

**The H.R.H. Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa Award for Sustainable Development
Award Ceremony at the United Nations Headquarters, New York.
23rd September, 2016
Main Building, East Lounge (Salon Est) 6.00 pm**

**Acceptance Statement
By
The 2016 Award Winner**

**Hon Professor Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka
Member of Parliament for Muleba South, Tanzania.
Retired UN Under-Secretary-General and Former Chief of the United Nations Human
Settlements Programme, UN-HABITAT (2000-2010)**

The Guest of Honor President of the General Assembly, H.E. Peter Thomson of Fiji
Your Excellency Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom
of Bahrain
Your Excellency Shaikh Hussam bin Issa Al Khalifa, President of the Bahrain Prime Minister's Court
Honourable Basim Al-Hamer, Minister of Housing, Kingdom of Bahrain and all Members of the
Award Team
Your Excellency Ambassador Augustine Mahiga, Foreign Minister of the United Republic of
Tanzania
Your Royal Highnesses
Your Excellences
Honorable Mrs Anna Lupembe, Member of the Tanzanian Parliament and all Parliamentarians and
Representatives present
Heads of UN agencies, funds and programmes and all former colleagues and friends from the UN
system
Leaders of Global and Regional Bodies, Civil Society and the Private Sector
Members of the Tanzanian and African diaspora
Distinguished Guests
The Media
Ladies and Gentlemen.

(A) THE TANZANIAN EARTHQUAKE

Allow me to start on a somber note. On 10th September, 2016, as I was preparing to come to New
York to this great event, an earthquake of a magnitude of 5.99 on the Richter scale devastated my
home region of Kagera to the West of Lake Victoria. As a result, Tanzania is a country in a
humanitarian situation we have never known before and were least prepared for. Over 17 people
have died, hundreds have been injured and thousands of homes and property destroyed, and this in
an area that was already economically challenged. Rescue, relief and reconstruction efforts are in
progress and our leaders at the highest levels are all focused on this work. It was for this reason that
our President could not participate in this historic 71st session of the General Assembly that has

endorsed 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Before coming here, I had on my part, as area Member of Parliament, first to return to the area to assess the devastation and console the victims. The second aftershock on 11 September, 2016 actually found me in the area. So I witnessed first hand the devastation, shock, suffering and trauma that an earthquake can bring. Please may I ask that we stand for one minute to remember and pray for those who perished in the earthquake..... May God rest their souls in eternal peace. Thank you.

Your Excellency the Guest of Honor

The Government of Tanzania has already submitted an official request for the United Nations System to come to our assistance. It is my hope that Governments and all organizations and entities represented here and in a position to do so, will come to our assistance and respond generously and appropriately to the humanitarian and relief effort for Tanzania's quake victims that the UN shall call. Also, for private and individual effort, a practical mechanism to channel support has been put in place, taking advantage of modern rapid international money transfer systems. Given the importance of the matter to me and the people I represent, allow me to use this opportunity to provide those details as follows: CRDB BANK, BUKOBA, TANZANIA; Name of payee: Kamati ya Maafa Kagera; Account No. 0152225617300. Swift Code: CORUtz. For mobile money transfers there are 3 options: M;PESA:+255768196669; TIGOPESA: +255718069616 and AIRTEL MONEY: +255682950009. As Mother St. Thereza of Calcuta observed "There are no big things. It is small things that become big things". However small, whatever you give will add up to other efforts and build up to amounts that can help those in need. I thank you in advance for your generosity.

(B) THE KHALIFA SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AWARD

Your Excellency the Guest of Honor

The news that His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa had bestowed upon me a Sustainable Development Award named in his honor was received on my part with great humility and gratitude. It came as a new source of inspiration and renewed hope for my people of Tanzania in general and the Muleba South community in particular. The Muleba South constituency that I represent has a population of about 500,000 people and has elected me twice to represent them in our Parliament. I left the United Nations in September 2010 to return home and work for sustainable development goals at grassroots level. On behalf of myself and those who worked with me at UN-HABITAT, I wish to accept and dedicate this award to the faith and trust that the people of Muleba South have continued to have in me.

Your Excellency the Guest of Honor

News about the Award triggered congratulations and spontaneous celebrations everywhere, including in my family, my village, my constituency, my municipality, my home region, the parish, the mosque, the women groups, the youth, fellow academics, fellow Parliamentarians and Government officials and Party leaders at all levels.

This huge and fully packed gathering of today at the UN Headquarters, in this spacious East Lounge, graced by the mighty of your own office Mr. President of the General Assembly, bears testimony that the international community is also in full support and in celebration of the achievements we

have made together in the past, and of the work that lies ahead for us in the future. I thank you all for coming. Time does not allow me to mention all outstanding personalities present here today, but I would be remiss if I do not mention the presence of my former colleague, Mrs. Helen Clark, the Administrator of UNDP. Thanks Helen for coming and all the best with the ongoing campaign to lead this organization.

Your Excellency Mr. President of the GA

I bring you greetings from our beloved and indefatigable new President of Tanzania , H.E. Dr. John Pombe Magufuli, who as you might recall was elected President of the UN-HABITAT Governing Council for the biennium 2005/2007 and served as co-Chair of the very successful third session of the World Urban Forum in Vancouver (2006). Upon learning of this good news, President Magufuli promptly sent me a congratulatory message observing that “this honor is a blessing from God”. The Speaker of the Tanzania Parliament, Honorable Job Yustino Ndugai, who has also worked extensively in environmental conservation and sustainable development, was equally pleased and observed he was very proud of me for this achievement. And so did our youthful and brilliant Deputy Speaker Dr. Tulia Axon with her exclamation “you have made us proud”. A distinguished elder of my home community, Dr. Enock Kamuzora noted that “good works cannot be hidden or lost” but in time stand out as shining monuments of legacy and achievement. Last but not least, Dr. Thereza Kaijage, an international award winning iconic social worker in Tanzania said “Hard work and endurance pays. With God’s blessings more awards will come”.

Your Excellency the Guest of Honor,

The conferment of the Award at the UNHQ in New York during the General Assembly has also given more meaning to this prestigious award, as I reminisce of my work at the UN for over a decade. As observed by the former Chief of Water and Sanitation at UN-HABITAT, Dr. Kalyan Ray of India, the conferment of the Award at the UNHQ in New York during the General Assembly is in his view, an appropriate and fitting occasion because over the years, he noted he had “witnessed firsthand the many initiatives I initiated at UN-HABITAT to promote sustainable development, always with focus on the least developed countries, the poor, and women”. Dr. Christopher Williams, the Executive Director of the World Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council in Geneva, and who is here with us today, has said this award is well deserved and vindication of the teamwork of the entire staff at UN-HABITAT that worked with me to raise the profile of the organization and the plight of the urban poor. Dr. Williams, observed, and quite correctly so, that our effort paid off because of the unwavering support of visionary leaders in Member States including the Kingdom of Bahrain under the visionary and steady leadership of the Prime Minister, who had a very insightful understanding of the habitat agenda and of what needs to be done to deliver sustainable development in a globalizing and urbanizing world.

Your Excellences, Distinguished Guests,

Having made a carrier in academia and civil society activism in my home country of Tanzania for over 25 years, in 1998 I joined the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva to work on trade issues that affect poor countries. But my tenure at UNCTAD was short lived because in September 2000, Secretary General Kofi Annan moved me to Nairobi to work on the urban agenda that he felt was neglected and not understood. My terms of reference from him was to sensitize and motivate global leaders to the importance of the implementation of the habitat agenda and to end its neglect. He needed an economic perspective

brought to this work. So, I became a global campaigner for the habitat agenda. I put in a place a team of committed and passionate campaigners to work with me, and some of them are here today. I recognize Dr. Axumite Gabre Egziabher of Ethiopia former Director of the UN-HABITAT office here in New York whose task was to brief and inform Member States at the General Assembly. I recognize Dr. Chris Williams, of the USA, who, from the UN-HABITAT office in Washington DC had a task of impressing upon the donor countries the importance of supporting the urbanization process in poor countries. And I recognize Mr. Abdalla Abbas of Sudan, who was tasked to work in conflict and post conflict areas especially the housing needs of the Palestinian peoples in Gaza. It was a great team, and this award is as much about me as it is about them and others not mentioned here.

Your Excellency Mr. President of the GA

Looking at the 17 SDGs, I can see how our campaign of 10 years finally paid off high dividends. Let me inform this august audience though that our campaign was no easy task, and we used to say then, working long hours to get our message through, that our work “did not make a golf game”. WE just kept going.

We were tasked with sensitizing and informing the world that urbanization is a fact, that it is irreversible, and that the greatest danger facing Africa and the developing world was the rapid and chaotic urbanization taking place. Premature, rapid and unplanned urbanization was a process that condemns people into slums and squatter settlements, characterized by the SDG Agenda of Poverty (SDG1), hunger (SDG2), preventable diseases that lead to lack of good health and well being (SDG 3), slum children have no access to decent schools and access to quality education (SDG4); women and the children they support take the blunt of slum life due to lack of gender equality (SDG5). A slum is a place without adequate clean water and sanitation (SDG6); it is a place without affordable clean energy (SDG7); a place without decent work and economic growth (SDG8). Yes a slum is a place without security of tenure, a symbol of inequality that must be reduced (SDG9) through Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 10). These ills have to be sorted out in the context of planned settlement or Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11). The other SDGs namely Responsible consumption and production (SDG 12); Climate Action (SDG 13); Life below water (SDG 14); Life on Land (SDG 15); Peace, Justice and strong institutions (SDG 16) and Partnership for the Goals (SDG17) are also linked with human habitats and environmental protection. At the First UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, then Prime Minister of India pointed out that Poverty is the biggest polluter. If you want to protect the environment, then fight poverty.

Your Excellency the Guest of honor,

This formulation of the SDGs would prove that our labor was not in vain. It must bear fruit that I did not go wrong when I took Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon to visit Kibera in Nairobi, Africa; largest slum so that he could witness first hand how the other half lives. I argued not against rural development, but for the need to balance rural and urban development, that rural romanticism alone, of idealizing static rural communities would not work. We had to enlighten the world to an economic imperative, agriculture is a residual employer. As rural development is achieved and agricultural productivity improves, more and more people are not needed on farms but must move out of rural economies to find jobs in secondary and tertiary occupations, often in cities and other urban or peri-urban settlements. Our slogan was *Homo sapien* becoming *Homo urbanus*.

The Prime Minister of Bahrain and his government was always with us, and for this I am grateful. Fortuitously, I started my campaign in Manama in October, 2000 on the occasion of Bahrain hosting the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on Habitat II dubbed Istanbul +5 for the Arab Countries. Ever since, the seriousness and support of the Bahrain Government under the active engagement and guidance of Shaikh Hussam el Issa Al Khalifa, and the respective Housing Ministers kept growing, and is the reason we are here. This award coming 6 years after I left the UN goes to prove that Bahrain is not only a best practice in Sustainable development but also a good example in sustainable cooperation and partnership (SDG 17). I normally say, and seriously so, that if there is a Switzerland in the Middle East, it is Bahrain.

In this regard, I note in this audience a number of donor countries that were also supportive of my efforts and wish to thank all of you. I wouldn't be here if you had not believed in me and my great team to provide the financing badly needed to deliver global goals. I see in the audience that we are graced by the presence of H.E. Olof Skoog, Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations. I would be remiss if I did not point out that Sweden helped us to raise the visibility of our urban development agenda when in 2009 I was announced co-winner of the Goteborg Award for Sustainable Development, dubbed "the alternative Nobel Prize on the Environment" equivalent.

Your Excellency the Guest of Honor,

Sustainable development is not a slogan but a norm to be lived, a reminder of our common interest, our right to enjoy and live well but without losing site of the need to also secure the future and wellbeing of coming generations. Sustainable development will come from leaders committed to the global agenda like HRH the Prime Minister of Bahrain who has created this award to enhance the mission. Sustainable development requires human solidarity and friendship at all levels and in all countries if we are to keep peace and get prosperity. The notion of the award is a symbol of commitment to the delivery and implementation of the SDGs that we have set for ourselves. This award raises the visibility and seriousness of the agenda before us. The challenges are enormous but by no means insurmountable. I sincerely thank those who recommended me for this award and HRH for accepting their recommendation. I reiterate I accept the award with humility on behalf of my people as well as all those who worked with me to make a contribution that is being recognized.

Many challenges still lie ahead but the award will serve as a catalyst for renewed efforts to continue with our work. The founding President of Tanzania, the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere taught us that "It can be done, play your part". This motto has guided me well in life.

Mr President of the General Assembly,

As you have pointed out in your opening remarks, we meet at an opportune time, on the eve of the Third United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat III) in Quito, Ecuador, next month. With the SDGs now focused on the habitat agenda, may I take note and salute the generous, progressive and forward looking peoples of Bahrain and other parts of the world who have continued to recognize and are ready to support sustainable development, and urge them to do so at Habitat III. I believe that in Quito a great program of action will be agreed upon and an appropriate institutional framework for its delivery put in place. I hope UN-HABITAT will emerge out of that conference much stronger than it is now, and hopefully with its chronic financing problems sorted out, once and for all. So far the organization's fortunes have been very much dependent on the success of its leadership to mobilize financial support for its work very difficult and insecure. Core

predictable funding is something I would recommend.

On that note, let me end by thanking each one of you individually for coming and thus making this event a great success. I am aware of the pressures on your time Mr. President and all of you here at this High Level Session of the General Assembly. It is a season when only a friend or an ally is able to come to your event, because of the great competition. I commend the organizers who have done a wonderful job and worked tirelessly behind the scene to deliver what we see. H.E. the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations and his staff are much appreciated. I also recognize the hard work of the Award team from Bahrain under the very able leadership of Shaikh Hussam who has always impressed me with his dedication and commitment to our work.

In keeping with African tradition, I look forward to a day when I shall also be accorded an opportunity to receive you in Tanzania and in my community, so that you can witness first hand, the challenges we face but also our determination to transform ourselves from poverty to prosperity as we deliver the SDG. Please come and see how I am taking action at local level to secure global goals. Please come and hold me accountable for the award we celebrate today.

I thank you for your kind attention.