

**Speech by Mr Pieter Dorst
Head of Development Cooperation,
Royal Netherlands Embassy
On the Occasion of REPOA's 11th Annual Research Workshop
5th April, 2006 at Dar es Salaam**

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

As you know the Netherlands's Government has been supporting REPOA since its inception in 1994. Last year our relationship changed somewhat, when for the first time other development partners joined in funding the core activities of REPOA. I am pleased that the Royal Norwegian Embassy, department for International Development - DFID, and the embassies of Sweden and Finland have also made a commitment to financially support REPOA for 2004 – 2009. In addition, as the lead donor to the basket funding, we would like to acknowledge that the Government of Tanzania is making a contribution to basket funding as well. It is my sincere hope that this commitment will further be accelerated to ensure the sustainability of the fine research institution REPOA has grown to be.

We are also pleased to note that REPOA is now the secretariat to the Gender Mainstreaming Working Group for Macro Policy and we look forward to the first outputs from the gender programme this year.

The development partners are pleased with the updated research agenda, of which we have begun to see some initial outputs and will see more over the next two days. This research agenda is broad and multi-disciplinary, and we note that it is not a rigid programme, should the need arise new issues could be included during the term to 2009.

Looking at REPOA's research agenda it is important to come to an understanding as to why poverty in Tanzania is not showing a significant reduction trend. Under MKUKUTA and its monitoring plan, the Government of Tanzania acknowledges that, research is a key issue of its development process agenda. This realization indeed calls for affirmative and long term investments which will ensure the sustainability of the research agenda within the wider context of the economic growth and poverty reduction strategies. Based on the fact that the poverty is increasingly becoming a rural phenomenon partly due to weak linkages between macro and micro levels, this commitment becomes even more important.

Specifically, resource management is a topic of increasing importance, nationally and internationally. Energy crises, global warming and rising prices make this a noteworthy area of research, particularly in the area of searching for practical and viable alternatives for a developing country such as Tanzania.

How to protect Tanzania's vulnerable environment is another important issue. We know that Tanzania's environment, in particular its national parks, provide a valuable and growing source for growth and revenue generation. There are various options for and constraints to local development and income generation from tourism that could be explored. Another topical area, with the current push for growth, is that of micro-finance and the access to credit by medium and small entrepreneurs. The ongoing land formalization initiative could also provide much interesting areas for research.

We all know that research plays a vital role for development, and we are looking forward to participating in this workshop and other REPOA activities in the years ahead.

Thank you