

Kenya to import maize to build up food stockpile

The Kenyan government plans to import three million bags of maize in the next two months to build enough stocks to cushion the country against the impact of possible food shortages caused by post-election violence and the failed rains.

They will also continue buying available stocks from local producers.

The government is increasing funding for expansion of the strategic grain reserve from four million to eight million bags of maize in the next two years as a medium term measure, President Mwai Kibaki said on Sunday.

He was addressing the nation from Nyayo National Stadium to mark Jamhuri (Republic) Day.

He said the maize imports, plus the release from the strategic reserves and locally available maize, would stabilise food prices and ensure that the country had enough food to last until harvest of the current season crop.

"The Government is also making available cheaper fertilizer through the National Cereals and Produce Board, which will in turn lower the cost of maize production in the country," the head of state added.

President Kibaki said prices of food in the world had more than doubled and were at their highest in more than 30 years, and the effects had impacted negatively on ordinary Kenyans.

He added: "In addition to the political challenges we faced early this year, we are also facing serious social challenges caused by the rapid rise in the cost of living over the last few months.

"The price of (crude) oil in the international market has also more than doubled to the current 135 US dollars per barrel."

President Kibaki also announced various measures being taken by the government to reduce the adverse impact of the high international oil prices on the national economy, including expanding market share of the national oil corporation for an effective role in stabilising prices in the local market.

The head of state noted that inflation and the cost of living were not only rising in Kenya but across the world and said the government was ensuring that the Kenya shilling remained stable to reduce the adverse impact of the high cost of petroleum prices.

Touching on the resettlement of people internally displaced by post-election violence at the beginning of the year, President Kibaki said the government had, over the last three weeks, facilitated the return of 178,000 Kenyans to their homes.

He, however, noted that there were still more than 40,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) still in the camps in Nakuru and Eldoret and he assured them that the resettlement programme was continuing until all those forced to flee from their homes and farms returned to continue with normal lives.

On Saturday, members of various civil society groups staged a demonstration here to protest against rising food prices, making Kenya the latest country to witness such protests.

Police were forced to fire tear gas to disperse the protestors who were demanding that the government subsidise the cost of basic commodities such as maize flour. Two people were arrested during the incident.

Article published courtesy of [BuaNews](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>