

**Speech by Professor Joseph Semboja
Executive Director of REPOA**

**On the Occasion of REPOA's 12th Annual Research Workshop
28 March, 2007 at Dar es Salaam**

Madam Chairperson, Guest of Honour, Your Excellencies, Heads of Diplomatic Missions, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to welcome you all to our 12th Annual Research Workshop, which has grown in prominence in the field of development for Tanzania. Today we have 180 participants, with over 50 from up country. For some of you this is the first time you have attended our workshop, but there are many who have been coming since our first workshop in 1996. Together you form what I would term as REPOA's alumni, and we are all interested in research and policy related to poverty eradication and pro-poor growth.

We are pleased that we can offer this opportunity for REPOA's alumni to meet, exchange ideas, and take stock of developments in the field of research and policy. REPOA's Annual Research Workshop is one of the rare annual occasions which provide an opportunity at the national level for people such as us to meet and exchange ideas.

It is vital for our country's development, as well as our own professional development, that we take time each year to reflect on larger issues; to look beyond our day to day work. We need to take the time to listen to others, expose ourselves to new concepts, challenge ourselves and others to grow. If we are to be innovative and forward thinking we must nurture a fertile environment for sharing knowledge and stimulating thought. REPOA's Annual Research Workshop seeks to create the home for this environment, it is now up to REPOA's alumni and staff to take advantage of this.

At our workshop last year Hon. Dr Juma Ngasongwa stated that Tanzania must be a knowledge driven society to succeed. He challenged us to draw lessons from our work and those of others and to search for ideas that could make a positive contribution to development thinking and practice in the national sphere.

During these past two years we have noted a move away from a discussion centered on poverty per se, towards discussion and research on growth and development; from a focus on poverty alleviation to wealth creation and broad based growth.

This is a significant stage of maturation of the mindset of Tanzania's intellectual resource. Rather than focusing on problems and how to 'fix them', a rehabilitation or remedial kind of mindset, we are now seeking to be forward thinking and progressive. This is the way for our future, and the responsibility is on us to make sure that this progressive thinking gains momentum.

Thank you for participating in this year's workshop. I hope you will find it as rewarding as I know I will. I now hand over to Professor Esther Mwaikambo, the Chairperson of REPOA's Board of Directors.

Thank you