



EMBASSY OF SWEDEN

Dar es Salaam, 1 April 2009

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Introductory remarks by H.E. Staffan Herrström, Ambassador of Sweden, at the REPOA workshop, 1 April 2009

Honourable Prime Minister,
Distinguished guests and participants,

I have been asked to say a few introductory words at the opening this workshop. I am very happy to do that.

Sweden has since the late 70's supported research activities in Tanzania, We are doing that as strong believers in the need and importance to promote and support research made FOR, BY and WITHIN developing countries. A research that harness the analytical capacity of Tanzanians to solve Tanzanian problems and promote development. We take a pride in the fact that one of the architects of Tanzania PRS made his studies in Sweden supported by the Swedish development cooperation programme (at that time managed by our agency SAREC, now part of Sida).

A former colleague of mine in Sida wrote the following in the African last Thursday: "If donor agencies genuinely want to recognise 'ownership' in the development dialogue, then funding institutional research capacity, should be an essential ingredient of bilateral development cooperation". I could not agree more. Unfortunately there are still too few of us doing this.

There is a significant democratic dimension in research capacity development.

First of all because a stronger domestic research capacity means improved possibilities for a domestic rather than externally driven political agenda-setting. Secondly because a stronger national research

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capacity when developed in a pluralistic society also creates preconditions for a better informed public democratic debate and consequently political decisions better anchored in the realities of the electorate.

Some challenging results has come out of the household budget survey. Results that pose a number of questions to someone following the developments in Tanzania the last 5--10 years. Researchers play a very important role in helping to understand such results e.g. why hasn't income poverty been reduced more over the last years given the high economic growth in the country? In trying to uncover facts researchers contribute to bring up important issues to public debate, issues that politicians sometimes themselves may be more reluctant to bring out in the public.

Tanzania needs to encourage research that contributes directly to the formulation of policy in government, a research initiated by the end user rather than the researcher, research that is characterised by being strategically driven, problem oriented and cross-disciplinary.

REPOA has certainly contributed a lot. Poverty and Human development report; Views of the people; Local Government reform and impact to governance and service delivery - all these have provided useful data and tools in policy dialogue and implementation of programmes – not least by giving voice and space to people living in poverty.

To meet the challenges and opportunities of the modern economy and society it is necessary to draw on knowledge from many disciplines in meeting. Technological research and innovation benefits from the inclusion of complementary work in the social sciences and humanities.

How can we encourage and facilitate interdisciplinary research ?

Interdisciplinary research is likely to be driven by end-user requirements and therefore it rarely falls within the ambit of a single discipline: new knowledge for policy application in such areas as the natural environment, health and society, energy, transport, communication or innovation is inherently interdisciplinary.

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Interdisciplinary research requires disciplinary knowledge, built up through a rigorous commitment to research excellence, as well as a sound understanding of the way knowledge will be applied, gained through exposure to practice. As such, it requires effective collaborative arrangements within research organisations, as well as between research organisations and government end users.

The need for relevant social sciences research is becoming more pressing, as policymakers look for evidence as a basis for new program interventions and to make sure that scarce resources are directed towards resolving real, identified problems and delivering intended outcomes. In the area of climate change, water policy and the natural environment generally, policymakers and their advisers are calling for evidence drawn from research as a basis for policy and program design.

The time is opportune to address ways to support and fund problem-oriented, interdisciplinary research. The Government has already announced its intention to increase allocation for research even up to 1% of GDP. We saw and were impressed by the message from the President on this and certainly look forward to implementation.

A greater commitment to interdisciplinary research must seek to integrate research into a larger body of concepts and ideas, to interpret and draw it together in a way that addresses problems — and opportunities. There is a need to synthesise knowledge from disparate disciplines to resolve pressing problems. Policy issues in the natural environment, health and society, energy, transport, communication, emerging industries and innovation are likely to respond best to this approach.

Tanzania's next PRS ought to establish a research plan to address critical policy problems and issues, funded as a required element of overall portfolio budgets.

The questions to be studied do not differ so much between countries. For example, during FP7 (2007-13), EU research in Socio-economic Sciences and the Humanities promises to study and offer answers to questions regarding the demographic change and quality of life; education and employment in view of the current economic trends; global interdependence and the transfer of knowledge; the wellbeing of

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democracies and political participation; cultural diversity and values. So we are all addressing similar issues.

The theme of this workshop will be addressed and discussed in depth in the hours and days we have ahead of us. I think it is extremely relevant not least having been politically active in my Sweden during some decades of redefining the role of the state in our market economy. Redefining it in order to level and regulate the playing field for economic actors rather than for the state to be an actor in itself, to improve the business climate, to encourage entrepreneurship and to make important social welfare systems financially sustainable.

I want to share one lesson learned – coming back to where I started: the democratic dimension of development and decision making.

The lesson learned is simple and reasonably well accepted in principle in many countries but much less so in practice: Fight the culture of secrecy wherever you find it. Be bold, daring and radical. Make transparency the rule and secrecy the rare exception. Do it because it is the most effective way of making sure that the state is acting in the interest of its citizens rather than in the private interests of politicians or civil servants.

Make sure that you formulate a right to information legislative bill here in Tanzania – and everywhere else – where these rights are clearly stated. And make sure that it is implemented on the ground making information available to everybody. Both for a citizen coming to the Prime Minister's office and to a citizen coming to the district council of Babati or the regional administration in Mwanza.

And of course combining this with free, active, dynamic and ethical journalism.

That kind of journalism could also be instrumental in facilitating dissemination of scientific and operational research findings.

The state is needed. The state needs to be controlled - both by formal institutions such as CAG and by larger society including media, civil society and ordinary citizens.

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Transparency is key for that control. Tanzania could become a real champion in this area. Why not take the opportunity?

The workshop we are attending today and tomorrow provides one of the best national fora available for discussing key development challenges of this country. Our inputs will – hopefully – assist in the formulation of relevant questions to be addressed by the research undertaken in REPOA.