A lion with a rooster and a shield

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**REMARKS BY H.E AMB. MAURICE MAKOLOO, DURING THE 61ST MADARAKA DAY CELEBRATIONS ON JUNE 1ST 2024 IN VIENNA, AUSTRIA.**

**For Official Use**

**Distinguished Guests,**

**Fellow Citizens,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Good afternoon.**

1. Today, we gather to celebrate a momentous occasion in our nation's history—Madaraka Day. On this day, 61 years ago, our beloved country took its first steps towards self-governance, marking the beginning of our journey towards full independence. It is a day that fills our hearts with pride and reminds us of the resilience, determination, and unity of our people.
2. As we reflect on the significance of Madaraka Day, we honor the courage and sacrifices of our forefathers and foremothers who fought tirelessly for our freedom. Their unwavering dedication and commitment to justice, equality, and self-determination laid the foundation for the Kenya we know today. We stand on their shoulders, inspired by their legacy, and propelled by the vision they had for our nation.
3. Madaraka Day is not just a commemoration of our past; it is a celebration of our present achievements and a reaffirmation of our commitment to the future. It is a reminder that the quest for self-governance did not end with independence but continues as we strive to build a more prosperous, equitable, and united Kenya. It is about moving forward, together.
4. We gather here today, thousands of kilometres away from home, yet still connected with our motherland. This is testament to the power and value of our independence. It’s power to open doors including in foreign lands. And its value in guaranteeing safety and dignity wherever we find ourselves. We gather today to embrace the beautiful gift granted us by those before us. In the same vein, we gather to remind ourselves of our responsibility and solemn duty to nurture that gift and hand it over as an inheritance to the next generations. The young children and the youth are here to express their hopes in the future; and to remind us that in their own way they are part of this enterprise. As a matter of fact the future belongs to them. We merely hold it in trust for them. May we give them a just return.
5. To our youth, you are the torchbearers of our future. Your energy, creativity, and passion are the driving forces that will shape the destiny of our nation. You are the generation that understands and bravely embraces Artificial Intelligence and new forms of emerging technology. In the words of our National Anthem, may you all arise, with hearts both strong and true and meet the challenges of our times- such as the climate crisis, threats to world peace and security. Because of you we remain confident that the best days of Kenya are ahead.
6. I cannot end without celebrating you Kenyans in diaspora. You exemplify everything beautiful about Kenya: focus, resilience, discipline and hard work. Your remittances daily move the wheels of our national development. We thank you for the skills, knowledge and technological transfers. We appreciate your continued engagement with the government including through policy formulation. Please know that we value you. Which is why we encourage you to keep registering with us at the embassy and giving us feedback. Ours is a shared journey with you in the spirit of Ubuntu. We are here, because you are! I also urge you to be there for one another specially for those who have fallen on hard times eg mental health or other associated challenges. We are equally grateful of the partnership we continue enjoying with the people and the government of Austria ever since we established our diplomatic relations. It is for this reason that today we have as our Chief Guest, Mr. Robert Zischg, Director, Department for Sub-Saharan Africa and the African Union, Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, Austria.
7. In closing, let us celebrate Madaraka Day with pride, joy and the confidence of a nation that has come of age. May plenty be found within our borders.

Thank you, and may God bless Kenya.

Happy Madaraka Day!