

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

**On the Occasion of REPOA's 11th Annual Research Workshop
5th April, 2006 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 today to our 11th Annual Research Workshop. It has been a busy year for REPOA since we were together during the last workshop and the 10th Anniversary. 2005 was the first year of implementation of REPOA's Strategic Plan for 2005-2009 and we have already seen results and changes to the organisation.

I would first like to thank the development partners, The Royal Netherlands Embassy, the Royal Norwegian Embassy, DFID, the embassies of Sweden and Finland for committing to support REPOA's activities for the period 2005 – 2009. We are also grateful to the Government of Tanzania for joining the basket funding. Other development partners, such as UNDP, USAID, UNICEF and JICA have provided financial support to specific projects. This combined support ensures our sustainability through to 2009 and I am confident that REPOA will be able to contribute much to the field of research, training and policy dialogue and development during this period.

We are particularly grateful for the intellectual, moral and logistical support that we have received from all the stakeholders, as can be seen from this workshop. We would not be able to offer such a rich repository of knowledge and networking without the support of both individuals and institutions from the central and local governments, Civil Society Organisations, the private sector, the development partners, academic institutions, and research institutions. I would like to thank you all for joining us once again today, in particular those who have traveled from afar.

The REPOA Strategic Plan 2005-2009 has specified the following goals:

- Strengthening the capacity of the intellectual resource by undertaking, facilitating and encouraging strategic research, and
- Facilitating and stimulating the utilisation of research findings in decision making

REPOA began as, and will continue to be a research organisation. However, maturity has taught us how to proactively respond to society needs. Increasingly therefore, in addition to promoting the undertaking of good quality research, we have also facilitated the use of research to strengthen and support the

development of policy. REPOA is aware that dialogue not only aids the dissemination of research findings, it also provides an important feedback to the field of research. Hence in recent years, REPOA has worked to increase its capacity to coordinate policy dialogue and development as well as implementation. Its active participation in the development of MKUKUTA and now its implementation is one such example.

Last year the REPOA research agenda was revised to take into account developments in the national policy such as the promotion of growth as an important element for poverty eradication. Furthermore, in order to ensure that this growth will include and offer opportunities and benefits to all Tanzanians, the revised research agenda also covers the fundamental area of vulnerability and social protection as well as important cross cutting issues such as gender and governance. Judging from this research agenda, the support that MKUKUTA will receive from REPOA supported research is quite obvious. This is consistent with our mandate of promoting and undertaking society relevant research.

So far the revised research agenda has received very positive response from local researchers. In 2005 we received 145 applications, a 65% increase from 2004. Of these proposals, 33 research grants totalling USD 474,193 were provided, also a substantial increase from 2004. Furthermore, there was a greater coverage of researchers, both from institutions and locations around Tanzania. Results from some of these research projects will be presented during this 11th workshop, with the 29 presentations reflecting the breadth of our research agenda.

REPOA's Annual Research Workshop has grown in prominence in the field of development; each year we have an increased attendance. I am also pleased to see an increasing diversity of participants, all interested in research and policy related to poverty eradication and pro-poor growth. This workshop has the three-fold benefit of: disseminating research findings as a contribution towards policy making, providing peer review as capacity building for researchers, and providing a networking forum for dialogue among stakeholders. REPOA is pleased that the Annual Research Workshop is turning into a forum for development issues, an added dimension to the earlier focus on research capacity building. This is a rich opportunity for knowledge sharing amongst researchers and development thinkers and practitioners.

Once again, thank you for participating in this year's workshop. I hope you will find it as rewarding as I know I will.

I would now like to hand over to Professor Esther Mwaikambo, the Chairperson of REPOA's Board of Directors.

Thank you