

THE MWALIMU NYERERE FOUNDATION



WELCOMING REMARKS

BY

DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM

**TO THE PUBLIC ADDRESS OF H.E. DR. A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA**

13TH SEPTEMBER 2004:
KARIMJEE HALL
DAR ES SALAAM

**Welcoming Remarks by Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim
to the Public Address by H.E. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam
President of the Republic of India**

Your Excellency Dr. Abdul Kalam
President of the Republic of India,
Honourable Ministers,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Honourable Members of the Board of Trustees of the Mwalimu Nyerere
Foundation,
Honourable Chairman and Members of the Board of Trustees of Tanzania-India
Friendship Association,
Honourable Leaders of Political Parties,
Your Worship, the Mayor of Dar es Salaam,
Excellencies Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

We are deeply honoured to have in our midst this morning, an eminent personality who is both an accomplished scientist and distinguished statesman who has used his expertise and knowledge in the service of his country and the world community at large.

Mr. President,

On behalf of the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation, of which I am its Chairman, and the Tanzania-India Friendship Association, of which I am its Patron, I would like to welcome your Excellency Dr. Abdul Kalam and the delegation you are heading to this gathering. It is a great honour for our two institutions to be able to play host to your Excellency.

The Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation was established by the late Mwalimu himself with an objective of promoting the ideas and ideals that he stood for; and the Tanzania-India Friendship Association, as the name itself suggests, has been created to further strengthen the cordial relations that exist between our two countries and our peoples.

The relations between our two peoples have not started today nor are they a post-colonial phenomenon. Long before our two countries were colonized, our peoples have discovered and known each other. I am more inclined to subscribe to the popular narrative that the monsoon winds were created so that our two peoples can establish contacts between each other. It is therefore quite likely that the route which Vasco da Gama followed as he steered his ship from Zanzibar and the Tanzanian Coast, to the Indian Sub-Continent in search of the precious Indian spices had probably been traveled by some brave Indian and East African sailors before.

During these many centuries, our fate and destiny has been linked, and in this regard we have shared common aspirations. As Africans we suffered the indignities of the slave trade and colonialism and the stigma of racial discrimination. But so too did the Indian people, who as indentured labourers, whether in Port Elizabeth, or the ports of Durban and Cape Town, or on the plains of East Africa, were subjected to exploitation and discrimination. It is against this background of common humiliation that the struggle of the Indian people for independence provided hope and inspiration to the Africans, and made what appeared to be remotely feasible to become achievable goals, thus giving a new impetus to the resurgence of African nationalism. The great fighter of Indian independence, Mahatma Gandhi, remains a shared icon for our two societies not only because he perfected his skills as a people's revolutionary within the context of Africa's colonial experience but the strategy of Passive

Resistance that he applied in India was followed to success by many a nationalist movement in Africa, including TANU on the Tanzania Mainland.

The peoples of Africa are aware and grateful for the tremendous support that India has provided us in our struggles for independence and in our quest for development. This support has been forthcoming regardless of which party is in power in New Delhi. It is therefore not surprising that the relations between Tanzania and India have been bolstered by the broader context of a common Continental experience and shared aspirations for freedom, dignity and improvement of people's welfare. It is these values that strengthen the bond between leaders like the Founding Father of the Tanzanian modern nation, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, and the First Prime Minister of India Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. It is the same shared vision that fostered the determination of our two nations to promote South-South cooperation as a basis for strengthening the position of developing countries in global relations. The recommendations of the South-South Commission, of which the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere was its Chairman, and the present Indian Prime Minister, H.E. Mr. Manmohan Singh, was its Secretary, are as relevant today as when they were made fourteen years ago.

For centuries the monsoon winds have also brought hundreds of Indians to these shores. Many of them have intermingled with the local societies and have identified themselves fully with this country. Most of them have played and continue to play an important role in commerce, trade, the professions, and in politics too. The devotion and dedication of Tanzanians of Indian ancestry in the development and welfare of this country are well known. The interaction with India has also had a tremendous impact on our culture, especially in the Coast and Zanzibar. The Indian cuisine is now very much part of our national cuisine; Indian films are enjoyed by thousands of our people; and many words coming from Indian languages have been Swahilized. Thousands of Tanzanians,

including a former Prime Minister of our country and the currently 5Vice-Chairman for Tanzania Mainland of the ruling party, CCM, have graduated from Indian universities and other institutions of higher learning.

Your Excellency Mr. President, In welcoming you to address this gathering, we not only welcome a representative of a people whose civilization has had a great influence in the civilization of the world, and whose thinkers, philosophers, scientists and literary figures, continue to pay a great role in the shaping of our world, but we want also to recognize your own personal achievements and qualities of leadership. Besides your renowned impressive academic progress and outstanding contribution to India's scientific and technological achievements, you stood very firm on the principles of secularism, and in your lifestyle you treat all people with respect. You are a person who believes that a quality of a leader is vision and that a leader cannot lead if he or she does not know the final destination. The academic and scientific community has recognized your achievements, and 22 universities have conferred you the degree of D.Sc (Honoris Causa), one university has conferred you the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Honoris Causa) and two universities have conferred you a degree of Doctor of Literature. Apart from that you are recipient of 10 very prestigious awards and three national medals. Furthermore we are conscious of your interest, concern and contribution in the areas of environment, literature and poetry. We salute you Mr. President for all these outstanding achievements.

It is therefore with particular pleasure that I welcome you at Karimjee Hall to address this distinguished audience of a cross-section of Tanzania society including its leadership.