

Fellow Kenyans and Conference Participants,

Good Evening to You All,

I am delighted to **conference** with you **today** at this gathering that has brought together the teams, which have **shaped** our **national response** to the **Coronavirus Pandemic**.

In your different capacities, as leaders, clergy, technocrats, civil society and experts; you have helped the Country **navigate** through the **turns** and **twists** of the Corona crisis for the last **six months**, and **brought us within sight of safe harbour**.

The panel discussions held this afternoon have highlighted both the **Hits** and the **Misses** in our national endeavor to flatten the infection curve. **Overall**, we have **demonstrated resilience** in the face of a **tremendous challenge**.

I celebrate our ***gallant*** health care workers and all our essential services providers, for **keeping the Kenyan flame burning bright**. Today, we honour and salute them all, and recognise their representatives who are in our midst at this Conference.

Even as we mourn for our compatriots whom we have lost to this disease, we are **eternally grateful to God** for our **survivors and recoveries**. Each death is

a tragedy, and every **recovery** is a **story of heroic triumph**.

I am confident that as a Nation, we will **stay the course** for the remainder of this journey and reach our **desired end**. For your **efforts**, I once again thank you, **collectively** and **individually**, on behalf of the People and the Government of the Republic of Kenya, and on my **own behalf**.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For the last **six months**, the country has been in a '**Season of Paradox**'. Since **March** this year, when we recorded the first COVID-19 case, it became necessary to **shut down** the economy in order to **save it**.

We had to **avoid** our loved ones, especially the elderly, because we care for their health and cherish their wisdom.

And, it became necessary to **withdraw** our children from schools in order to **secure their future**.

All this, was a **paradox** – a **conflict** between the '**new normal**'; and what we think the '**normal**' **should be**.

Today, however, we face an even greater paradox. **As we flatten the Corona Curve**, it may appear like **victory**, is on sight. Yes, the COVID **positivity rate** has fallen

from **13%** in **June**, **7%** in **August** and is **now** at **4.4%** in **September**. With these figures, we can be **tempted to celebrate**, more so because we are **now below** the **5% positivity rate** recommended by the World Health Organization (**WHO**) for re-opening.

Yet these achievements are a **paradox** in themselves. I say so because “...the **greatest danger** is always at the moment of **victory**”.

In fact, experience has taught us that we are most **vulnerable** and **fragile** at the point where **we think we have won**.

Get me right, I am not saying this to belittle the achievements we have made so far. I am only asking us to **incline on the side of caution**. If we have won one **battle** against COVID-19, we have not won the **war** yet. The possibility of a **second wave** of this pandemic is, real as we have seen in other countries.

As an affirmation that the enemy is still **within our borders** we continue to record new infections every day. In that regard, to forestall what is happening elsewhere, we must continue adhering to the protocols issued by the Ministry of Health.

I am however, particularly **delighted** by the advances we have made in the health sector. **When** we were hit by this pandemic in March this year, we had only **8 infectious diseases Isolation beds** country-wide.

Seven days after the first COVID case was reported, we were able to increase this bed capacity to **60**.

Currently, and working in partnership with County Governments, we are at **312 ICU beds** and **7,411 isolation beds** nationally. Done in only **six months**, these achievements are, indeed, phenomenal.

In fact, in this period of **six months**, we have installed medical equipment never seen in this country since independence. As an affirmation of our expanding capacity and as we continue to **Re-imagine** Kenya's Healthcare, early in the month, I presided over the official opening of our **fifth** National Referral Hospital – **K.U. Teaching Referral and Research Hospital**.

The new facility is part of our national response for specialized treatment of chronic diseases, notably: cancer and renal diseases – the twin diseases that have wreaked havoc to many families across the nation.

In that regard, **once the K.U - Integrated Molecular Imaging Centre (IMIC)**, is completed, by **March 2021**, there will no longer be need for any Kenyan to travel abroad in search of specialized treatment Cancer Treatment, as our enhanced capacity will be able to handle medical conditions treated abroad.

Indeed, the Referral facilities, coupled with the **expanded county infrastructure** will enhance

our national possibilities and anchor our plans to position our nation for **medical tourism** from neighbouring countries, and propel us for the national rollout of **Universal Health Care** under the **Big Four** Agenda.

Fellow Kenyans,

Our expanded health infrastructure, as I have mentioned, is impressive. However, the important question to ask ourselves is: **Does it make our position unassailable if the second wave were to hit us? Is it sufficient a buffer to keep the wave at bay?**

The **ANSWER** to this question is a **resounding NO**.

The expanded infrastructure is **NECESSARY**, but not **SUFFICIENT**. Without **citizen action**, the impressive infrastructure cannot **forestall the aggression** of a second wave.

To buffer the country, therefore, the **citizens** must position themselves as the **First Line of Defence**.

The reason why we have managed to flatten the curve is because Kenyans have exercised an impressive **civic responsibility** and **duty**. And if **danger** is most present in moments of **victory**, this achievement is in **danger** if **we do not watch out**.

That is why I **urge all Kenyans** to **double** their efforts in **observing** the **COVID protocols**. We got this far because we, the citizen, were the **First Line of Defense** against this pandemic.

And as we get into the next phase of the war against

this pandemic, we must **heed** the teachings of **Saint Francis of Assisi** when he said: '... start by doing what is **necessary**, then it will lead you to what is **possible** and before you know it, you will find yourself doing the **impossible**'.

If we do what is **necessary** during the next phase of the war against this pandemic, it will lead us to do what is **possible**. Then **cumulatively**, our necessary actions (like wearing a mask) coupled with our possible deeds, will lead us to the **impossible outcome** of containing this pandemic.

Indeed, as a people we must always remember that '**...impossible is nothing**' if we **apply ourselves**.

And now in the **spirit of co-creating** the 'new normal' between the **government and its people**; and on the **advice** of the **National Security Council** and in line with the **recommendations** of the **National Emergency Committee** on the Coronavirus Pandemic, I direct and announce as follows:-

- i. **One**, THAT the **Nationwide Curfew in force** throughout the territory of the Republic of Kenya is extended for a further **sixty (60)** days;
- ii. **Two**, THAT the **commencement time** for the Nationwide Curfew is varied from **9:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.** Therefore, effective tomorrow, **Tuesday the 29th September, 2020** the national wide dusk-to-dawn Curfew will run from **11:00 O'clock** in the night

to **4:00 O'clock** in the morning.

iii. **Three, THAT the prohibition against the operation of bars and the prohibition against the sale of alcoholic drinks and beverages by ordinary restaurants and eateries shall stand vacated with effect from 29th September, 2020;**

iv. **Four, THAT the closing time for all bars, restaurants and eateries shall be 10pm every day with effect from 29th September, 2020 and their operations shall be with strict adherence to all applicable guidelines and protocols issued by the Ministry of Health;**

v. **Five, THAT in line with the recommendations of the Inter-Faith Council, the permitted maximum size of religious gatherings is increased to one third (1/3) of its normal sitting capacity; but with strict adherence to all applicable guidelines and protocols issued by the Ministry of Health; and**

vi. **Six, THAT the permitted maximum number of persons attending funerals and weddings is reviewed upwards from one hundred (100) to two hundred (200); but with strict adherence to all applicable guidelines and protocols issued by the Ministry of Health.**

As we progressively de-escalate the containment measures and resume a sense of normalcy on education, our paramount consideration both as a

Government and as parents is the safety and the well-being of our children.

The lives and health of our children is not a matter of debate. Learning institutions should be reopened only when we can sufficiently guarantee the safety of our children.

And here I really would plead with Kenyans - let us not focus ourselves on when schools will reopen but how shall these schools open in a manner that protects our children and protects their lives and their health.

Let us think first about their health and wellbeing and once we have established how then together we will agree when.

The resumption of in-person learning must be predicated on strict adherence to the health protocols and guidelines as issued by the Ministry of Health.

In that regard, I, therefore, direct and order the **Cabinet Secretary for Education** to issue the Calendar for the resumption of the **2020 Academic calendar**, strictly bearing the foregoing in mind.

As I give these directives, I underscore the need to continue adhering to the health guidelines and protocols; to avoid losing the gains we have made thus far. I will **not hesitate to escalate containment measures** in the event any of these indicators

register on **my dashboard**.

Fellow Kenyans,

Conference Participants,

The containment measures put in place in **March 2020** to stem the spread of **Covid-19**; have had positive returns in terms of **our safety and national security**. In the **six months** since then, crime has exhibited a **21% average decline** and **traffic accidents** have reduced by an **average of 10%**.

I will conclude with some thoughts on our economy.

I said earlier that we are living in a '**Season of Paradox**'. An age where our **new reality** is in conflict with what we '**feel reality should be**'. Indeed, this is not only true of our social lives it is also **true of our economy**.

Against all odds some of our entrepreneurs have **re-imagined** the subsisting pandemic and created a **new business reality** that disorganizes the existing order at play.

This is a new **business model** driven by **innovators** and **makers of things**; people who did not see **danger** in the COVID crisis, but saw **opportunity** instead. **Businesses** that experienced shock from COVID, but **bounced back better**.

But the question that this development begs is the

following: **If positive disruptions and innovations** have mushroomed during COVID-19, how do we support them as part of our **resilience-building strategy**?

How do we boost a small **'samosa delivery' company** known as **"Wau Eats"** whose recipe from **India is 100 years old**, for instance? And how do we encourage the **Association of Women in Agriculture Kenya (AWAK)** with their innovative work amongst vulnerable slum women across the country?

During the first phase of this pandemic, we rolled out a series of **economic stimulus packages**.

Today, and in **support of our small businesses and innovators**, I direct as follows:

- i. **One**, that the National Treasury considers retaining VAT at **14%** until **1st January 2021**.
- ii. **Two**, that the National Treasury considers retaining the Income Tax Rate (Pay-As-You-Earn) at **25 percent** until **1st January 2021**.
- iii. **Three**, that the National Treasury considers retaining the Resident Income Tax (Corporation Tax) at **25% until 1st January 2021**.
- iv. **Four**, that to continue cushioning low income earners the National Treasury maintains the **100 percent tax** relief for persons earning gross monthly income of up to Ksh. **24,000** beyond the Sunset date

of **31st December, 2020.**

v. **Five**, that to continue cushioning our Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises the National Treasury considers maintaining the reduction of the turnover tax rate from **3 percent** to **1 percent** for all **Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs).**

vi. **Six**, to enhance access to credit for our micro, small and medium enterprises, the National Treasury is directed to expedite the roll-out of the credit guarantee scheme in partnership with participating banks and development partners. **The credit guarantee scheme as approved by Cabinet is a risk-sharing partnership between the Government and banks, which will afford our enterprises access to credit by an additional 100 billion shillings.**

Fellow Kenyans,

When COVID pandemic hit us in March this year, we did not know the extent of the crisis. In-between the crisis, I told you that we were in what I called the ‘Fog of War’. The theatres of war were invisible and foggy.

However, today I am comforted by the fact that we are not running in the dark. We might not know everything about this pandemic, but we know something.

And although we only know in part, we are better prepared today than we were in March this year. Our

level of **civic consciousness** and **responsibility** is higher. **However**, to build the resilience that allows us to anticipate the second wave and respond to it, we must do even better.

That is why I must **emphasize** by repeating what **St Francis of Assisi** taught us: If we do the **NECESSARY**, it will **lead** us to the **POSSIBLE**. Indeed at this point, the **IMPOSSIBLE** will happen without us **REALIZING** it.

Starting the next phase of this pandemic by doing the **necessary**, and working together in unity, this is how we will **defeat this COVID menace!** **And** we will conquer the enemy.

God Bless you. God Bless Kenya

Thank you