

**Introductory Remarks by Dr Salim Ahmed Salim at the opening of the Third
Zanzibar Africa's Mediators Retreat, 23rd November 2011**

I would like to warmly welcome the Second Vice President of Zanzibar, Honourable Ambassador Seif Ali Idi to our retreat

I wish to express my particular appreciation of his presence here bearing in mind that there is an important going on now in Dodoma of which he is a participant but he has been able to make a flying visit to be with us. This is a clear demonstration of the importance you and the Government of Zanzibar attached to this retreat. It is also yet another manifestation of the hospitality of the people of these islands.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of The Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation I wish to salute all the participants who are here with us and extend to you a very warm welcome to Zanzibar and to Tanzania. My colleagues and I are most appreciative that this Third Africa's Mediators Retreat – part of the Oslo Process - is again being held in Zanzibar.

In joining hands with the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the convening of this retreat we take the view that this gathering is both extremely useful and very relevant in our collective quest for the promotion for peace, stability and security in the African continent through conflict resolution and through appropriate mediation. I would like to thank and commend the Royal Norwegian Government and Center for Humanitarian Dialogue for making this possible.

I would at this point also like to express our outrage and condemnation for the brutally and senseless killings of more than seventy young people in the Island of Utoeya in July. We convey our condolences for the bereaving families and our solidarity to the people and Government of Norway as they deal with horrendous terrorist act.

When we met here in 2009 none of us could have seriously anticipated the dramatic changes that have recently taken place in Northern Africa. There are lessons to be learned from those developments especially as they pattern to the impotency of pursuing policy of Good Governance, respect of human and people's rights and ensuring the participation of the people in the affairs of their country. There have been a lot of positive things as far as these events are concerned but also development of serious concerns to us as Africans. I note that we will discuss some aspects of the situation in Libya and I do hope that will also afford us an opportunity for some preliminary discussion on implications and prospects of the situation there and beyond.

It is appropriate that one of the topics for our discussion is the developments in Sudan and South Sudan. Some of us had always hoped that the conditions would have been created so that Sudan which was until the recent separation was the biggest country in Africa would serve as an example for the microcosmic nature of our continent in terms of unity in diversity. But as you all know this has not been possible and now we have the reality of two Sudan. What is of crucially importance is to support the people of both these countries so that they overcome the current fissures and move toward the resolution of outstanding problematic areas. For the fact remains even as separate nations the two countries have a lot in common and they have to work together and above all avoid the misery and destructions that are inherently in any resumption of conflict. As the adage goes, you can choose your friend but not your brother or sister, and neighbors are brothers and sisters.

Naturally a retreat of this nature would be incomplete without the consideration of the situation in Somalia and its devastating consequences for the people of Somalia and beyond. This is an issue of great importance both to Africa and International community. It's an issue whose repercussions are clearly felt by the countries of the region who are compelled to devise ways and means to limit its damages. I have always believe if there is one country and one conflict which calls for concerted international action to support Africa's action, that country is Somalia. And if there is one country which qualifies for top consideration under the rubric of the responsibility to protect, that country is Somalia.

Mr Vice President, this retreat would be discussing these and other issues of great importance to the African continent. They include such events as development in West Africa with particular reference to Ivory Coast and Guinea. It will also be discussing the Africa's architecture for conflict prevention, management and resolution. The only point I want to stress here is that important as the structure are they still lack the necessary resources. We appreciate the support given by international community. In my opinion it is unacceptable that African countries should excessively be dependent on such support. African continent and Africa governments can certainly do more than is the case now. We need to start walking the talk by ensuring that we institute serious steps for self reliance. For African solutions to the Africa's problems to succeed, we definitely have to ensure we are ready to bring in the necessary resources.

Honourable Guest of honour. It is now my honour to invite you to give your welcoming remarks and to officially opening the Third Africa's Mediators retreat. Thank You