

**SPEECH BY H.E. DR. JAKAYA MRISHO KIKWETE,
FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF
TANZANIA AND CHIEF GUEST AT THE 7TH UONGOZI
INSTITUTE GRADUATION, 17 MAY, 2024,
MLIMANI CITY CONFERENCE HALL, DAR ES SALAAM**

Hon. George Boniface Simbachawene (MP), Minister of State, President's Office – Public Service Management and Good Governance;
Eng. Zena Ahmed Said, Chief Secretary of the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar and Secretary of the Revolutionary Council;
His Excellency Amb. Ombeni Sefue, Chairperson of the UONGOZI Institute Board of Directors and the Board Members here present;
Mr. Majula Mululi Mahendeka, Permanent Secretary, State House
Her Excellency Theresa Zitting, Ambassador of Finland in Tanzania,
Mr. Kadari Singo, Chief Executive Officer, UONGOZI Institute;
Ms. Katherine Gifford, Deputy Representative of UN Women;
Dr. Mikko Laukkanen, Academic Director, Aalto University Executive Education and Professional Development;
Dr. Lucy Newman, Chief Executive Officer of UNECA's Africa Private Sector Summit;
Heads of Government Institution and UONGOZI Institute Stakeholders;
Resource Persons and Facilitators for Executive Education Programmes;
Graduates and Participants for Postgraduate Diploma in Leadership;
Media representatives;
Invited Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen;
Honourable Minister,

Allow me to begin by thanking you for inviting me to officiate at this auspicious occasion of the 7th graduation ceremony of the UONGOZI Institute. I know, this time, around these graduating, are students of the long-term programmes of Postgraduate Diploma in Leadership, Certificate in Leadership, and Women's Leadership Programme. To Ancient Greeks the number seven, holds a unique significance as it symbolizes perfection and completion. So you, the graduands of today, should consider yourself lucky and special. I hope to see luck follow you as walk out of the doors of this hall. Inshallah.

As we mark this memorable moment today, I am overwhelmed with immense joy and satisfaction to witness what this Institute of the African Leadership for Sustainable Development has become. I feel proud to have been part of the thinking which translated into the establishment of this wonderful institution. The Uongozi Institute, as it is popularly known, has registered tremendous growth and development in the one and a half decades of its existence so far.

Let me tell you a story behind the establishment of this institute. It all began in 2002 when the government of Finland convened the Helsinki Conference where global issues of interest were discussed. Globalization took the center stage. The consultation among stakeholders which followed after the conference, resulted in the Helsinki Process on Globalization and Democracy. It was a joint initiative between Finland and Tanzania. I was our country's foreign minister at that time. I co-chaired the process with my counterpart the Foreign Minister of Finland H. E. Erkki Tuomioja. We had a formidable team of prominent global citizens drawn from all walks of life: governments, international organizations, academia, private sector,

civil society organizations, and prominent individuals. Professor Joseph Semboja was Secretary of the process.

We worked from 2002 to 2005. It was when I was President of our dear country that together with President of Finland we presented our report to the UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon. As we were working on the recommendations, Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja asked me if there was a specific request for Africa. I said let's establish a leadership training institute to address Africa's leadership deficits. He agreed and that's how Uongozi Institute came to be born. Also, don't be surprised that Prof. Joseph Semboja was its first CEO. With regard to the place to host the Institute, I proposed Tanzania and fortunately it was accepted by the counterpart.

It took time to complete the process leading to formal establishment of the Institute. It was for reasons of thinking through the necessary things. On the 28 of July, 2010 that I signed a Presidential Instrument [No. 274] to establish the Institute of African Leadership for Sustainable Development (also popularly known as the UONGOZI Institute). At the time, we had in mind one vision of fostering sustainable development through leadership education. Today, seeing this vision materialize, is nothing short of a dream come true to me.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The journey of the UONGOZI Institute has been marked by unwavering joint dedication from the board of directors, the management team and various stakeholders from the government and the private sector. We are particularly grateful for the cooperation and support of the Government of Finland in the growth and development of the Institute. This steadfast commitment of our two governments

over the years has been instrumental in nurturing leaders who can drive positive change here in Tanzania and beyond.

In a special way it is gratifying to note the remarkable strides made in promoting gender equity in education and training at the Institute. This is evident in today's graduation, that the representation of women in executive education courses has nearly doubled since their establishment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Graduates,

Tanzania's and the Africa's collective aspiration for peace, unity and prosperity requires not just ambition, but also active involvement of leaders in programs like those offered by the Institute. The development task before us is complex but crucial and it needs leadership. Poverty, food crisis, climate change, diseases, ignorance, and underdevelopment in general, are the kind of challenges that continue to confront our respective nations and dear continent. These challenges demand the unwavering attention and concerted effort of current and future leaders like yourselves. May we all rise to this challenge.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we celebrate this momentous occasion, it's heartwarming to see participants from several African countries graduating and therefore underscoring the Institute's regional impact and relevance. I am told we have amongst us participants and graduates from five (5) African countries of Kenya, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Nigeria and Malawi. I believe we will get more in future. Let's do better branding of our institution.

To all graduates today, I extend my heartfelt congratulations on your momentous achievement. You have attained an important milestone in your leadership journey. Your dedication and hard work, under the guidance of your tutors and supported by your families and friends, have brought you to this great day of celebration. Congratulations!

It is my earnest belief that throughout your time at this esteemed Institute, you have been equipped with the knowledge, skills, and leadership competencies needed to make you perform better and succeed in the dynamic landscape of the 21st century.

Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, the founding father of the Tanzanian nation, Tanzania, once said, “.....Education is not a way to escape poverty, it is a way of fighting it.”

Let me emphasize on his wise counsel by saying that leadership is also about confronting poverty head-on and overcoming it through continuous learning and putting in place sustainable development measures. It goes without saying that education is a formidable weapon against poverty. In this regards, I commend the Uongozi Institute for embodying this ethos by nurturing leaders who are lifelong learners and agents of positive change in their respective societies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I conclude, I want to underscore one essential message to the graduates. Critical to your growth as leaders is a commitment to reading and expanding your knowledge. Embrace the opportunity to immerse yourselves in literature, for it is through reading that you will

deepen your understanding, broaden your horizons of knowledge and perspectives, and enable you to make informed decisions.

It would be remiss of me if I did not acknowledge and commend the Institute for setting up the Resource Centre at the Julius Nyerere International Convention Centre here in Dar es Salaam. As alumni, please do not hesitate to be regular visitors to the Centre. I have been asked and agreed to be the Guest of honour during its opening in a few days to come.

As you embark on the next phase of your leadership journey, I beseech you to apply the lessons and insights gained from your time at the Institute for the betterment of your organizations and society at large. Your journey doesn't end here but it is just starting. Go on to live the legacy of leadership excellence fostered by the UONGOZI Institute.

It has been demonstrated that where there is strong and committed leadership, progress is achievable. Through good leadership, nations have prospered but where there are leadership deficits, nations have stagnated, and at worst regressed. As leaders, all of you have to play your role effectively. As Mwalimu Julius Nyerere once said, "It can be done, play your part". Of course you can!

Once again, I say congratulations to our graduates. May you go forth with confidence, inspired by your experiences at the Institute, and may you continue to lead with integrity, empathy, a commitment to inspire positive change, and the spirit to serve.

Congratulations!
Hongerani sana!