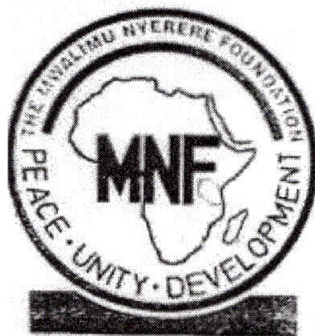


THE MWALIMU NYERERE FOUNDATION



**OPENING REMARKS
BY DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM
CHAIRMAN, MWALIMU NYERERE FOUNDATION
AT THE SYMPOSIUM ON THE GREAT LAKES REGION
KAMPALA, UGANDA, 8TH - 10TH 2002**

December

OPENING REMARKS BY DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM
CHAIRMAN, MWALIMU NYERERE FOUNDATION
AT THE SYMPOSIUM ON THE GREAT LAKES
REGION
KAMPALA, UGANDA, 8TH – 10TH 2002

Your Excellency President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni

Honourable Ministers;

Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Distinguished Invited Guests

Distinguished Participants

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation and, on my own behalf, I would like to thank the Governments of the Republic of Uganda and of the United Republic of Tanzania for the invaluable support they have rendered towards organizing this symposium.

I would like to express particular gratitude to President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania for the personal interest they

have demonstrated towards this initiative and the encouragement and counsel they have given us at every step of preparing for the symposium.

To the participants who ^{are here in Kampala} ~~have been able to come to~~ Kampala, please accept our appreciation. We are very much encouraged by your heeding our call to join us in reflecting and strategizing on how we can make a contribution to the formidable challenges obtaining in the Great Lakes. This, for us, is an eloquent testimony and reaffirmation of your commitment to the overall African cause.

This symposium has a very special significance to the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation. In the first place, it provides an opportunity to sustain Mwalimu's unflinching commitment and concern to issues of unity, peace, security and stability in Africa and in the world at large. These pillars of society, when they are disrupted in one community, one nation, or one region; they generate serious concerns for all the African people.

In whatever part of the Continent we may be, as Africans, we cannot detach ourselves from the predicament of those who are directly or indirectly affected by such problems. The legacy that Mwalimu Nyerere has bequeathed to us is one of shared concern and shared commitment to our collective destiny. By bringing together African people from different constituencies, to deliberate and seek ways of engaging ourselves to the challenges faced by one part of our Continent, we will also be paying tribute to the ideals cherished by Mwalimu ~~Nyerere~~. X

Another significance of this symposium is that the Question of the Great Lakes bears special attachment to the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation. It may be recalled that towards the end of his life, Mwalimu had devoted all his energies in contributing towards bringing about sustainable peace and stability in the region. As a facilitator to the Burundi Peace Process, Mwalimu was involved with the different facets of the question of the Great Lakes. For him, the issue is not simply conflict mediation and resolution.

to inculcate and/or strengthen a Culture of to love & act

The challenge is to foster unity, peace and development. The theme of this symposium is thus a great homage to Mwalimu in terms of addressing the situation in the Great Lakes within the greater vision of the future of our Continent.

The complexity of the situation in the Great Lakes brings out very prominently Mwalimu's concerns about Africa's development. Indeed, the relationship between 'parts' and their 'composite whole' has been at the center of Mwalimu's philosophy, political practice, and his overall vision of Africa. Whether it is the place of individuals in society, nations in regions, or countries in the Continent, Mwalimu underlined the centrality of a harmonious relationship that reinforces the capacity of the whole to promote the welfare of the individual, nation, or country. In the Great Lakes, the tension between these dynamics has played itself out acutely, and it presents a challenge to all of us that we need to confront collectively and in its broader perspective. This symposium provides us that opportunity.

Mwalimu bequeathed us the principles and values that underscore Pan-Africanism, peace, human respect and integrity, human equality, and the centrality of the human being in all our endeavours. In this symposium the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation believes that we can undertake a collective discourse that brings to bear the importance of these values and their practical implications in overcoming the challenges of the Great Lakes region.

Much as the idea of organizing this symposium was initiated while Mwalimu was still alive, the timing of its actual convening is very opportune. At the present juncture, the constellation of forces in the region offers more hope and prospects for peace and development in the Great Lakes. Many of the stakeholders in the region are demonstrating a stronger goodwill and resolve for attaining sustainable peace and development. In each of its components, the question of the Great Lakes has now acquired a new positive momentum.

Reports we are receiving on the different peace efforts are very encouraging. Difficulties are still abound, but they are not insurmountable. In fact, the process has now entered a new phase in which the dominant atmosphere is not conflict management, rather, it is the modality of consolidating and sustaining peace and stability out of the conflict situation.

It is our sincere hope in the Foundation that the deliberations of this symposium will serve as useful input to the ongoing Continental and International efforts towards seeking a lasting solution to the problems obtaining in the Great Lakes. The fact that the participants at this symposium come from governments and other public institutions, from the private sector as well as from the civil society provides a distinct enrichment to the deliberations of this forum.

The experience of the last four decades has demonstrated that developments in the Great Lakes have serious repercussions for the whole Continent. The

aftermaths of negative developments in the region, in terms of deaths and human suffering, damage to societal assets, undermining of institutions, disruption of social structures, and even lost opportunities, have an impact that go far beyond the Great Lakes. In the same regard, harnessing the potential of this region – both in terms of its socio-economic and political strength – can activate a powerful engine of growth for the whole Continent.

In this era of globalization, Africa has to deploy all its potential, so as to remain an effective actor in the international scene and to harness the opportunities and avoid the threats of the new world order. This is particularly important at this juncture when we have also embarked into establishing the African Union, which is a higher level of cooperation and integration among our people. The power of the Great Lakes needs to be released and directed towards promoting the African synergy which is so critically needed for realizing our collective vision.

This Symposium is taking place within a backdrop of at least three major events which should have some impact on our deliberations.

First, here in our host country, Uganda, they are on the eve of celebrating the definitive overthrow of the Idi Amini dictatorship which inflicted so much pain, suffering, death and destruction to the people of Uganda. The implications of this dictatorship went beyond the borders of Uganda.

+ Second, during this very month, eight years ago, in 1994, the people of Rwanda were subjected to the most horrendous crime – the genocide and massacres of hundreds of thousands of people. That crime against humanity had severe repercussion not only for the people of Rwanda and the Great Lakes Region but also Africa as whole ^{and} in many ways, the world at large.

Third, as we meet here, the inter-Congolese dialogue in Sun city, South Africa aimed at finding a durable solution

to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, has reached an advanced stage.

What lessons should we then draw from these events?

First, oppression and repression will always be met with resistance and no matter how challenging and difficult the struggle may be, people will always finally triumph. Put differently, tyranny, dictatorship and ~~massive~~ violations of human rights cannot and should not be allowed to prevail in our societies. The triumph of the people of Uganda therefore was the collective victory of the region and the Continent as a whole.

Second, the genocide and massacres in Rwanda constituted a collective indictment on us all. We must endeavour never to allow such a monstrosity to raise its ugly head in our region and in our continent again..

Third, in situations of conflict like that prevailing in the DRC, there is no alternative to a dialogue among the parties in order to arrive at a just and sustainable solution.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The period of brutal dictatorship in Uganda, the genocide and massacres in Rwanda, the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the civil war in Burundi—all these put together have resulted in the death of millions of our fellow Africans in the Great Lakes region and the injury and maiming of many millions more to say nothing of the over all destruction inflicted on the countries concerned. This is a painful and devastating reality that we must bear in mind as we attempt to chart the way forward for the region. The people and governments of this region must not only endeavour to put an end to conflicts but above all ^{must} create conditions which prevent future ones and usher in an era of cooperation among our countries and peoples and a political culture based on the fundamentals ^{at} principles of justice, equity and the rule of law which we have all subscribed to whether in the context of the United Nations or our respective regional and continental organizations.

New
power

The sombre background of genocide, the testimony of the power of a united people being able to uproot a vicious dictatorship, and the unraveling prospects for peace and stability in the region, make this meeting to be a medium of empowerment. Indeed, the designation of 'symposium' has been deliberately and carefully chosen because the objective is to engage into a rigorous exercise of reflection, analysis, exchange of views with the aim of engendering commitment and determination so that we can engage ourselves in contributing towards concrete change – towards a better life for the people of this region, and the people of Africa as a whole. The context of this symposium deserves no less.

In the intellectual tradition of Mwalimu Nyerere and his exemplary practice in commitment and action, it is the hope of the Foundation that this symposium will generate an earnest and rigorous discourse that will serve as a means of mobilization, reinforcing our commitment and determination towards creating a better tomorrow for the people of the Great Lakes Region. As Mwalimu constantly

reminded us, the primary objective in all our endeavours should be the liberation, integrity and better life for that ordinary person in our villages and towns.

Thank you .