

OPENING SPEECH BY PROF. CUTHBERT KIMAMBO

**AT THE ROUNDTABLE ON THE ROLE OF RESEARCH IN DEVELOPMENT
IN TANZANIA, HELD AT THE LAPF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
CENTRE, DAR ES SALAAM,**

THURSDAY, 30TH JULY 2015

Dr. Adalgot Komba, *Chairman, Board of Directors, Science Technology and Innovation Policy Research Organisation (STIPRO),*

Dr. Bitrina Diyamett, *Executive Director, STIPRO,*

Workshop Participants,

Invited Guests,

Members of the Press,

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Good morning!

It is great pleasure to be invited to officiate at this important event on the “**Role of Research in Development in Tanzania**”. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Research Organisation (STIPRO) for organizing this roundtable at the time when **most universities are rethinking their research agenda....**

Let me also express my profound appreciations to the participants of this roundtable for finding time to attend this round table. I

understand that among the participants are Deputy Vice Chancellors, Research Directors and senior researchers who are normally very busy. I am also happy to note that government officials, private sector, donor community and the press are in attendance despite their extremely busy offices – thank you very much all for finding time to be here today.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Given this unique representation, I am confident that the discussions will result into effective deliberations regarding the role of research in development, and challenges and opportunities surrounding the research enterprise in Tanzania.

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me take this opportunity to take note of the crucial role STIPRO is playing in capacity building in knowledge for development. Specifically, I make mention of the STIPRO's efforts – in collaboration with UDSM - in building research capacity in the area of innovation and development. Two areas of indulges are worth mentioning here; first is support to masters' students' dissertations at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS); and second, the development of the innovation and development modules at the masters level at the College of Engineering and Technology (CoET).

I urge STIPRO to keep up the good work it is doing, and further strengthening its relationship with the university for the benefit of the social and economic development of our country.

Distinguished Participants,

Research in both natural sciences and social sciences aims at two major goals. The first purpose is to generate knowledge that contributes to increase in productivity and production of new products and services; secondly, is to inform the decision making process, whether policy or otherwise; and the experience shows that to a large extent such researches have had positive impact in society. With such recognition, most universities have put research as their core function, targeted at finding solutions to social and economic problems surrounding the society. Others are teaching and consultancy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Else where in the world there are spectacular examples of local economic development processes that were stimulated by university research, which include the electronics clusters in Silicon Valley (with ties to Stanford University) and Route 128 near Boston (with ties to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology). In those two cases, local university research has not only served to expand the employment base, but has also dramatically raised the average income levels.

Another notable example where university research has stimulated the development of a very successful industry is in the sector of biotechnology. Biotechnology offers an example of an important new industry built directly on basic scientific research, in which commercial firms have established close ties to university-based scientists. Studies have found a strong geographical relationship between the location of university scientists, who made early contributions to gene sequencing, and the location of commercial biotech firms. Biotech firms that have had the most financial success are those that have maintained close working relationships with university scientists, specifically in developed countries

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen

Despite of the mentioned success stories, there are also examples, such as that of John Hopkins University in Baltimore, which is regarded to be a university with prestigious research programs that have had little impact to the high-tech industry in the local economy, implying that prestigious research programs at universities are not panacea to the social and economic development of a region or country – other factors also play an important role, one being good policies that connects a university to the wider social and economic environment. For Tanzania the interaction between industries and research institutions, including universities, have largely been lacking; it is my sincere hope that this is one of the issues that will be taken up during our today's discussion.

Distinguished Participants,

Much of the value of research I have so far alluded to, to a large extent concerns research in natural sciences. However this does not mean that social science research is any less important: The literature informs that between thirty to forty percent of all the university research (and much of the wider professional, government and business research) being undertaken in most countries takes place in social science subjects, and this have had profound impact in the development of the societies. For instance, research in social science is crucial in exploring the nature of the communities within which we live and those with which we might interact with. Academics in arts, humanities and social sciences have so far made a great contribution to our cultural and intellectual well-being as these subjects help us to understand our heritage and culture, and that of others. Most importantly, social sciences teaching and academic research enriches and informs society and provides the context in which policy and technological innovations can advance.

Distinguished Participants

In addition to what I have already said about utility value of social science research, most technocrats, those working in business and wide range of civil society organizations, work in jobs where skill they require in their jobs are produced thorough social science research and teaching. Social science research and teaching is therefore extremely important for the good health of any society.

Distinguished Participants

Just like research in the field of natural science, production of social science research in Tanzania is not without challenges; among others is its limited recognition and therefore limited use in decision making, as well as weak mechanisms for its coordination and funding.

Distinguished Participants,

In recognizing the role of research and development activities in Tanzania, in the year 2010, the government came up with a “Research and Development Policy” that among others acknowledges the following challenges:

- Lack of national framework for identifying research priorities and strengthening coordination of the roles of different ministries, government departments and agencies.
- Inadequate mechanisms for training and hiring researchers.
- Inadequate funding for research

It is my sincere hope that some of these issues will prominently feature in our today’s discussion and that we will have some fruitful way forward towards addressing these challenges. The ED of STIPRO has just mentioned that she believe that solutions to our problems lie within our reach, and I would like to echo this contention – let every one of us represented here play her/his part so that at the end of the day we lay a solid foundation on which such challenges could start being addressed.

Distinguished Participants,

I believe that important aspects in building the national research capacity include strengthening the relationship between users of research and researchers through mass media who communicate research outputs to the general public; and therefore unless relationships between researchers, users of research and the mass media is effectively forged, the contribution of research outputs to social and economic development will be minimal.

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finally, events such as this do not just happen. They take a good deal of hard work and commitment, both by the organisers and speakers. I would, therefore, like to conclude by appreciating the contribution of every one of you for the successful organization of this workshop. With these few remarks, I now declare the Roundtable on “The Role of Research in Development in Tanzania” officially opened and wish you fruitful deliberations.

I THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION!!