and is committed to fundamental and inclusive economic transformation, not opportunistic coalitions to rig the system against the people.

We cannot and must not, in all honesty, embark on a discourse about the future of our nation without the largest owners of that future. The youth are, by far, the demographic most affected by the grave state of affairs in our country. The overwhelming majority of

young people suffer the brunt of joblessness, many are driven to depression, many have become victims of drug abuse syndicates and the vast majority are hostages of burdensome debts.

Today, I call on each and every young person in our country to step forward, stand up to be counted, summon their energy, talent and knowledge to imagine, fashion and create a new Kenya.

I urge the young people of our country to refuse to be sidelined, to resist to be marginalized but to assume their rightful place in national discourse. Your place at the centre of the national discourse is your right. Do not wait to be invited; it is your place. Your future, and that of our nation, is anchored on your readiness to assume your rightful position.

Now henceforth, we must build an alliance of all Kenyans with our young people at the core so that we can tap into our creativity, talents, energy to fashion the new Kenya where success is not based on who you know but how hard you work, a Kenya where nobody is left behind.

As leaders, we must consolidate the beauty of our dreams by believing in the promise of our young people. We must deliberately, purposefully and meaningfully turn to and keep our focus on listening to the youth and ceding ever greater space for them to express themselves and actualise their aspirations. The issues affecting our young people must be our most important priorities, and they must be at the core of all future-oriented policies and actions.

United as brothers and sisters in this great task, with the Almighty God going ahead of us, let us build this our Nation together.

Thank You

21st August 2021