

“PEOPLE ASK THE PRESIDENT”

PRESIDENT KIBAKI OF KENYA AND

PRESIDENT KAGAME RESPOND



“PEOPLE ASK THE PRESIDENT”

MAIL AND GUARDIAN

AND

UN MILLENNIUM CAMPAIGN

QUESTION & ANSWER INITIATIVE:

Questions were collected from the public asking their respective presidents in preparation for the High Level Event that will focus on the progress of MDGs. The features targeted 10 countries these include South Africa, Mozambique, Zambia, Angola, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda, Rwanda and DRC.

This is the first of the responses from the Presidents others will be published as we receive them.

QUESTIONS

1. How do you assess the progress of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in your country and is your government on track to delivering them by 2015? What are the challenges your government is facing and how are you addressing them?
2. One of the biggest achievements by your government is on the goal of education; however citizens have raised the question of unsatisfactory quality as a result of increased enrollment. How does your government tend to address this challenge?
3. Despite the ever changing science and technologies innovations e.g. medicine and infrastructure, children still die due to preventable diseases, what has your government done to deal with this?
4. The call from citizens is that no woman should die in child birth. What measures has your government done to ensure this and what other measures has your government done to curb maternal mortality?
5. The general call from HIV and AIDs activists is to "*treat people for free*", kindly indicate how your government has treated this demand?
6. In the wake of the challenges the world is facing in relation to climate change, what measures is your government undertaking to address this challenge?
7. Has your government considered collective debt repudiation proposed/ recommendations by some African states?

8. What is your government doing to reduce dependency on international donors?
9. Has your government domesticated international instruments like Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), AU Protocol on Women's Rights to promote gender equality and empower women?

KENYA

**ANSWERS BY HIS EXCELLENCY HON. MWAI KIBAKI, PRESIDENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA ON THE Q AND A INITIATIVE
AHEAD OF THE UN HIGH LEVEL SUMMIT 2008**

QUESTION 1:

How do you assess the progress of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in your country and is your government on track to delivering them by 2015? What are the challenges your government is facing on how you are addressing them?

Answer:

Kenya is on track to achieving some of the MDGs by 2015. We are however aware that we need to do more to make sure we achieve all of them by 2015. MDGs in Kenya are being addressed in their respective sectors through different interventions such as formulation of policies and strategies to address the goals. Under Goal 1, the government has formulated a Strategy for Revitalizing Agriculture (SRA), which is being implemented through the Ministry of Agriculture. The SRA outlines the strategic objectives to be pursued to eliminate hunger through a programme known as “Njaa Marufuku”. SRA also aims to achieve food security for all, increase employment, generate incomes, and reduce poverty. The strategic plan hence endeavors to deliver efficient services to the agricultural sector and people of Kenya. The government has also established devolved funds such as the Constituency Development Fund, Youth Development Fund, and Women Development Fund, Local Authorities Transfer Fund to address poverty issues particularly in rural areas.

More importantly, the government has provided Free Primary Education and increased resource allocation to enhance its delivery. This has increased enrollment rates in primary schools which has translated to high transition rates to secondary schools. Currently the Gross Enrolment Rate(GER) is 107.6 for Primary schools. This is one of MDGs which Kenya is proud to have already achieved.

The government has mainstreamed the MDGs into policy and planning. A fully fledged ministry dealing with gender has been established to address issue relating to the goal.

Measures to Address MDGs

The government has ring-fenced budgetary allocations to core poverty programmes intended to accelerate the attainment of MDGs. Additional resources have been allocated to core poverty programmes. These included programmes that would directly create employment; provide access to basic education; increase agricultural productivity, ensure access to health and family planning, reduce gender disparity, provide decent shelter, expand the supply of clean water and sanitation to the needy, manage disaster and emergencies, and meet environmental protection demands.

Question 2:

One of the biggest achievements by your government is on the goal of education; however citizens have raised the question of unsatisfactory quality as a result of increased enrollment. How does your government intend to address this challenge?

Answer:

Since the introduction of the Free Primary Education in Kenya there has been increased gross enrolment rate of 107%. This has put pressure on the existing physical infrastructure such as classrooms. We also have faced the challenge of inadequate number of teachers. As a result of this some schools will require additional resources to meet these needs. In line with that the government has therefore increased its budget allocation to free primary education. The percentage of total Government spending on education (both recurrent and development) has ranged between 24 percent and 30 per cent (or about 6.5 percent of the country's GDP) over the last five years. In the 2007/08 Budget, primary Education Development Expenditure increased by 63 percent from KShs. 6.4 billion in the 2006/07budget to Kshs. 10.4 billion. The Government has also put in place mechanisms to ensure that the transition rates are high from primary schools to secondary schools by introducing free day secondary education and paying of tuition fees in all public secondary schools. Our transition rate from

primary to secondary education has risen from 47 percent in 2003 to 60 percent in 2007.

We are also constructing more physical infra-structure in primary schools through the devolved funds such as the Constituency Devolved Funds, Local Authority Transfer Fund, and is also providing bursaries to needy secondary students. In 2007, the total number of primary schools was 26,104 compared to 25,929 in 2006. The Government is also in the process of recruiting more primary school teachers to fill the existing gap. A total of 6500 primary school were recruited by the Teachers Service Commission in 2007 while 4,200 teachers left the service under natural attrition. Additional teachers will also be recruited this year.

These measures will address the issue of quality of education.

Question 3:

Despite the ever changing science and technologies innovations e.g. medicine and infrastructure, children still die due to preventable diseases. What has your government done to deal with this?

Answer:

To ensure that Kenyan children don't die due to preventable diseases, the Government has established an immunization program which is free to all children under 5 years. This has led to increase in immunization coverage to 72 per cent by 2007. When combined with the measures that have been taken to control malaria, where 68 per cent of under- five children are receiving bed nets, child health is expected to make further improvement during the same period. The Government is also controlling Malaria incidences in children under the age of 5 years by residual spraying of Malaria-prone zones.

Question 4:

The call from citizens is that no woman should die in child birth. What measures has your government taken to ensure this, and what other measures will your government undertake to curb maternal mortality?

Answer:

My government realized very early that a high maternal mortality rate was a major problem facing Kenyan families and expectant mothers in particular. To

ensure all expectant mothers are safe, and that they get quality health services, the government has abolished user fees in all public maternity hospitals and clinics. It is also encouraging mothers to deliver in the nearest maternity facility under the supervision of a skilled health worker.

The Government has also provided funds to equip health centres and dispensaries. In addition, the Government is committed to shifting budgetary resources from curative health to preventive and promotive health services. This will help us to deal with childbirth problems before they become serious. We are also decentralizing our health-care system to the districts to ensure local needs are met better. Through devolved funds more health facilities have been put up and the government is employing more personnel to provide services to these facilities. Further, the Government has taken steps to curb maternal mortality through provision of bed nets and spraying of malaria prone zones in order to give more emphasis to promotive health-care.

Question 5:

The general call from HIV and AIDs activities is to “*treat people free*”, kindly indicate how your government has treated this demand?

Answer:

The Government has declared HIV/AIDS as a national disaster and HIV-AIDS prevention and treatment has been integrated into the work of all ministries. Overall coordination lies with the National Aids Control Council (NACC) which is spearheading our campaign against HIV/AIDS. The Government has taken steps to ensure that people living with HIV/AIDS are not discriminated against in the provision of medical services or elsewhere.

Currently, the Government is providing free anti- retroviral drugs to the patients and, together with its development partners, it has established a large number of Voluntary Counseling and Testing Centres (VCT) throughout the country to provide free services. HIV positive patients are also given necessary advice and enrolled on the Anti Retro viral Therapy (ART) Programmes. The Government is also supporting these patients with food supplements and other mitigation programmes have been introduced to support people living with HIV/AIDS. This includes income generating activities.

Question 6:

In the wake of the challenges the world is facing in relation to climate change, what measures is your government undertaking to address this challenge?

Answer:

The government passed the Environment Management Coordination Act (EMCA) in 1999 in order to provide the country with the legal and institutional framework for the management of all our environment problems. The Kenya Government then established the National Environmental Management Agency (NEMA), to coordinate implementation of the strategies recommended in the Act. NEMA has now developed regulations to control environmental degradation, enhance water quality, manage waste disposal, ozone depleting substances (ODS), and fossils fuels. Kenya has also launched the Bio Carbon Project, which is to run for two years through a partnership between the Ministry of Environment and Green Belt Movement. The project gives the country an opportunity to engage the global carbon market so that poor communities can benefit from their contribution to improving the local and global environment under this scheme.

The government is also delineating Kenya's continental shelf, which seeks to claim Kenya's continental shelf beyond the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) as required by the United Nations Commission on the Law of Sea. The activities are being undertaken by a taskforce composed of different government ministries and institutions.

In addition, the Government has ratified the Kyoto Protocol and is in the process of implementing it, through establishment of a Centre to deal with issues related to Climate change. Kenya is also collaborating with other countries internationally to prepare for 2012 post-Kyoto protocol. Finally, Kenya is also encouraging the adoption of non-fossil sources of power especially wind, solar, geothermal that do not emit green house gases and carbon emissions to the air.

Question 7:

Has your government considered collective debt repudiation proposed/recommendations by some African states?

Answer:

The Kenya Government has a long record of honoring her debt obligations and does not at the moment subscribe to blanket repudiation of debt. The Government has been negotiating for debt relief on a bilateral basis given that it does not qualify for debt relief under the HIPC initiative. Given the need for additional resources to implement MDGs, Kenya Vision 2030 and its First MTP, there may be need to consider debt relief or cancellation in future.

QUESTION 8:

What is the government doing to reduce dependency on international donors?

Answer:

Official Development Assistance (ODA) is crucial in filling the gap created to fund Government investment. In the short and medium term, Kenya still requires ODA to meet the investment requirement as per the Vision 2030.

However consistent to the just concluded Poverty Reduction Growth Facility, the Government receives only concessional Loans and Grants for funding Development Projects and Programmes while on the recurrent expenditure only 5-6% is funded by ODA.

For Kenya to reduce dependency on International Donors, the Government needs to continue with broad Tax-reforms and ensure highest rate of compliance and also ensure efficiency and value for money. This will result in increased revenue collection to fund investments.

The Government will also create Partnership with the Private Sector and encourage the private sector to invest in areas that are non-core to Government investment thus creating fiscal space.

Question No. 9

Has your government domesticated international instruments like Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), AU Protocol on Women's Rights to promote gender equality and empower women?

ANSWER:

The Kenya Government strongly believes in promoting gender equality and women's rights. It supports the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Some of the measures the Government has taken to implement CEDAW include the following:

- Implementing free and compulsory primary education since 2003.
- Passing of the Children's Act in 2001 which prohibits female genital mutilation and early marriages of minors.
- The enactment of the Public Officers Ethics Act 2003 which prohibits sexual harassment in the workplace.
- The establishment of the Constituency Development Fund and the Women Enterprise Fund aimed at improving the lives of rural women.
- The establishment of the National Commission on Gender and Development Act 2003, No. 13 of 2003, that has the mandate of coordinating, implementing and facilitating gender mainstreaming in national development and advice the Government on gender.
- Creation of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Services to coordinate the mainstreaming of gender in the entire development process
- Appointment of gender officers in all line ministries to facilitate gender mainstreaming.
- Deliberate effort to increase women's participation in leadership and decision making, the affirmative action directive on the recruitment, appointment and promotion of women in the public service.
- Affirmative action for University entrance for women.