

**OPENING REMARKS BY SALIM H. MSOMA, PERMANENT  
SECRETARY FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT  
DELIVERED AT THE SEMINAR ON “MKUKUTA INFORMATION  
AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY APPLICATIONS”  
DAR ES SALAAM, ON 26 MAY, 2005 AT 14:00HRS**

**Mr. Nils Jensen, ICT Program Officer (SIDA) and Chairman of  
DPG-ICT Group and the Chairman of this Seminar,  
Members of the Development Partner,  
Distinguished Participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

May I on behalf of the Government of United Republic of Tanzania, express my sincere gratitude for being invited to officiate the opening of this important workshop on “Mkukuta Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Applications.”

**Mr. Chairman,** I would like first of all to welcome all of you, stakeholders of ICT matters and others, your varied backgrounds is testimony to the fact ICT is a cross cutting issue. I also wish to welcome development partners who, in many ways, are interested parties through their field of work. This gathering here should demonstrate that for ICTs the concept of public-private partnerships (PPPs) is pervasive and will work by jointly generating and structuring ideas, and indeed if the scope allows here, implementing programs of mutual benefit.

**Mr. Chairman,** we all know that ICT is a key factor in making other sectors of the economy function efficiently and effectively thus enhancing national socio-economic growth. ICT is vital for good

governance, democracy, poverty reduction, and transparency. The access to information efficiency that ICT services provide to people narrows the existing digital gap. Efficient and effective ICT services empower people to share and exchange information, knowledge and experience which serve as tools to face challenges of everyday life. ICT equips the society with skills for improving living standards by promoting business interaction through various means such as e-commerce, e-education, e-medicine, e-agriculture, e-tourism, e-transport, e-tc.

In its endeavor to achieve the objectives of MKUKUTA, the National ICT Policy and the Vision 2025 the Government sees three areas where ICT Applications play a major role

- a) Grass root Projects such as community Telecenters, Business Information Centers and Health Information centers. These are initiatives that directly affect the livelihoods of the population.
- b) E-Governance, to enhance the delivering machinery for public services.
- c) Performance Monitoring to keep development targets in clear vision

To do so it is absolutely vital as are vessels to the hearts blood or roads to our national products, to establish a strong ICT infrastructure. Without it we can talk to the beginning of the next century without effectively achieving our Development goals.

I am happy to have been informed that this seminar will discuss amongst others these issues.

**Mr. Chairman,** I am also told that this workshop is intended for experts to appreciate those efforts the Government is taking to

promote the use and applications of ICT services and facilitates for development. All initiatives of Government and the public have to be very well coordinated. Short of which we cannot realize the optimal of these tools which are crucial for the achievement of our National Development Goals. This workshop under the theme “MKUKUTA ICT applications has really been organized just-in-time when the Government has recognized the importance of ICT for development and has incorporated it into the National Social Economic Poverty Reduction Strategy (MKUKUTA) in the same way as other cross cutting issues like those of Environment, Health, and Gender. The Government made this decision in August, 2004 in Dodoma and instructed all Government Ministries, Departments, Agencies, and all other public and private institutions and individuals to integrate ICT components in their respective development program activities. The same action was re-iterated by all Permanent Secretaries during a seminar organized to discuss National ICT Policy Implementation Strategy held in Bagamoyo, from 11-12 March, 2005.

For critical review, the workshop needs to internalize major ICT initiatives and their impact on development in Tanzania; to explore further opportunities for applying ICT solutions to the development challenges; and to be assured of the seriousness Government applies to entering and fully utilizing ICT as a tool to fulfill its development aspirations.

**Mr. Chairman,** Much as ICT services are a cross-cutting in terms of impacting development of all sectors of the economy, it is not easy to exhaust the discussion of such in a half day session given the wide, complex and involving agenda of this workshop. This reflects the need for strengthening a coordinated, efficient and sustainable system which will be reviewing the implementation process on a continuous basis and take remedial measures where need arises.

The Government commends the on-going support by UNDP in strengthening the institutional capacity through providing the current National ICT Coordination Office with the necessary operational back up. As of now there are efforts for converting the section responsible for ICT (National ICT Coordination Office), Telecommunications and Postal services into a full department.

**Mr Chairman,** Tanzania recognizes the importance of ICT for accelerated socio-economic growth and is currently undergoing a boom in ICT. A number of measures have been and continue to be taken to create a conducive environment for investing in the ICT Industry. The National Policy has been put in place since 2003 and it addresses key areas that need attention in order to realize the benefits of ICT for all. The Policy highlights ten focus areas namely Strategic ICT Leadership to obtain political will and commitment; ICT infrastructure for reliable and efficient access of information to all the citizens for them to be involved in business activities; Capacity building (Training, Research and Development) to have adequate and well skilled personnel in ICT to avoid becoming just recipients of inappropriate technologies.

Other focus areas of the policy include, legal and regulatory framework to enhance trust, security and safety amongst service providers and consumers; Content, and Universal Access creation are the key issues for sustainable business provision. Public, Manufacturing and Service sectors are also areas of concern where ICTs will help promote rapid economic growth. Tanzania like other countries, is in a challenging position of being part of the global economy, with its imperatives an innovation, speed and profit and therefore must embrace and harness new technology to succeed and participate in the new digital economy or else risk being left out and exposed to total dependency.

The National ICT Policy was developed through a participatory process which involved all key stakeholders. This was to ensure that the policy addresses almost all serious issues which hamper smooth and speedy social-economic progress. The policy also recognizes contributions made to the national economy by women and other disadvantaged groups and therefore spells out how best the groups can be assisted through opportunities for exercising their talents and in overcoming challenges of their lives (fight against poverty, ignorance and diseases and enhance wealth creation). The objectives of the policy are also in line with the National Development Vision 2025, Poverty Reduction Strategy, and those of the United Nations New Millenium Development Goals (UNMDGs)

**Mr. Chairman**, the Private sector's commitment greatly accounts for the high growth of the digital economy today and its success will greatly depend on their participation and involvement. Accordingly, the success of electronic commerce will require an effective partnership between the private and public sectors, with the private sector in the lead.

Another success story is the accomplishment of preparation of a practical and friendly sustainable ICT Policy Implementation Strategy. In October, 2004 a draft of Implementation Strategy was finalized and in January, 2005 it was submitted to the Government for consideration. The government discussed the draft strategy document during a Seminar for Permanent Secretaries which was held in Bagamoyo, on 11-12 March, 2005. In principle, the document was endorsed apart from few general comments which were made in order to come up with a comprehensive and most practical Strategy easy to implement and speedily realize. A copy of the strategy

document is now available and can be obtained in its soft form from the National ICT Coordination Office.

**Mr. Chairman,** this Strategy document is a general proposition and each sector group needs to identify and pick from it only those areas of its interest. It serves as an inspirational guide for the sectors to reformulate and refocus onto their most realistic sectoral strategies. It involves all stakeholders bottom up and vice versa. The Plans of action should be derived from the strategies, and we believe that in so doing, the process of integrating ICT into the economy will be a success and a home grown undertaking, thus sustainable.

I am delighted to note that a number of integration programs are underway. These include those of introducing ICT subjects in the education sector, strengthening local training colleges/universities and research institutions to enable them to train and generate experts in the ICT field to meet the country's fast growing demands in ICT research, hardware and software development, and the related skills. It is important to mention the on-going study on an 'ideal' national ICT broadband infrastructure backbone network intended to create cost effective access of information to the entire population and increase communication, thus improving peoples' standard of living. The success of the above initiatives will be greatly enhanced with proper and effective coordination of resources, effective mobilization and controlled use; planning and management of ICT programs. This aspiration will be achieved through creating intensive awareness about ICT to all the people, use the strategy document as an instrument for guiding all other public and private sector institutions in formulating their own strategies and plan of actions which suit their needs, within their environment. The Government and Tanzanians in general consider Integrating ICT in education system as one of the

effective and appropriate approaches to spreading the new knowledge culture towards an Information Society we aspire to become.

**Mr. Chairman,** Tanzania needs to have home-grown and sustainable ICT services that will best facilitate people in solving their problems and promote their development through the MKUKUTA. To achieve that goal, the issue of institutional arrangement and sustainability is crucial and needs further and continuous examination. Some of the actions which need to be done in order to realize the tangible results include Strengthening Institutional capacity, the Government to include ICT component in its key national Strategy Documents and plans, and set aside significant budgets for implementing ICT integration project activities. The important issue is to create conducive environment which allows promotion of ICT on a public-private partnership (PPPs) basis. Each of us must promote the use of ICT services in our places of work so as to realize the expected benefits.

However, our objectives and goals can be achieved if there is a close cooperation and mutual support amongst stakeholders. We have to work as a team in this endeavour if we are to cope with the fast growing global ICT based economy. You as experts need to meet, chart out your roles on ICT, share information and exchange knowledge and experience in order to implement ICT activities for improved national socio-economic performance. The Government is aware of the importance of proper Institutional Framework to deal with day-to-day operations and implementation of ICT activities in the country. Tanzania Communications regulatory Authority is in place to perform the regulatory functions of the sector. The Ministry harbours the small National ICT Coordination Office, which needs further strengthening for it to fully and efficiently deliver the expected services. The Government is working on the need for establishing a

fully fledged department of Communications to be responsible for all ICT related matters under the Ministry of Communications and Transport. It is our hope that the decision will be obtained in the near future (before end of 2005) as part of speeding up ICT integration process.

**Mr. Chairman,** I expect you to discuss and agree on appropriate working frameworks amongst the various initiatives that will better coordinate resources for ICT development to further enhance the growth of the national economy. The Government is ready to work together and support any efforts by stakeholders and will appreciate to receive any kind of technical or administrative recommendations for effective and efficient national ICT services. Such feedback can be obtained from various ICT fora like the ICT contact persons' meetings, ICT Infrastructure stakeholders' meetings, including the DPG-ICT meetings which are expected held monthly or bimonthly. Plans are being developed by our ICT Coordination Office to establish a regular ICT stakeholders forum that includes across section of stakeholders similar to the gathering here.

**Mr. Chairman,** May I once again thank you for inviting me to open this meeting and I urge all participants to contribute in the discussions with a view to making the workshop realize meaningful results. The Government is ready to cooperate further more within the framework of public-private partnership approach. Finally I would like to express my special thanks to our Development Partners who have constantly been supporting the Government in its efforts of re-organizing and promoting ICT services for Development. These include the UNDP, the Government of Sweden through SIDA, CIDA, USAID, JICA, NORAD, etc, We urge them and other partners to further increase their support in ICT so that it can reach the rural people. I urge UNDP



and other partners to further to support the National ICT Coordination Office for improved performance.

With this few remarks I once again thank you for attending this workshop and now wish to officially declare it open.

**THANK YOU ALL FOR LISTENING TO ME!!!**