

**Speech by Dr Juma Ngasongwa (MP)
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**On the Occasion of REPOA's 11th Annual Research Workshop
5th April, 2006 at Dar es Salaam**

Madam Chairperson, Your Excellencies, Heads of Diplomatic Missions, Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

As the Minister of Planning, Economy and Empowerment I am pleased to open this important annual event for the field of research for Tanzania because I strongly believe that research will play an integral part in supporting economic and pro-poor growth for Tanzania. Research is a vital element that supports development.

During the 1960s and 70s the Government of Tanzania established an enabling environment to encourage the production and use of research, and thereby strengthening knowledge and encouraging innovation. Two examples are the National Development Corporation (NDC) and the Small Industries Development Organisation (SIDO), which continue to operate today. At that time the Government of Tanzania saw the production of knowledge and innovation as key to the development of the country. It was acknowledged that the production of knowledge and introduction of new technologies were vital for sustainable development and reduction of poverty.

However during the late 1970s, 80s, and into the 90s, the focus shifted from knowledge and innovation; and human and financial resources were cut back due to budgetary constraints then acutely facing the Government. As a result there was less research, fragmentation of institutions, and the withering of committed and coordinated support to research.

During the 1980s and into the 1990s the majority of research that did take place was driven by the North. Unfortunately this meant that the stimulus for the generation of knowledge, the subsequent analysis, dissemination and repository of this research took place in the North. And it is not impolite to state here that this research met their needs more than ours. This is the objective reality as the English saying teaches us: "He who pays the piper plays the tune". The South saw little of the outputs from research, and the discussion in the South moved from the production of knowledge and the introduction of new technology to the issues of consumption, service provision and equity.

Now we have come full circle and we are returning to a focus on growth, and the production and use of research to achieve growth, thereby development. But the arena is different to that of the 1970s. This is not a purely social agenda, we are now looking at partnerships between the private sector and the public sector. Globalisation and foreign investment offers opportunities; within the East African Community, SADAC and through AGOA (Africa Growth and Opportunity Act of the USA), EBA (Everything But Arms of the European Union), for example. There are opportunities for Tanzanians to study good practices in industry and agriculture, including production, processing and marketing, and then adapt these practices for use in our specific situation to take advantage of them.

The importance of research leading to knowledge and innovation for the development of any country anywhere in the world cannot be over emphasised. No country, no sector – public and private - will experience sustainable growth or effective service provision if they ignore the contribution by research. We have witnessed the growth achieved by countries that invest heavily in and actively support research.

The Government of Tanzania recognises the increasingly important role of research, including locally based research. Therefore, the Government has announced an increased budgetary allocation of 1% of GDP to research by 2015. Currently, Tanzania is ahead of many sub-Saharan countries in the production and use of data for research. It is the only country in sub-Saharan Africa that has an annual survey calendar funded by the National Budget. It is also the only country producing the Poverty and Human Development Report on a regular basis.

The Government also recognises the importance of partnerships with local researchers and policy makers. Researchers from many academic institutions, research institutions and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are involved in government led processes, such as policy development, implementation and monitoring. Important documents such as Vision 2025, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (MKUKUTA) were developed jointly. The MKUKUTA monitoring and evaluation is a fully inclusive process involving all stakeholders – researchers, CSOs, private sector and development partners.

To provide tangible support for locally based research, the Government makes contributions to the basket funding of some Tanzanian research institutions. REPOA now receives Tshs 100 million per annum from the Government as a contribution to support the core operating activities of REPOA, activities such as the holding of this annual research workshop. The Government also contributes about Tshs. 100 million per annum for supporting research activities of the Economic and Social Research Foundation.

These partnerships have also supported human resources and provided financial resources - through the Government's commissioning of work. This has helped to build the capacity of researchers within Tanzania, in the near future we will not be reliant on the North to provide researchers. The Government will continue to involve and support Tanzanian researchers and research institutions.

These partnerships between the Government and researchers and research bodies bring an added degree of relevance to the outputs, as the researchers understand and are well experienced in local conditions. Some good examples of the rich material produced from these partnerships are Vision 2025, MKUKUTA, the Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) and the Poverty and Human Development Report (PHDR). I will be launching the 2005 PHDR next week.

It is appropriate at this point that I thank the development partners who are also actively supporting locally based research in Tanzania, whether by providing funding for the core activities of research bodies, or commissioning research. In REPOA's case last year the following development partners committed to providing basket funding for REPOA's activities for the term of REPOA's third phase strategic plan, from 2005 to 2009. These are: The Royal Netherlands Government, the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Department for International Development (DFID), the Finnish Government, and the Royal Swedish Government. There are other governments and organisations who are funding specific projects operating within REPOA – USAID support the Tanzania Government Noticeboard (TGN), JICA support REPOA's grassroots programme and the children's programme is supported by UNICEF. We hope that in the future these programmes will be incorporated within REPOA's core activities so as to ensure their sustainability.

Research provides credible measurement tools of the effects of decisions and change. This information can be used to prompt recommendations for any changes or refinements to a strategy. Evidence based research is a catalyst for thinking more proactively and strategically. The Government of Tanzania relies upon knowledge, including the outputs from research to guide us in the development of policy. But this information is not for Central Government alone – we need to encourage a society where all stakeholders - developmental, public sector, private sector, civil society or others who have access to, and customarily use research as a basis for decision making for advancement of our people.

REPOA's Annual Research Workshop is a successful forum for dialogue and debate of developmental policy. As the Minister responsible for leading the national think tank for ensuring sustainable growth through the proper management of the national economy, I pledge my commitment to open forums for dialogue and knowledge sharing, such as the Poverty Policy Week. The Government recognises that these forums complement our work and aids awareness of the developmental work being undertaken within and outside of the Government. In our endeavours to plan an effective role as Tanzania's think tank, my Ministry will soon initiate debates on different topics on best practices to be adopted or adapted in our commitments to accelerate implementation of national plans and strategies to achieve the objectives of the Tanzania Vision 2025 and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). When the time comes for these I please to you to come forward and participate and thus contribute to the success of the plans and strategies.

We have expectations of researchers as yourselves and research institutions such as REPOA. We live in times of dynamic change and research provides a solid base for evaluating and helping us to cope with change. It ensures that decisions are not reactive or in keeping with customary or popular practice, but proactive and based on guided reasoning. The Government needs research to provide the following:

- I. Key data which gives up to date and reliable information on the status of a matter,
- II. Thorough and consistent analysis of data to show trends and provide explanations of the current status,
- III. Predictions for the future, based on sound reasoning from research data and analysis, and
- IV. Recommendations for the Government to consider in addressing detected and potential problems as well as expectations for the future.

I believe that Tanzania must be a knowledge driven society in order to succeed. The generation and sharing of knowledge is required for making rational decisions, and for enabling the meaningful and effective participation by stakeholders. Research is a public good which touches all spheres of our lives, whether environmental, economic, cultural, educational, health related, business related, good governance, and more. Knowledge is the ultimate development resource for sustained development, being instrumental in driving economic growth and development.

In his inaugural speech to the Parliament on 30 December 2005, our President, His Excellency Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, stated that the Fourth Phase Government would continue with existing policies and strategies to empower the majority of Tanzanians to take part in the national economy. His Excellency stated that the Government would empower its citizens to directly participate in the economy as individuals, as shareholders, or as cooperative societies. He added that:

“All these government initiatives will succeed only if Tanzanians change their attitude towards their own role, and the role of government, in a private sector led economy. Tanzanians have to learn to be entrepreneurs, and be ready to see and use opportunities for self-development that economic reforms provide, and the empowerment efforts by the government.....We must, as a nation, develop a strategy to work in partnership to increase investment and production, efficiency and quality of exports of goods and services, and hence increase the pace of economic growth.”

Honoured Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, this cannot be achieved without the effective generation and sharing of knowledge. This workshop with the range and nature of the papers being presented, and the composition and disciplines of the participants is an example of the rich source of knowledge available to our society. I charge you to be constantly aware of how the research you produce and share could help our nation and all its citizens to prosper.

I also challenge you - it is time for you to move to the next level of thinking. Do not think of your work in terms of its outputs, instead seek to draw lessons from your work and those of others – search for ideas that could make a positive contribution to development thinking and practice in the national sphere.

It is now my honour and privilege to declare REPOA's 11th Annual Research Workshop open.

Thank you for your attention