

**TRIBUTE BY H.E. UHURU KENYATTA, C.G.H., PRESIDENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF KENYA IN MEMORY OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF  
H.E. MWAI KIBAKI, C.G.H., THE THIRD PRESIDENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF KENYA, NYAYO NATIONAL STADIUM, NAIROBI,  
KENYA APRIL 29<sup>TH</sup> 2022**

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**The family of President Mwai Kibaki,**

**The Clergy,**

**Visiting Heads of State and Government,**

**Heads of Delegations,**

**Distinguished Guests from Home and Abroad,**

**Fellow Kenyans,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**1. We congregate** here today, to honour one of the **Founding Fathers** of our beloved Nation.

**2. We** are here, not only to mourn an **incalculable loss** but to also **celebrate a magnificent life**. **We** celebrate a man of faith, a man of family, a man of honour, and a man who always **put Kenya and Kenyans first**.

**3. My** fellow citizens, whereas President Kibaki has rested and a remarkable life ended, his **service** to our country will **NOT rest** until the **last mile** of his **bold vision** for Kenya is **completed**.

**4. We** honour and salute him today for his toil in the run-up to our nation's independence, and, most notably, as amongst the **leading architect** of the modern Kenya State. **As** one of the last standing heroes of our independence struggle, he had a **special calling** to execute the **last chapters** of the Vision of our Founding Fathers. **And** he did this with **surgical precision**, and a total disregard for what the **naysayers thought** of him.

5. He finished the **last mile** of our **founding vision** as a Nation. But he did not stop there; he helped us lay the **foundation** upon which future generations shall build.

6. But to this, I must add one more thing; Hon. Kibaki was by all means a **modest** man and did not believe in loud shouting. When the **limelight** was shone on him, he tended to **coy** and **hide**. And this is because he found **virtue** and **joy** by doing the **ordinary things** that fulfilled his purpose.

7. He knew that he could not fulfil his purpose in the presence of **cheering crowds**. He had to do this in the **privacy of his space**. And his desire to contribute to the transformation of Kenya, in his **quiet** and **secluded space** with no one watching, is what makes him a **legend – a man of purpose**.

**Fellow Kenyans,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

8. Allow me to celebrate the man **laying-in-state** before us using three frames: **Kibaki the Man, Kibaki the Leader** and **Kibaki the Visionary**.

9. I begin with **Kibaki the Man**. And in celebrating his **humanity**, I want to pose an age-old question about our existence: **What is the true measure of a man?**

10. How do you judge a man after he has **served God**, his **generation** and **country**? Do you **measure** a man by his **financial exploits** or by how many **lives he touched**?

**11. Do you measure a man by the **victories** he gained or by how he dealt with those he **vanquished**?**

**12. Do you measure a man by how he handles his losses, failings and tragedies or how **magnanimous** he is when he **bags a win**?**

**13. Do you measure a man by how he treats his peers and **equals** or how he treats his subordinates?**

**14. Do you measure a man by what he **started** or by what he **finished**? And do you measure a man by how he handled his **finest moments** or by how he handled his **lowest moments**?**

**15. If you want to know the true measure of a man, watch what he does with **power**. How he handles his **opponents**; how he treats his **wife** and **family** and what he does with his financial influence.**

**16. But **fundamentally**, and as **Martin Luther King Jr** taught us: *"...The true measure of a man is NOT where he stands in moments of **convenience** and **comfort**; but where he stands in times of **challenge** and **difficulties**..."* In other words, the **true measure** of a man is how he behaves when **misfortunes** hit.**

**17. And the question before us today is this: Who was **Kibaki, the Man**? How must we measure him? How do you measure a man who was **sworn in** as President on a **wheel chair**? How do you measure a man who **suffered ill health** during the **first year** of his Presidency and in his **lowest moments** he did not give up, **but he soldiered on**?**

**18. And how do you measure a man under whose watch Kenya experienced our **darkest moment** in **2007**? Yet at this moment, the Hon. Kibaki shook the hand of his **bitter opponent** and invited him to**

form government with him on a **50:50 basis** despite opposition from some of his own supporters.

**19. Kibaki the Man** had an incredible gift of **tolerance**. He had the ability to take in **pressure** and **pain** without showing **distress**. And this is why he was known as a **man of few words**.

**20. From his 50 years** of active politics, he learnt not to rush into **judgement** and **decisions**. He learnt to **lay in wait** until the '**swollen river had found its course**'.

**21. When** moments were **dark**, he chose to be the **light**; when **reason** was scarce, he became the **voice of reason**; and when **hope** was down, he encouraged us all to exercise the **gift of longsuffering**.

**22. And** if a man is **not measured** by what he **started**, but by what he **finished**, then the record must reflect that the Hon. Mwai Kibaki **finished strong**.

**23. The end of Kibaki the Man** can only be summarized by the words of **Apostle Paul** when he said this of his own life: "...*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have kept the faith*".

**24. This too**, must be recorded in our Books of History as the **finishing line** of Hon. Mwai Kibaki. He fought the **good fight**, finished the **race** and he, without doubt, kept **the faith**.

**Fellow Kenyans,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**25. Turning to Kibaki the Leader.**

**26.** As we have heard from the story of his life and times, as far back as **July 1974**, the Hon. Kibaki was named by **Time Magazine** as one of the **150 men and women** who would become new **World Leaders**.

**27.** **Six years later** in **1977** and **9 years later** in **1981**, the same magazine named him as one amongst **100 people** with **remarkable leadership qualities**. **So** the world had noticed his leadership promise.

**28.** But his **leadership abilities** were not only obvious to the **Time Magazine** and the world at large; they were also noticed by those close to him as well.

**29.** His Professor at Makerere University in the **1950s**, **Prof. Kenneth Ingham**, noted that, if the Hon. Kibaki had not joined politics, he was destined to become the first **African President of the World Bank**.

**30.** A similar observation was made by the former World Bank President, **Mr Robert McNamara** who noted that Mzee Kibaki was one of the **greatest economic brains** produced by Africa.

**31.** And this is not a wonder because President Kibaki was the **first African** to attain a **First Class Honours degree** from the **prestigious** London School of Economics and Political Science.

**32.** But how did his leadership abilities, celebrated by the world, **translate at home**? How do we measure **Kibaki the Leader** during his **50 years of service to our country**?

**33.** At a very early age, the Hon. Mwai Kibaki knew that the biggest challenge of a leader is **'leading yourself'**. And to lead yourself, you have to be **measured, disciplined** and **unwavering**.

**34.** He understood that a leader who does not lead himself will be **driven** by his **difficulties**, rather than his **vision**. He will give in to the **pressure of the crowds**, rather than the **chosen path** appointed for him.

**35.** Such a leader will be pushed to make **popular choices** that please the crowds as opposed to **bold choices** that are good for the country, but **unpopular** with the public.

**36.** This ability to **'lead himself'** against the **noise** and **buzz of the crowds**, is what brought Mzee Kibaki this far. His ability to **'lean in'** and deal with his **darkest moments**, not in public, but in seclusion, is what **distinguishes** him as a **great leader**.

**37.** And if the **true measure of a man** is determined by how he **stands** in moments of **challenge** and **difficulties**, President Kibaki handled his **political misfortunes** with **unparalleled grace**.

**38.** In every **low moment**, he acknowledged the **impending danger**, but chose to focus on the **attendant opportunities**. And two examples support my observation here.

**39.** The first happened in **1988** after the infamous **mlolongo election**. During this election, Hon. Mwai Kibaki had served as **Vice President and Minister for Finance for 10 years** under President Moi.

**40.** When the new government was formed after the election, **the** Hon. Mwai Kibaki was **demoted** from his position as **Vice President** and made **Minister for Health**.

**41.** At the time, popular voices countrywide wanted him to reject this **humiliation** and **resign from government**, altogether. **But** he shunned the **voices of the crowds** and opted for the **lonely** and **unpopular path**.

**42.** To the shock of the Nation, he embraced his **demotion** with **grace** and continued to serve the country in a **lesser capacity**.

**43.** And his superior reasoning was that **leadership** is NOT a **position**; it is **service**. And he was ready to serve the country in any position the people summoned him to. **With** this reasoning, the demands for his resignation were put to rest.

**44.** The **second** demonstration of his **leadership** came at the **darkest hour** in our history as a Nation. This was the **post-election violence of 2007**.

**45.** The Hon. Kibaki admitted that this was the **lowest moment** in his career as a political leader. **But** turning in-wards, he converted this **political misfortune** into a **constitutional moment**. Let me explain.

**46.** You cannot talk about the **2007 crisis** without going back to the **2005 constitutional referendum**. During this referendum, President Kibaki and his '**banana team**' suffered a **resounding defeat** to the '**orange team**'.



**47.** But he banked the referendum loss as a '**dream deferred**'. He knew that one day, some day, we will fulfil Kenyan's **clamour for a new constitution**.

**48.** Then the **2007 crisis** presented itself. At first it was devastating, but with time, it gave him the opportunity to engage in a **constitutional re-set**, executed through **bold** and **unchartered** waters.

**49.** **First**, and against the wishes of many, he ceded **half** of his **government** to his **arch rival**. And he invited Prime Minister Raila Odinga to **co-create government** with him.

**50.** **Second**, he needed to **build consensus** around his decision. And he did this because he understood that: "*...Leaders **do not look for consensus; they build consensus...***" as Martin Luther King Jr said.

**51.** In **March 2008**, he led to the enactment of **minimum constitutional changes** to our independence constitution, which established the position of **Prime Minister** and **two Deputies**, which **I am proud to have served as one**.

**52.** With this **2008 consensus** in place and an **inclusive government formed**, the crisis of 2007 was resolved and '**spirited away**'. And in June that year, **Vision 2030** was launched, setting the stage for better planning and the highest economic growth ever recorded in Kenya.

**53.** The other notable achievement, which is also the **third re-set** to our **constitutional order**, was the **2010 referendum**.

**54.** This referendum was meant to **retire** the Independence Constitution and align our supreme law to the aspirations of the New Republic.

**55.** And in August 2010, the '**dream deferred**' in the 2005 referendum became a reality. Apart from the **Vision 2030**, the **misfortunes of 2007** had gifted our country a new supreme law, **The Kenya Constitution, 2010**.

**56.** If the true **measure of a man** is how he stands in times of challenge and difficulties, from the **2007 dark moment of our Nation**, President **Kibaki stood tall** and turned misfortune into positive change. These examples affirm that dreams deferred can never wilt away.

**Fellow Kenyans,**

**57. Finally, I** will now end with my brief reflections on **Kibaki the Visionary**. At the age of **29**, the Hon. Kibaki was persuaded by Mzee Jaromogi Odinga Oginga to quit a well-paying job as a **Lecturer at Makerere University** in Uganda; and to take up a job that offered nothing but **promise**.

**58.** If his Professor at Makerere University was right, Hon. Mwai Kibaki had the hope of becoming the first **African President of the World Bank** – a much safer and a much assured path.

**59.** But he rejected this **dream** in pursuit of a more **challenging vision**. He took up a job as the Executive Officer of KANU, a **little known entity** where he would survive on **nothing but stipends**.

**60.** For him to make this decision, he must have been propelled by a vision that loved **country** more than **self**. Although identified by the **international media** as a **world leader**, he chose NOT to take the **trodden path**.

**61.** Instead he opted to explore the **unchartered path** of an independent Kenya and **leave a trail**. And this is what the **29-year old Kibaki did**.

**62.** But to follow such a **hazy path**, he must have listened to an **inner voice**. A voice that led him to what the **heart sees**; not what the **eyes see**.

**63.** A voice that took him to the **path of faith**. And because of this walk of faith, the Hon. Kibaki must go down on record as a **guardian visionary** of our new Republic.

**64.** Armed with faith and vision, the young Kibaki, alongside colleagues like TJ Mboya, drafted the **founding instruments of our economy**.

**65.** Indeed, **Sessional Paper number 10 of 1965** on "***African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya***", drafted by him and Mboya, remains the **guiding light** of our **economic transformation**.

**66.** When he became President in 2002, he went back to this **original blue print** and upgraded it to **Vision 2030**. And using this document, he encouraged us not to be intimidated by **bold projects**.

**67.** That is why my Administration, **inspired** by this **thinking**, has accelerated what I call the **"Big Push Investments"**, especially in the area of infrastructure.

**68.** And if President Kibaki authored **Vision 2030**, the next administration must take us to a **bolder plan**. They must give us **Vision 2063... a blue print for Kenya at One Hundred Years and beyond**.

**Fellow Kenyans,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**69.** The man **lying-in-state** before us today was a gentleman. **A measured man; a man of few words but a man of decisive action.** If he was here with us today, he would have instructed us to choose **leadership** over **politics**. He would have told us that **leadership** is about **vision; politics** is about **positions** and that Nations are founded on visions.

**70.** President Mwai Kibaki **epitomized** the quote that ***"life is no brief candle. It is a sort of splendid torch which hold for a moment, and a desire to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations."***

**71.** His light will never **flicker out** because his torch lit **countless lives**. Therefore, as we mourn his passing, we are reminded that it would be a tragedy if we **let die** what he **left alive** in our hearts and memories.

**72.** On this dark day, **Mwai Kibaki's enduring legacy** illuminates **our nation** and the African **continent**, placing him as one of the greatest African statesmen of his generation.

**73.** To President Kibaki's family - **Judy, Jimmy, David and Tony and your families**, and the entire extended family; I deeply share in the pain of your loss and pray that you will find **comfort in** the words of the **Psalmist** when he said: "...***hold on my child, for weeping may endure only for a night, but joy comes in the morning***".

**74.** Remember that no **night can last forever**. The sun will always rise, and with the dawn comes **hope** and **light**.

**God Bless You All, God Bless Kenya.**