

**SPEECH BY HON. BAHAME TOM NYANDUGA, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE
COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOOD GOVERNANCE, IN
COMMEMORATION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS DAY IN AFRICA AT THE NEW
AFRICA HOTEL, DSM, 21/10/2015**

*Hon. Alhaj Ali Hassan Mwinyi, former President of the United Republic of Tanzania,
Deputy Attorney General,
Representative of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and
International Cooperation,
Excellencies, High Commissioners and Ambassadors representing member states of
the African Union,
Representative of the African Court on Human and Peoples Rights,
Representatives of the International Organizations,
The Resident Director, Help Age International Tanzania,
Honorable Commissioners and the Executive Secretary of the Commission for
Human Rights and Good Governance,
Various government officials of the United Republic,
Representatives of Civil Societies Organizations,
Older Persons who are present,
Dear Journalists,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Asaalam aleikum.

Your Excellency, the guest of honor, invited guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere gratitude to you all, for agreeing to join us in celebrating the African Human Rights day, which is being commemorated in Tanzania for the first time. Despite your tight schedules and heavy responsibilities, you accepted our invitation and agreed to be with us here today.

Your Excellency, Retired President Mwinyi, you will remember that when we came to extend the invitation and explain to you the main theme of the event, as well as explain the motto of our event, namely “The **Safety and Welfare of Older Persons in Tanzania**”, you did not hesitate to accept the invitation notwithstanding the short notice and you have come to join us today.

Let me once again, Your Excellency, the state on behalf of the Commission, on behalf of HelpAge International, an international organization that assisted us in organizing this event today, and on my own behalf, how grateful we are for your acceptance of our invitation.

Also, let me take this opportunity to thank all invited guest who managed to join us in celebrating this important day for Africa, and Tanzania. I would like to recognize the

presence of senior Government officials, Your Excellencies High Commissioners and Ambassadors representing the member states of the African Union, the Representative of the African Court of Human Rights, Representatives of United Nations agencies, representatives of the European Community, the Director of Help Age International, and our elders who present, who are the key stakeholders of this day.

Your Excellency,

Let me explain briefly about the essence of this commemoration. This day takes us back to 1979 when African Heads of State agreed to establish The African Charter on Human and People's Rights. On June 27th, 1981 during their annual summit meeting which was held in Nairobi, Kenya, they adopted the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, and five years later on October 21st, 1986 following the requisite ratifications, the implementation of this Agreement began. This is why this day is commemorated as **AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS DAY**.

Our slogan to commemorate this day in Tanzania this year is "**Welfare and Protection of the Older Persons in Tanzania.**"

Tanzania signed this treaty in 1981 and ratified it on 18th February 1984. The aim of this commemoration is to remind our government, the Tanzanian society and public in general of the need to respect, protect, preserve and promote human rights, including the rights of the older persons, which is necessary for ensuring the well-being of society as whole.

Your Excellency,

On this occasion, the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance in collaboration with Help Age International organized a workshop of experts from government and civil society with a view of generating ideas on how to strengthen the protection and welfare of older persons in Tanzania. Three topics were presented and discussed at the workshop. These topics are as follows;

1. The African Human Rights system,
2. The legal protection of the rights of the older persons in Tanzania; and
3. The challenges facing older persons in Tanzania and the world.

Overall participants shared their experiences on the situation affecting the human rights of older persons. This workshop concluded with a number of resolutions and recommendations that will be presented during the winding up of our meeting today, and will subsequently be submitted to the government.

The Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance believes that the implementation of these resolutions and recommendations will facilitate access to the rights of older persons, including enforcement of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, and other African human rights instruments, including the

Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, otherwise known as the Maputo Protocol of 2003.

Your Excellency,

Despite some progress recorded, as was evident from the various reports presented at the workshop, which show an improvement in the human rights situation in the country, there are many challenges that hinder implementation of the rights of older persons. Some of these challenges include incidences of the killing of older persons due to superstitious beliefs, and the general lack of awareness of human rights within society. Older persons have been killed because of issues related to property, whereby close relatives and even family members conspire or arrange the murders and finally take their property especially cattle, land and houses, earned legitimately by these older persons, during their youth age.

Guest of Honour, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Another challenge that older persons face is the absence of a legal framework that protects their rights in the country. Since the National Aging Policy was adopted in 2003, it is now 12 years, and no law on the protection of rights of older persons has been enacted. The enactment of such legislation requires commitment by government which will ensure that older persons are well protected under the law.

At this juncture let me take this opportunity to congratulate the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar for having adopted policy and measures to address the rights of the older persons. It is my hope that based on the recommendation that were adopted yesterday, the government of the United Republic will adopt laws for guaranteeing the rights of our elders.

Your Excellency Guest of Honour

Let me close by saying that it is the common duty of every individual, community, the government, civil society and the private sector to work towards the role of the Welfare and Protection of the older Persons in Tanzania. It is therefore my hope that, as we mark African Human Rights day, let us bear in mind that each one of us is an advocate for the rights of older persons, and human rights in general, which is key for creating a nation of peace and sustainable development.

Your Excellency,

Having said all that, allow me to thank you once again for accepting our invitation to be the Guest of Honour. In addition I would also like to thank all invited guests, who came to commemorate the African Human Rights Day.

Thank you for your attention.