

***Honourable Dr. Suzan Kolimba, Deputy Minister for
Foreign Affairs, East African, Regional and
International Cooperation,***

***Your Excellency Idzai Chimonyo, Ambassador of the
Republic of Zimbabwe and Acting Dean of the
Diplomatic Corps,***

***Ambassador Ramadhan Mwinyi, Acting Permanent
Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, East
African, Regional and International Cooperation***

***Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and High Com-
missioners,***

Excellencies, Heads of International Organizations,

Other Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcoming Remarks

I am pleased to welcome you all to the State House this evening. I am very delighted, as it is my first time to host such an auspicious occasion as the 5th President of the United Republic of Tanzania. At the outset, I would like to thank God for his blessings throughout the year 2015, and for granting us this opportunity to meet today as we celebrate the New Year 2016.

Allow me belatedly, to extend to your Excellencies, your families, staff and leaders my warmest wishes for the New Year 2016. I know you are just back from the holiday season, in the months of December and January, I thank you for taking your time to attend this occasion. It is my great pleasure to welcome you together to the State House. Your presence here today of almost all of the envoys accredited to the United Republic of Tanzania reaffirms the good relations with your countries and the Organisations that you represent.

Excellencies, let me also convey through you my warm greetings and gratitude to your respective Heads of State and Government as well as Heads of Regional and

International Organisations for the warm congratulatory messages that I have been receiving from them on my assumption of office. Although I have replied to them, through you I wish to once again reassure them of my friendship and cooperation of my Government and I look forward to continued cordial relations and partnership among our governments and citizens.

On the occasion of this traditional diplomatic gathering, the President gets an opportunity to share with you some highlights of what transpired in the nation in the previous year, and to look forward on some of our priorities in the coming year. It is not yet too late in the month of February to restate our goals and marshal our energies and resources for achieving them.

Domestic Situation

Excellencies, as you all know, in October 2015 we held General Elections; and as witnessed by various observer groups, they were conducted in a fair, free and peaceful manner. The campaigns were intense, highly competitive yet peacefully conducted. There was a high voters turnout compared to previous elections with a visible participation of Women and young and new voters. Moreover, the tallying process was transparent assisted by the use of electronic means. The handing over of the administration for the fifth time in a row, was orderly and peaceful. This is a clear demonstration that Tanzania 's democracy continues to grow and mature consistent with the unity, peace and stability of our country. At this point, I would like on behalf of the government to thank all those who supported us during the entire electoral process including the international observers who monitored the elections and affirmed its outcome on mainland Tanzania.

Now that elections are over in the Mainland, it is time to work, as it was my motto during the election campaigns and now of my administration, *“Its time to Work, Nothing Else” (Hapa Kazi Tu!)*. New governments come with new strengths, new thoughts, and new zeal and new zest. I count on your support in my efforts to transform and revitalize the integrity of the government, respect of human rights, good performance and sustainable socio-economic change for the benefit of all Tanzanians. I should also at this forum reiterate Tanzania’s resolve to fight domestically and globally against international terrorism, drug and human trafficking as well as the spread of small arms and light weapons. We appeal to our partners to assist us especially in the areas of information sharing, capacity building and technical support in these challenging areas.

Excellencies, I am sure most of you are expecting me also to speak about the difficult election outcomes in the Isles of Zanzibar. I do not have to remind you that although the United Republic of Tanzania is one country, Zanzibar has its own political system and tradition. It has its own

constitution, government and an independent Electoral Commission. The Commission annulled the election results in Zanzibar following gross irregularities especially in Pemba. A new date has been set for fresh elections in accordance with the Zanzibar constitutional requirements. Dialogues has been going on since November 2015 among the main political parties without reaching a consensus on how to resolve the disputed election outcomes. The main opposition party is claiming unilateral victory from the October elections while the ruling party and other parties see the need for another round of elections.

Excellencies, in this situation, it is common political wisdom that such a political impasse or a non participation in the elections does not auger well for the peace and stability of Zanzibar. The door is still open for the dialogue on how to make the forthcoming elections free, fair and transparent according to internationally acceptable democratic practices. Refusal to participate in the elections is to reject an olive branch for compromise from the government and recipe for protracted political antagonism in the next five years. We urge, as the majority

of Tanzanians do, for the opposition to validate their claims through the ballot box. There is no better way of resolving this impasse than through another round of free, fair and transparent elections. We hope all genuine friends of Zanzibar and Tanzania as a whole will support this option. Meanwhile, peace and tranquility is prevailing in Zanzibar. The peaceful status quo in Tanzania is too precious to be disturbed. It is not too late to find an agreeable solution in Zanzibar.

Excellencies, it would be remiss if I do not register my gratitudes to my predecessor, H.E. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, for handing over to me a very stable country in all aspects with friends like you from all corners of the globe. Through his able leadership and of Chama cha Mapinduzi, the past five years has seen our economy growing at the average of 7 percent and we have witnessed encouraging progress in many socio economic sectors. We could not have done it by ourselves without your support. We appreciate your contribution. Please continue supporting and working with us particularly now that we have a very ambitious development plans for the betterment of

all Tanzanians especially those lower echelons of society.

Excellencies, despite recorded achievements, we are still facing major hindrances on our way to achieving a prosperous Tanzania. Poverty, unemployment and corruption have remained to be among the major challenges confronting us. We are striving hard to overcome these challenges because we know that our vision of becoming a middle-income country by 2025 will not be reached if we do not address them comprehensively. In our efforts to address these challenges, among other things, we are working to reduce bureaucratic red tape and accelerate implementation of Government's decisions. We are also making efforts to reduce Government spending; promote discipline, accountability and transparency in the Government and the public sector as a whole starting with revenue collection as you have seen.

We envision a corrupt free Tanzania and this can only succeed by working together at both national and international levels. We must fight both demand and supply side of corruption. On this note, I take this opportunity to appreciate and applaud the Government of the United Kingdom for taking the lead by returning the money taken corruptly from our country. It is only through such a genuine cooperation, commitment and partnership that we will be able to eliminate corruption in our countries.

Excellencies, our emphasis in these five years is on appropriate industrial development. And again, to achieve this goal we are looking forward to working with you, our Development Partners, the private sector and other important stakeholders. My Government will continue to create a conducive environment for investors both from inside and outside the country. Help us to identify areas and gaps which need to be addressed in order create a more friendly investor climate in Tanzania. This will in turn accelerate economic growth of the country, reduce

poverty, increase standard of living of our people and generate employment for Tanzanians, especially the youth.

Excellencies, my Government is also working to improve other key economic sectors such as education, health, agriculture, infrastructure and energy. Power generation, rural electrification and development of the central railway corridor will be among our major priorities. In terms of education, we have already embarked on providing free education for all from primary to secondary level. As I speak, we have already started to implement this and we will strive to extend it to other levels in coming years.

Excellencies, wildlife and forest conservation will receive urgent attention in the face of the alarming destruction of our wildlife and forests. We want to live up to our obligation as custodians of wild heritage of our beautiful national parks and other historical and cultural attractions. Let me at this point again pay my deep condolences to the British Helicopter Pilot Roger Gower who tragically lost his life in Northern Tanzania while working with Tanzania's authorities in the fights against

illegal poaching of elephants in our national parks and game reserves. His life should not be lost in vain, I call upon all friends of Tanzania to join us in this war to save the BIG FIVE and other rare fauna and flora in the wilderness of Tanzania.

Regional Cooperation

Excellencies, my Administration will continue to build on the foundation of good relations laid down by my predecessors based on, among others, our Foreign Policy of good neighbourliness. Tanzania will continue to be committed to the regional bodies, and we will work with other members to uphold and advance the principles of the East African Community (EAC); the Southern African Development Community (SADC); the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR); as well as the African Union (AU). Undoubtedly, you have all been witnesses of our foreign policy being put in practice by assisting our neighbours in conflict resolutions as well as hosting refugees and asylum seekers. We will cooperate with fellow member countries to maintain peace, security, stability and development in our respective Regions.

Excellencies, now that we are embarking on industrial economy, we will endeavour to take advantage of the regional markets. My Government will intensify sensitization programmes to create awareness among the private sector and thus increase growth while stimulate production and businesses. We will continue to commit to the implementation of already concluded protocols in the region such as Free trade, Customs Union and Common Market.

Excellencies; as the current Chair of the East African Community, we have had to deal with the evolving political situation in Burundi, which is a concern not only to Tanzania, but also to the Region, the whole continent and peace loving citizens of the world. Tanzania will continue to work closely with all stakeholders in searching for a peaceful and lasting solution to the Burundi crisis.

We are of the view that in order to achieve sustainable peace and security in Burundi, inclusive dialogue is the only solution. Tanzania has reservations the use of force

at this stage in dealing with the current political crisis without the consent of Burundi. We are at the same time encouraging dialogue between Burundi and the African Union because Burundi has genuine security concerns which require support from the African Union and the international community. It is in this spirit that we applaud the concerted efforts by H.E. Yoweri Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda who on behalf of the East African Community is a mediator of this conflict. We are concerned that a festering political crisis in Burundi will exacerbate an already difficult economic situation in Burundi which can easily lead to institutional stress with dire security consequences in Burundi and the region as a whole.

International Cooperation

Excellencies, 2015 was a very eventful year for the international community. Among other events, we celebrated 7 decades of our noble organisation the United Nations. In the same year, we also winded up the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which Tanzania achieved four of them and subsequently, led to the adoption of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

Excellencies, Tanzania will continue to participate in the United Nations and African Union peace keeping operations as her contribution to the maintenance of international and regional peace and security. Tanzania has a long history of generous hosting of Refugees long before independence. We pledge to respect this international humanitarian obligation. We appeal for equally generous international burden sharing on this issue especially as refugee hosting comes with numerous demographic, environmental, economic and social challenges to the countries of asylum like Tanzania.

As you may recall, in December 2015 the global leaders adopted a historic agreement- The Paris Agreement, in Paris. This Agreement will take over from the Kyoto Protocol in 2020 and will decide the future of our Planet.

We, as Member Countries must ensure that we adhere to these agreements. There has to be a close follow-up and review mechanism of these new global Agreements and Goals so as to be sure of their successful implementation. My Government has plans in place to ensure that this takes place effectively. But we know that we cannot achieve any of these without our joint efforts, we therefore once again urge for your cooperation and necessary support in these endeavours.

Conclusion

Excellencies, before I conclude, I would like to emphasise the role of women in development of the country and Tanzania will continue to do its best so that women continue to be part and parcel of our development endeavours. We

have shown this by electing our first ever-female Vice President, H.E. Mama Samia Suluhu Hassan. My Government will also continue to empower each Tanzanian so that no one will be left behind as pledged in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. In the same vein, every individual has to play their role in ensuring that we achieve our goals.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, for the year 2016, I promise you my Government's full cooperation and I look forward to working with you.

I thank you.