

Speech by Professor Joseph Semboja
Executive Director of REPOA
On the Occasion of REPOA's 14th Annual Research Workshop
1 April 2009 at Dar es Salaam

Right Honourable Prime Minister Mizengo Kayanza Peter Pinda,

Professor Esther Mwaikambo, Chairperson of REPOA's Board of Directors,

Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and Head of Diplomatic Missions

– I recognise the presence of Ambassadors Karel van Kesteren (The Netherlands Embassy), Staffan Herrström (The Swedish Embassy),

Professor Benno Ndulu, Governor of the Bank of Tanzania

Dr Thandika Mkandawire, currently the Director of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development; taking up a new position in September 2009 as Chair in African Development at the London School of Economics and Political Science,

Permanent Secretaries present,

Vice Chancellors,

REOPA Board Members and Members of Technical Advisory Committee,

Distinguished Colleagues, and may I make special mention here of Dr. Odd-Helge Fjeldstad; Prof. marc Wuyts; Prof. Maia Green; Dr. Claire Mercer and Dr. Andrew Coulso. You are most welcome to Tanzania. The rest of my dear colleagues (up-country and Dar es Salaam),

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today is a proud moment for all of us from REPOA. We are honoured to have the Prime Minister of the United Republic of Tanzania open our Annual Research Workshop. We are particularly grateful to have this high level demonstration of support from the Government of Tanzania for the intellectual community. Right Honourable Prime Minister, you are most welcome.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

REPOA's Annual Research Workshop is Tanzania's largest and longest running research workshop. Initially conceived as a research capacity building workshop, this event has gradually grown to include policy dialogue and draw in a wide circle of intellectuals. All participants value this opportunity for knowledge sharing and networking.

Desiring to further enrich this annual event, REPOA determined to bring policy dialogue to the forefront. Therefore, last year a half day plenary session designed to stimulate discussion and encourage research on the 'big picture' for Tanzania was included as part of the workshop's programme. REPOA's intention was that the intellectual community would share knowledge on substantive issues relating to our nation's policy matters and development issues. REPOA's desire was to create a productive environment for the advancement of knowledge.

Last year's plenary session focused on the theme of growth and development. The insightful presentations by His Excellency Mr Karel van Kesteren, Professors Benno Ndulu, Sam Wangwe and Issa Shivji led to rich discussions. I am pleased to note that these discussions continue, as growth for development is pivotal to the national agenda. In today's plenary session we will explore one important aspect of growth: 'The role of the State for market-led development in a developing economy'. It is crucial to policy development that the State's role is thoughtfully explored in depth and the complexities well understood by all stakeholders in policy development.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

This year's workshop brings together a rich gathering of recognised experts in development. I am pleased that a distinguished African scholar, Dr Mkandawire, Director of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development will give the keynote paper. I am sure that Dr Mkandawire will provide a global perspective, as he is an internationally recognised author in this field. The contributions by His Excellency Mr Karel van Kesteren and Professor Marc Wuyts and the discussions that follow will also provide a fertile environment for learned debate and knowledge sharing. **Right Honourable Prime Minister**, as a politician and a government leader, your views on this subject will be invaluable.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

There is a second and equally important component of REPOA's Annual Research Workshop, that of capacity building. Capacity building of Tanzanian researchers was the core reason for the establishment of REPOA and it remains so. The role of research in the promotion of growth and the reduction of poverty is as critical today as it was when REPOA was formed in 1994. Tanzania needs more skilled researchers to address the challenges of development in the world that has become increasingly knowledge driven.

Therefore, during this workshop, in addition to the papers for the two plenary sessions, twenty-one research papers will be presented and discussed. This task, already started this morning, provides opportunity for researchers to present their work, receive peer feedback from colleagues and, advice on matters for revision by experts. Most of these studies are micro and locally focused, aimed to provide local contexts, as well as feeding into the comprehensive 'big picture'. Workshop participants have been requested to appreciate the differing levels of expertise for our researchers to support this important capacity building initiative.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

This year REPOA will develop its third Strategic Plan which will guide this organisation through its 20th year of operation. REPOA recognizes the critical responsibility of the intellectual community in today's knowledge driven society. Therefore the new strategic plan will include the continuation of an important responsibility of this organisation – that of fostering informed dialogue and supporting the intellectual community. **Right Honourable Prime Minister**, the intellectual community appreciates the Government's support for knowledge generation and open discussions. We look forward for more support and interaction with the Government. On our part the intellectual community pledges to use their capabilities and the available space to fulfill their duty.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In closing, I would like to pay tribute to those who provide the financial and moral support for REPOA to conduct its activities in the areas of research, capacity building, fostering dialogue, and responding to stakeholders' needs. The Chairperson has mentioned and thanked the REPOA basket fund contributors. Their generous funding is invaluable. I would also like to acknowledge with gratitude the active support given by our other key stakeholders: development partners from other nations, academics and academic institutions, researchers, other research organisations, members of civil society organisations and the media. We will rely on you all for continuing commitment and support as REPOA develops and implements its next strategic plan for 2010 to 2014.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for your attention.