

Introductory Speech

By

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**At the Round table on the Role of Research in Development
in Tanzania**

**Kisenga's LAPF International Conference Centre,
Kijitonyama, 30th July, 2015**

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen; Good morning!

This is a round table where there is going to be a lot of speaking – including myself; so I did not really plan to make a formal speech. I am however obliged to say two things:

First, on behalf of the Board and Staff of STIPRO, is to say a very warm welcome to you all to this nice room, and to very sincerely thank you for accepting our invitation to participate in the round table on the role of research in development in Tanzania (You have done it in spite of your very busy schedule, which is a clear testimony that the subject matter before us has touched the hearts of many; and we are so very much pleased!)

Special thanks go to our guest of honor, Prof. Cuthbert Kimambo, Deputy Vice Chancellor responsible for Research and Knowledge Exchange from the University of Dar es Salaam for agreeing to officiate at this gathering. We have very special respect for this university, not only because it is the mother of most public universities in Tanzania, but also because we have a much closer working relationship with this university, than any other. So thank you very much Prof.

Second and major reason I am now standing before you is to briefly state the objectives of the roundtable

Distinguished participants, this is a round table on the role of research in development, and because in front of me are accomplished scholars, professors, research leaders from different organizations, I dare not say anything on this subject – I have personally come to learn – and this is one of the major objectives of this gathering.

This notwithstanding however, I am obliged to say why we decided to convene this round table: it is the idea we at STIPRO came up with, although we had to test it on a number of the important participants present or represented here today before actually daring to do it; to these I say thank you very much once again for your contribution in the organization of this event.

Distinguished Participants

There are two major reasons why decided to organize this round table.

First is the result of our own research: among the subjects we research on, is research itself – research policy is the responsibility of policy researchers: many of you know STIPRO is an independent think tank dealing with policy research in science, technology and innovation. Given this mandate, we interact a lot with researchers. Through this we realized that researchers, as individuals and as institutions, have their own little challenges and complaints surrounding the research enterprise in Tanzania. As a result we thought of bringing together the researchers and associated institutions dealing with research to speak as one voice.

Second is our own observation – it appears to us that – as innovation is rapidly gaining recognition in development debates –the debate on research at **the national level** is waning away as if the two are not mutually reinforcing. We are also noticing narrowing scope of research in development debates - almost exclusively on natural and engineering sciences; and in relation to its use by the private sector.

Distinguished participants, equally important are the use of research by other stakeholders in development, especially the governments, civil society and the media; and most relevant research for this is social science research: As renowned scholar of social science research Björn Wittrock, puts it: “**No credible public policy can be developed, no market interaction can occur, and no credible statement in the public sphere can be made, that does not refer explicitly or implicitly to the findings and concepts of the social and human sciences**”.

Distinguished participants, for the above two reasons we decided to convene this round table so as to have in-depth discussion on the challenges surrounding the research enterprise in Tanzania, and I believe that answers to these challenges do lie within our reach; and it is my sincere belief that talking about this in a forum like this one is an important step forward towards finding these answers. Let me at this juncture, very sincerely thank the TTI - our main partners in the work we do, including the organization of this round table, for their tireless support – technical, moral and financial

Finally, I would like to inform you that we will produce a short brief basing on the major issues that will be raised for use by different stakeholders. But above all, I do hope the forum will have an immediate impact at the individual, institutional, and national levels in the way we think and plan for research for the development of our country.

Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen; thank you very much for your kind attention