

# **THE MWALIMU NYERERE FOUNDATION**



**ADDRESS**

**BY**

**DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM  
CHAIRMAN OF THE MWALIMU NYERERE FOUNDATION**

**CHIEF GUEST**

**AT THE SECOND GRADUATION CEREMONY  
FOR MBA AND DIPLOMA GRADUANDS AT  
ESAMI**

22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2003  
ESAMI Headquarters  
ARUSHA

**SPEECH BY THE CHIEF GUEST,**  
**DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM**  
**CHAIRMAN OF THE MWALIMU NYERERE FOUNDATION,**  
**AT THE SECOND GRADUATION CEREMONY FOR MBA AND DIPLOMA**  
**GRADUANDS AT ESAMI HEADQUARTERS,**  
**NOVEMBER 22<sup>ND</sup> 2003**

Chairman of ESAMI Governing Board  
Honorable Regional Commissioner  
His Lordship the Mayor of Arusha  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps  
Members of the ESAMI Governing Board  
Director General of ESAMI  
Distinguished invited guests  
Dear Graduands  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I feel honoured and privileged to preside over this Second Graduation Ceremony of ESAMI. ESAMI is dear to me, because I have had linkages with it for a long time when I was serving as the Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity, now the African Union. I know ESAMI's capacity and I am very proud that it is one of those African managed institutions that is providing quality programmes we can be proud of.

I am very happy to see in our midst both women and men who have been pursuing knowledge, celebrating fruition of their endeavours. Indeed it is gratifying to see men and women committed to life long learning, men and women who in their own right are already managers in their areas of responsibilities but who have decided to go back to school to pursue further knowledge and skills.

Speech at The 2<sup>nd</sup> Graduation Ceremony at ESAMI  
By Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim

I know from personal experience that it requires a lot of effort and determination to do so. I vividly recall the formidable challenges that I had to confront when, while serving as my country's Permanent Representative at the United Nations, I enrolled and completed my graduate studies at Columbia University. The fact remains, however, that education is a continuing process and the importance of recognizing this is particularly relevant today as our peoples and societies have to grapple with the challenges of globalization.

We must therefore discard the fallacy that when we reach top positions we should be contented and think that we know everything hence need not go back to school or take steps to update and enhance our knowledge.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In a number of countries and centres of learning that I know, an occasion like this is referred to as "commencement" instead of "graduation". I urge all graduands to see today's occasion not only as a "graduation" day but also as "a commencement day". Commencement to your lifelong learning and also using what you have been learning in order to help your organizations become even more competitive and sustainable private companies. For those in public service, you should see this day as commencement to deliver better, efficient and effective services to our citizens. This is an opportune time to use your acquired knowledge and skills to effectively contribute to the development and growth of your organizations and your countries.

Dear Graduands, I take this opportunity to sincerely congratulate you for what you have achieved. Going through the rigorous degree and diploma course to its completion is indeed a testimony of your success. This achievement has been due to your personal dedication, personal commitment and sacrifices at family level and at work. It is, therefore, only proper on this occasion to pay tribute to your families



who were supportive throughout the study period, and to commend the organizations that supported you.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish you to join me also to congratulate the Eastern and Southern Africa Management Institute and their partner – Maastricht School of Management – for their commendable job in building a knowledge based society in Africa.

I believe that the graduands and each one of us here today is conscious of the challenges of this 21<sup>st</sup> century. It has been called the knowledge century. It is a century driven by knowledge managers. Without knowledge managers and knowledge workers, Africa will again lose out this century just as we lost out the just ended 20<sup>th</sup> century. I believe we in Africa, this time, cannot afford to be left behind. We are compelled to do everything possible to be an integral part of, and move along with the changing world. This is why in the New Partnership for Africa Development [NEPAD], African Leaders have affirmed their belief, and I quote, *"that resources [capital, technology, human skills] required to launch the war on poverty and underdevelopment exist in abundance and within reach. What is required to mobilise resources, is bold and imaginative leadership that is genuinely committed to sustained human development efforts and to eradication of poverty, as well as a new global partnership based on shared responsibility and mutual interest."*

This type of imaginative leadership entails having a knowledgeable leadership, in order to leap and jump where possible to catch up with the forces of change and to fight poverty. For knowledge to be useful, it must among other things, help in problem solving. A major problem of our century is indeed poverty. Of course Information Technology is allowing knowledge to instantly becoming accessible.

Given the ease and speed at which information is travelling, one would have thought that institutions in the knowledge society; Businesses, Government Agencies, Universities, or schools can be globally competitive in order to survive. The unfortunate thing about our continent however, is that most of our organisations still continue to be inward looking in their activities and in their markets.

As of todate, Internet keeps customers everywhere informed on what is available anywhere in the world and at what price. This new knowledge economy of the present century relies heavily on leaders and managers to acquire unique skills in managing intellectual capital and remaining competitive. Intellectual capital and the knowledge generated and possessed by employees is increasingly becoming the critical assets for any organisation – public or private. Knowledge is undoubtedly becoming even more powerful. It has been observed that the greatest power base of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is knowledge. Knowledge is taking precedence over wealth as a power base and is the major resource for any corporation/organisation or country.

Dear Graduands,

This knowledge issue has a catch. On one hand, a person or an organisation can be a world leader in any field since persons or organization all can acquire knowledge. The catch here, is that we can not store knowledge like money or gold. It is not even accumulatable. The catch with knowledge as a resource is that it sometimes and perhaps quite often rapidly becomes obsolete and irrelevant. One has therefore to continue learning, being innovative, imaginative and generating new knowledge in order to be competitive and useful in providing strategic leadership that is required to address new challenges.

The danger of not having a mind set of continuous learning is summarised by Bill Gates as quoted by Fortune Magazine of July 12<sup>th</sup> 1998 where he stated that,

*"Irrelevancy is a bigger risk than inefficiency"*. The implication here is that when one's knowledge base becomes obsolete, he/she is irrelevant and by that token, therefore becomes a barrier to the development of a country or organisation. A lot has been documented on eradicating inefficiency so as to utilize limited resources better and achieve results. However, few of us have been challenged to eradicate irrelevancy. And yet this is the crux of the organisation's competitiveness.

I want to urge the new and old managers to shift their attention from mere functional management and administration to organisational performance. Our challenge is to create knowledge through innovations and creativity.

Dear Graduands, you face a lot of challenges as leaders and managers in a knowledge based society. You are indeed going to face major challenges as you go back to your work place. Many of us expect better results in your work. We expect you to quickly transform ideas, cases and theories you have learnt in the class into making your organizations efficient and competitive. Your organizations accepted to invest in you with a noble aim of seeing viable and tangible improvements in your performance. This has been their expectation, and I am confident that you will endeavour to live up to this reasonable expectation.

I believe you have been given a base to confront and overcome the many challenges that lie ahead. As you leave ESAMI and go back to assume your various responsibilities, it is my confident belief that you will do so in a manner which will make your organizations, your countries and our continent proud.