

THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT CELEBRATES 100 DAYS OF HER EXCELLENCY MADAM PRESIDENT SAMIA SULUHU HASSAN IN OFFICE

WE CELEBRATE HER EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT SAMIA SULUHU HASSAN'S FIRST 100 DAYS IN OFFICE AS THE FIRST FEMALE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA, FOR BRINGING INTO OUR POLITICAL CULTURE AN ALTERNATIVE LEADERSHIP STYLE CHARACTERIZED BY CIVILITY, HUMILITY, FIRMNESS, & THE RULE OF LAW.

When President Samia was sworn into office, she had to reassure some of the Tanzanians who were doubtful of her capability to take over the presidency from the late President Magufuli who passed away on 17th March this year (2021) when she said,

"I know, there will be some few people who worry that due to my gender, I will not be able to fulfill all that I have said here. I want to use this platform (the Parliament) to allay their fears that, first of all, Allah did not create a weak brain for a woman and a brain with great potential for a man. Growth and mental alertness depend on the community around you and the activities you have. I want to assure you that I have been brought up in the right society and that I have enough experience in the Government and in my Political Party CCM. Therefore, I am confident that I have the power to lead this Nation. Second, I will not do this work alone but I will work with all Tanzanians.

In our opinion, this was a significant **breakthrough**, which has set a stage and defined her journey for the past 100 days. For the past 100 days, we have watched her Excellency using 'her **power**' to:

Define the principles which are going to guide her leadership: the rule of law, freedom of expression, inclusiveness and gender equality, accountability, and democratic principles.

"The first and most important thing we will pay attention to in these five years is to continue to protect and maintain the values of our nation, namely Peace, Unity and Solidarity, Independence of our country, the Glorious Revolution of Zanzibar and our Union. As you know, peace and unity are the key to development in any nation. Therefore, I urge my fellow Tanzanians to work together to protect these values".

These principles are constitutional principles which ought to guide all individuals, especially those in positions of power. During these 100 days, we have witnessed her Excellency translating some of these principles into operational practices. At a personal level, **'she walks the talk'**. She has taken on the presidency with humility and respect, but with firmness in matters of accountability, the rule of law, and consensus building, hence earning respect from the majority of peace-loving citizens and particularly us, the women of this country.

She brings into our country the additional value of enhancing a political culture characterized by civility, personal integrity, and respect of law.

Within these 100 days, she has set the stage that is gradually transforming the political landscape through initiating national dialogues with various actors, including : the elderly from whom she

gets their wisdom, the youth whom she inspires and expertly lends her ears to listen to their views on matters related to their interests; the private sector, to enlist their trust in investing in the country, service workers to listen to their long-standing grievances; women to get their views and share her aspiration of and commitment to promoting gender equality; religious leaders to enlist their moral support in building national unity; members of opposition parties to rebuild trust and regain consensus in matters of national interest; and finally the leadership cadre to demand accountability and respect of the rule of law.

The national dialogue is intended to strengthen Unity and Peace as the nation focuses more on what constitutes our National Interests within a context of multiple diversities which are accommodated. Peace and Unity are pillars which impact our (women's) daily lives differently in our diverse positions. Whenever there are tensions and conflict, it is women and children, particularly the girl child, who disproportionately carry the burden of conflicts either as rape victims of war, experience homelessness or become refugees with their children.

Reactivating the principles of rule of law, freedom of speech, and organizing.

There are a few steps the President has taken which demonstrate a move towards enhancing respect for the rule of law. For example, the arrest of a District Commissioner who had been acting as a powerful autocrat and allegedly engaging in criminal offences sent a powerful message to all political appointees that none is above the law. Similarly, the release of religious leaders who had been in custody for a very long time (9 years) without a right to bail due to the nature of accusations made against them, sent another powerful message to the justices that **“justice delayed is justice denied”¹**. The dismissal of charges by the High Court against members of political parties is yet another signal of respecting justice and the rule of law.

Recently, we have witnessed the DPP changing charges on individuals who had been accused under the Economic Sabotage (Special Provisions) Act, which denies such individuals a right to bail, to lesser charges which give such individuals a right to bail. Some business people and politicians who had their bank accounts frozen without any court case have had their accounts opened (case of Hon. Freeman Mbowe). Indeed, the ‘narrative is slowly changing’.

Absence of the rule of law leads to the victimization of women and girls particularly in gender-based violence including sexual corruption. Our main concern here is, the very fact that there are loopholes in our books of law which allow people in power and authority to temper these principles which are enshrined in our constitution threatens the sustainability of the measures which are currently being undertaken. For example, the DPP is not given a time limit for investigation, hence innocent persons have remained in custody for a decade, only to be declared innocent. And when found guilty, they have already served a long time in custody. This is an area we wish to work with the current regime in identifying legal barriers which confer excessive powers to duty bearers who oftentimes abuse such powers.

¹ She said this when she was swearing in newly nominated judges on May 17, 2021.

Related to the Rule of law is the freedom of expression, the right to be informed and democracy. This is well articulated by her Excellency when she said,

“...Other areas include continuing to protect the foundations of democracy and freedom of the people as well as the media. As you know, freedom and democracy are the foundations of peace in the country and also help to stimulate political, economic, and social development. However, I would like to say that there is no freedom or democracy that is not protected and governed by laws, procedures and regulations.... Thus, in addition to democracy and the freedom of the people, I urge Tanzanians to be determined to carry out our activities in accordance with the provisions of the laws of the land”.

During a swearing-in ceremony of newly appointed Permanent Secretaries on April 6th 2021, Her Excellency ordered the Minister of Information to lift the ban on media outlets which were banned on the grounds of criticizing the government stating, *“I am told you revoked licenses of some media outlets, including some online television stations. You should lift the ban but tell them to follow the law and government guidelines”.* The regulations, she said, must be open and punishment issued by authorities must be in line with the specific offence.

As we celebrate this move, we are also concerned that existing laws grant the Minister of Information powers to deregister a media outlet for reasons not related to the abuse of law. Again, this is an area we wish to support her Excellency in reviewing the media laws in view of removing loopholes which allow a person in power to silence voices which are critical to the development of democratic governance.

Commitment to Gender Equality Principles

In a meeting at the State house with the Under Secretary General and Executive Director of UN Women, Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka on Strengthening Partnerships ahead of the Generation Equality Forum, President Samia expressed her commitment to fulfilling the vision outlined in the Beijing Declaration and attain the targets for 50/50 gender parity in leadership. She further admitted that while Tanzania is far from attaining the 50/50 targets, she will work towards achieving this goal during her leadership. She also offered to lead the Economic Justice and Rights Action Coalition ahead of the Generation Equality Forum in Paris starting on 30th June 2021.

She re-emphasized this commitment when addressing the Women of Tanzania, on 6th June 2021, by assuring them that she believes in gender equality principles, is committed to ensuring that women’s rights are respected, and that she will appoint (qualified) women to take up leadership positions.

The President further acknowledged that her current position has resulted from long term struggles by women in demanding participation in leadership positions including top level leadership. She further admitted the multiple barriers which women face in attaining economic empowerment. In this area, she committed to task responsible agencies to ensure women’s access

to loans including the mandatory allocation of 4% of local government funds, as well as soliciting formal banks to open windows for soft loans for women.

The current composition of the leadership which she nominated includes two categories of leadership which nearly attained the threshold of 50/50, that is Regional Administrative Officers of whom 46% are women; and Judges, of whom 43% are women. Other than the two categories of leadership which nearly reached the Maputo Protocol and AU Solemn Declaration of 50%; her other appointees so far, (except for DCs) have not reached the minimum benchmark of the SADC Declaration of 30% which was later updated by the Maputo Declaration into the 50/50 benchmark. For example, out of the 23 Cabinet Ministers, only 5 female full ministers (22%, a decline from 30% in 2012); out of the 26 Deputy Ministers, only 6 (23%) are females; out of 24 Permanent Secretaries, only 4 (16%) are females and out of 24 Deputy Permanent Secretaries only 5 (21%), Out of 26 Regional Commissioners, 5 (19%) are females. Out of the 139 District Commissioners, only 44 (32%) were women. The District Commissioners had a good mix of young people who were composed of 28% males and 20% females (these were under the age of 35).

What accounts for gender gaps in nomination processes?

We are aware of the many structural, systemic, and institutional factors which act as a barrier in nominating women to various positions in our context. First, the invisibility of women with capabilities and qualifications for positions of leadership. In our current context, the issue of capability and qualification no longer holds as the country has invested a lot in education for women, in leadership skills as well as in having role models like her Excellency which inspire young women enter into leadership spaces. In a male dominated system, the competition for such positions might result in exclusion of names of women with all the potentials from reaching the nominating authority. The social cultural norms and values do define different criteria for assessing women's capacities. This might again result in the exclusion of potential names.

In our opinion, this is an area we wish to work closely with the nominating bodies including her Excellency in profiling names of women who have all the necessary capabilities, passion, and commitment to take up leadership positions.

Defined the Key Priority focus areas for the Coming Five Years of her Reign.

Within the 100 days of leadership, her Excellency, Madam President has also defined the key priority focus areas for the coming five years. Although she carries over the priority focus areas of the previous regime which she was a party to, she has re-emphasized certain aspects which are critical to women's economic rights.

Private Sector as an Engine of Growth

With the help of an enabling regulatory environment created by the Government, Her Excellency reaffirmed the private sector's role both as a driver and engine needed to propel economic growth in the country. On the enabling environment, she specifically stated:

“In addition, we will take concrete steps to improve the business and investment climate in the country to attract the private sector to participate more effectively in economic activities. The focus will be on restoring confidence in investors and providing incentives for talented investors (Strategic Investors), including enabling investment to be done quickly. There will be specific qualifications and requirements that will be clearly set out in identifying strategic projects that will be eligible for tax incentives or other incentives. The issue of access to capital must also be taken seriously. As you know, for the private sector to participate effectively, we must improve the investment and business environment... Similarly, we will continue to work closely with the Private Sector by recognizing that they are the key to economic growth. To demonstrate this, among other things, the Government is partnering with the Private Sector Foundation (TPSF) to establish a system to receive and address the challenges of investors in the country through the internet. The aim of the System is to simplify the handling of investor challenges in a faster way and to bring efficiency in serving them.”

In this respect she has opened dialogue with the private sector re-affirming her commitment to facilitate an enabling regulatory environment for investment; she has instructed TRA to improve the modality of tax collection and to avoid unnecessary confrontation with tax payers, and further instructed for shorter and smoother facilitation of foreigner work permits processing.

She also initiated a dialogue with East African partner states particularly with Kenya due to strained relationship emerging from the way both parties handled cross-border traders during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as nominated a seasoned female diplomat, Hon. Liberata Mulamula, as a Minister of Foreign Affairs to steer up and strengthen international economic diplomatic relations.

As we know, the private sector is motivated by maximization of profit, and not the rights of citizens. In this respect, we request her Excellency to task responsible government agencies to ensure that the private sector respects existing laws of the land including non-discriminatory practices in hiring, firing and promotion, as well as remunerations.

Priority Focus Areas

Her Excellency further re-assured the nation of her commitment to continue with the previous regime’s priority sectors in both productive and social service sectors, which includes: manufacturing, construction, mining, tourism, creative industries, energy as well as social sector services including education, health, water, housing and social protection.

Indeed, these priority sectors have a potential of contributing to women’s economic opportunities through employment creation, in promoting their participation in business and trade, in value addition in agricultural production particularly in agribusiness. Alternatively, if not regulated, the growth of the productive sectors can easily exclude a big fraction of Tanzanians particularly women. Tanzania has a historical experience to learn from. During the post-colonial period when the newly independent state embarked on a modernization agenda we witnessed what the then President of this Nation Mwl. Julius Nyerere said, “Development of **Things** and not of **People**” GDP growth rate during this era was 6% but the per capita income remained very low.

Mechanization of farming left out the majority of small-scale farmers, particularly women. The question is how are we drawing lessons from the past experiences?

The main challenge ahead of us, during this phase, is how to promote broad-based and inclusive growth that leaves no one behind in a private sector driven economy?

Evaluation of the implementation of the FYDP II by ESRF (2021) made the following observations which have gender equality implications.

“Growth has not been sufficiently broad-based. Growth is concentrated in telecommunications, financial services, retail trade, mining, tourism, construction and manufacturing; while these are important, a sector like agriculture and related activities are missing. The sectors with the highest rates of growth are predominantly capital-intensive and concentrated in large urban areas; rural areas where the majority of the poor population lives have been left behind. Growth has largely failed to affect the great challenges, generating more employment and additional jobs in all parts of society and improving incomes for the vast majority of the population. There is the opportunity to focus on promoting broad based growth. One major cause for the lack of poverty reduction despite economic growth is that Tanzania has not succeeded in raising productivity in agriculture over the last decades. Tanzania remains predominantly agricultural, with about 65 percent of the population living in rural areas. Majority of Tanzania's poor live in rural households. Growth in the agricultural sector remains low, at around 4 percent per year, and in the rural areas the growth in productivity can barely keep up with population growth. The birth rates in rural areas are high (6.1 births per woman compared to 3.7 in the urban areas)” ESRF (2021) (URT).

Expressing similar sentiments, Her Excellency acknowledged this in her address to the Parliament when she said,

“Mr. Speaker; as you know, more than 65% of Tanzanians are farmers, who are engaged in CULTIVATION, LIVESTOCK AND FISHERIES. Therefore, it is a dream for us to imagine that we will accelerate economic growth and tackle poverty without focusing too much on those sectors. It is true that over the years, we have had some success in the agricultural sector. For example, this sector currently accounts for 100 percent of food in the country, 60 percent of industrial raw materials, and 27 percent. 7 GDP and 25 percent foreign exchange. However, despite these successes, the agricultural sector is still facing many challenges, but the biggest is the low productivity...”

Women are disproportionately affected by gender-related challenges in the agricultural sector which include inadequate skills and knowledge; inequitable access to productive resources, especially land; inappropriate technologies; and inappropriate socio-cultural practices and beliefs (URT: 2016). Additionally, the size of land owned by women is smaller than land owned by men. Time Poverty is yet another challenge which women face in the agricultural sector. Women aged 18 – 49 years of age, spend 277 minutes each day which is more than 4 hours of unpaid care

work compared to 76 minutes for men which is less than 1½ hours per day on similar jobs. Men therefore spend just 5% of their total day on unpaid care work compared to 14% of women.

For any growth to be inclusive and pro-poor, it must involve substantial growth of agricultural productivity and allow most of the rural population (particularly women) to benefit from such growth through participation in improved technology, in value addition of their products through engagement in agribusiness, in marketing their produce internally and externally.

The measure she commits to undertake in promoting agricultural growth is well articulated in her inaugural speech as she said,

“We will complete the construction of existing irrigation schemes and ensure they operate efficiently. And here I want to point out that the Government will start levying fees for farmers who use these schemes to cover management and operational costs. Similarly, we will continue the construction of warehouses and warehouses in various parts of the country to eliminate the problem of post-harvest losses. With regard to pastoralism, as I have already said, we aim to abandon nomadic pastoralism. In pursuit of this goal, we will focus on promoting modern animal husbandry”.

In our opinion, modernization of the agricultural sector is unavoidable, if the sector is to keep pace with industrialization of the economy. Our main concern however is, how do we support the small farmers, particularly women, the nomadic pastoralist, the fishermen/women to be part of this modernization agenda? History has taught us that if this is to be done blindly, the small-scale farmer, the pastoralists, and the fisherpersons will be excluded from the growth process.

Much as we wish to promote and attract foreign investors, we equally need to protect our citizens from being driven out of their business, out of their land, and out of their sustainable livelihoods.

We might also need to draw lessons from the past, as we learn from other countries like Botswana and Ghana. In Botswana for example, no foreign company can operate without partnering with local companies. This country has made huge investments in women’s education, hence the multiplier effect of economic growth on women as they participate in skilled jobs. In Ethiopia, construction companies are tasked to partner with local companies. The country has also opened doors to their diaspora who invest in Real Estate which create jobs to nationals. Similarly, Ghana as it seeks to promote external investors, has given priority to the diaspora who will have to partner with locals.

Prioritizing Human Development through investing in Social Sector Services

Her Excellency highlighted notable progress in all social sectors for the past five years. In Health she committed to:

“In the five years to 2025, we will strengthen access to health care by continuing to build infrastructure, increase staff, medical equipment, medicines and reagents. In addition, efforts to reduce maternal and child mortality will be continued. When I was Vice

President, I launched the 'Increase and Keep Them Safe' Campaign to emphasize the responsibility of all stakeholders in reducing maternal and child mortality.”

In our opinion, most health-related problems, particularly maternal and child mortality go beyond medical courses. Some of these causes include: Violence against Women. Official data reveal that 8% of pregnant women have experienced physical violence by intimate partners during pregnancy. Teen pregnancy is yet another course of maternal and infant mortality. Lack of child care support services is yet another cause of infant mortality. In other words, while medical related focus is essential in addressing both maternal and child mortality, the non-medical aspects are equally important. Hence a multi-sectoral approach is needed which addresses the general inequalities in our social economic and political context.

Social Protection

When addressing the Women of Tanzania, Her Excellency President Samia Suluhu Hassan admitted that more than 70% of women in the labour force are in the informal sector. This implies the majority of women do not benefit from the formal pension schemes. Given the existing wage gap which exists in formal employment, in favor of male employees, it also means more women are more likely to end up with pension schemes which do not sustain livelihood after retirement. Thirdly, for formal employees, the monthly payments are never subjected to changes to correspond with wage increases in the formal sector or even to respond to inflation in the economy. And yet pension funds have been growing as a result of seed monies from all pensioners.

The current initiative of instituting universal social protection schemes ought to go hand in hand with initiatives of reforming the law to enable all pensioners to sustain a decent life after their long-term service to the nation.

In the education sector, Her Excellency Madam President Samia Suluhu Hasan admitted that the Fee Free Education Policy which will continue to guide basic education during her era, has opened doors for both girls and boys to enroll and that girls have outperformed boys in terms of enrollment.

While admitting that gender parity index has been achieved at all levels of education, we are still concerned that a significant number of the school age population has been left out of school, both females and males for a variety of reasons. The continued existence of out of school kids is a threat to society's social fabric and is an economic cost to the country. For girls, they are trapped in early marriage and or teen pregnancy which shatter their dreams for further education, as they get further trapped in multidimensional poverty. For young boys they are trapped in drugs, and or in petty crimes.

As the sector is embarking on a process of curriculum review as per Her Excellency's directive, aspects which ought to be addressed include: focusing on pedagogical skills for teachers to be able to handle emerging challenges which young adolescent face including reproductive health,



life skills to include managing peer pressure as well as how they handle multiple messages from the media.

In conclusion, with support from Women Fund Tanzania Trust, we, Women's Rights Organizations, members of the Coalition of Women Constitution Elections and Leadership, and the African Women Leaders Network, are confident that Her Excellency, President Samia Suluhu Hasan has demonstrated within these 100 days, amazing capability, determination and passion to move the country toward middle income status, without leaving anyone behind. Her success will very much depend upon collective and individual accountability first by the leadership cadres she has entrusted responsibility of assisting her, while the rest of us give her all the necessary support.