

PRESIDENT BARRACK OBAMA ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF KENYA

The visit by the 44th president of the United States of America, Barack Hussein Obama, to the Republic of Kenya on 24th - 26th July 2015, has been described by many as a historic visit to his fatherland. President Obama not only represented vibrant hope to the people but also portrayed Kenya as a growing nation full of potential and diversity. The Global Entrepreneurship Summit co-hosted by Presidents' Obama and Uhuru Kenyatta in Nairobi showcased creative innovations of entrepreneurs from Africa and all over the world. The event was also a learning experience for the entrepreneurs to interact and learn from world entrepreneurs as encouraged by President Obama. Innovations arise in a bid to change lives, create jobs, improve livelihoods and bring services closer to the people as remarked by President Kenyatta. Some of the cited examples include M-pesa, M-kopa and Ushaidi among others. President Obama acknowledged Kenya's growth and innovative ideas in his address "Kenya is setting a good example, Kenya is setting the way, Kenya has the largest economy in East Africa in internet connectivity and broadband, people all over the world use M-pesa to send money which began as an innovative idea in Kenya, as "Ushaidi" is used as a platform to carry out peaceful elections in Bangladesh."

President Obama address to the people of Kenya at the Safaricom indoor arena on Sunday 26th July, 2015, was also captivating and inspirational that not only left people mesmerized but hopeful to work towards fulfilling their dreams. Three pillars were critical in President Obama address namely, strong and transparent democratic government, universal economic development, and strong sense of national identity that rejects conflict thus leading to a future of peace and reconciliation. President Obama urged Kenyans to change the culture of corruption, "The attitude of how things are done", the government to increase efforts to root out corruption saying every coin that's paid as bribe could be put in the pocket of someone that is doing an honest days' work and warned that the cancer of corruption costs the country 250,000 jobs.

In empowering girls, he said that, Kenya won't succeed if it treats girls and women as second class citizens, end to forced marriages, genital mutilation and barring young girls from education should be stopped as the practice is barbaric and not of the 21st century, and just because something is a tradition does not make it right.

Young people were also advised to embrace diversity and use the opportunities available within the borders to fulfill their dreams and not necessarily travel abroad. Politics based on ethnicity and tribalism was also discouraged by President Obama who stressed out the fact that people should not be judged or chosen as per their ethnic names but on their capability. He also described politics based on only one tribe and ethnicity as failure of imagination. Political stability leads to economic growth and that should be encouraged to the latter. However, he commended Kenya's ability to rise from the violence that erupted after the disputed 2007 general election. "We are all part of one tribe, 'the human tribe'; progress requires that we honestly confront the dark corners of our past. Whatever the challenges, you will be stronger if you face it as Kenyans," President Obama's concluding remarks.

President Obama speech is a story of inspiration that will be told from generations to generations. One can be transformed from nowhere to somewhere as long as one has the will and

“right” attitude. Identity plays a key role in understanding where we come from and the lessons we learn make us to put in the necessary sacrifice for future generation. From “Grass to grace” that’s how President Obama journey to progress is described, we should rise above all the factors that we term as ‘limitations’ and believe in our ability to change our lives and the world, it all begins with the “I” in us, “ We can make it, we shall make it” that should be the attitude.

Dorothy Flora, MLIS Students and Nominee to the Event