



**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA, HON. DR. A.A. MOODY AWORI, EGH, MP DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE WORLD SCOUTING REPORT 2006 AT THE ROWALLAN SCOUT CAMP, NAIROBI ON 11<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2006.**

Distinguished Guests,  
Young Scouts  
Ladies & Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to join you this morning at this very important inaugural event of the World Scouting Report 2006, which I am informed, is the first ever to be produced by the World Organization of the Scout Movement.

Scouting in Kenya has a special historical significance. We all know that it is here in Kenya, that the founder of the Scout Movement, Lord Baden Powell chose to retire, and he also chose to be buried after his death. The remains of this great man and his wife are buried in Nyeri.

Indeed from his vision of an educational movement for young people in 1907, Lord Baden Powell's innovative and unique Scout method opened the way to an original way of life that is the trademark of the Scout Movement, now present in 215 countries and territories. With more than 28 million individual members active in Scouting, the Scout movement has remained the largest educational youth movement in the world. There are an estimated 2 million Scouts in Africa, out of which about 3000,000 are in Kenya, thus making Kenya Scout Association the largest Scout Association in Africa implementing a variety of social programmes.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it has become increasingly crucial, for any community that is seriously conscious of ensuring its future, to embrace the integration and empowerment of young people in the development process. Statistics show that more than 50% of the world's population is made up of young people. In numbers alone, the young persons constitute a strong social force, a force that deserves to be heard and seen in today's development agenda. These young people are an asset to our nation and must be nurtured and developed.

Involving the youth in matters of development is the best approach of knowing what the young people need. It also up possibilities of their involvement in transforming their communities.

Today, the young people face complex challenges that if not addressed, can hinder their smooth transition into adulthood. These challenges can hinder their effective participation in the growth and development of social, economic and political processes of their communities.

It is these challenges that make the role of youth organisations evident in our societies. As the debate on youth involvement becomes a global priority, the challenge for youth organisations is to influence in a positive and objective way, the role and place of young people in society. Organisations are critical avenues where the young people can voice their concerns, make decisions but not for exploitation.

It is for this reason that youth organisations become very important in influencing public policy and helping young people to take part in public life and participating in decision-making. It is therefore a challenge each one of us to see that young people are given all the necessary support if they are to become good citizens and good leaders. Their integration into decision-making process must be done now, in order to ensure their future and that of their communities.

I congratulate the Scout Movement, for preparing the inaugural World Scouting Report that not only seeks to understand the problems that young people face in the world today, but also creates a desire to debate so as to find answers to them. Since 1907, the Scout Movement has demonstrated, its unique Scout Method of letting the young people **learn by doing** that young people are the best source of home grown solutions to the challenges facing them. By facilitating young people to propose solutions, adult

Scout leaders play the role of mentors, thereby giving the young people the challenge, and the chance to practice independent decision-making. Scouting offers an original framework in which young people in search of ideals, and who need to develop the life skills that will enable them to face the future, can seek fulfilment.

As a country, we are committed to ensuring that young people are no longer marginalized and that their rights are protected. They need quality education, employment, medical care and protection from all manner of abuse and also ensuring that no child is denied access to education. This has clearly been demonstrated through the introduction of free and compulsory primary education.

You are also aware of the recent creation of the Ministry for Youth by His Excellency the President Hon. Mwai Kibaki. This Ministry has the sole responsibility to oversee on all challenges facing the young people and how they can be addressed. Currently the Ministry is putting in place structures and policies to integrate the youth into the main stream of development.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the world we live in today is faced with numerous challenges ranging from poverty to environmental degradation, climatic change, global warming, conflicts, diseases, unemployment and HIV/AIDS just to mention a few. This Report we are launching today captures most of these issues and particularly those that affect the young people and as leaders, it is our duty to design ways and approaches of involving, and integrating the young people into tackling some of these challenges.

I know that one of the elements of the Scout Method is contact with nature. Scouts learn to respect nature when they take part in camp life, hikes, and when they initiate community projects geared towards protection of nature.

I am aware of the ongoing campaign by the Kenya Scout Association to plant 10 million trees for peace, before August 2007, to mark 100 Years of Scouting. I urge all of you, and your family and friends at home to join this campaign and plant at least two trees as a contribution towards a peaceful world.

Turning to HIV/AIDS, which is increasingly affecting young people and especially girls, the trend on infection rates is worrying. Statistics have shown that those between 15-24 age bracket constitute half of the number of new infections worldwide. According to the 2005 World Youth Report, it is alarming to know that the total number of young people infected by the virus is estimated to be more than ten million. It is even more alarming to note that of out of this, 6.2 million are in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Research shows that lack of information is a major obstacle in fighting the virus. The future of our young people and of our nations cannot be assured, if the fight against killer diseases such as HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, Malaria and many others is not scaled up by all sectors of the community. Youth organisations must take a lead in repackaging and disseminating health information to our youth. The World Scouting Report ventures into this debate, and accounts for the health interventions of "youth-for youth" through Scouting.

This report is for everybody, and particularly you the Scouts and your friends. Read through the report, and contribute to the debate on the challenges facing young people in our communities today. Let us all play our part in giving young people a chance to contribute to the welfare of their own well-being. The Scouts have taken their role in addressing, these issues, and contributing, within their framework, the necessary solutions. In so doing, Scouts have not been working in isolation. They are working with others in the community to achieve mutual objectives.

As we read through the report, let us each take it upon ourselves, as individuals, as civil society, as Government and as global citizens, to take an active role in giving the young people a chance to contribute to the development process.

'To the youth, I challenge you to come forward, and stand up to be counted. You are a true force for development.

It is now my honour to formally launch the World Scouting Report 2006 and to thank. the Scouts here today and the Scout Movement globally who have made this Report and this day a success.

**Thank you.**