

**SPEECH BY HER EXCELLENCY MAMA SALMA KIKWETE AT THE
DIPLOMATIC PARTY TO WELCOME THE NEW YEAR 2012,
STATE HOUSE, 11TH JANUARY 2012**

*Chairperson of the Association of Diplomatic Spouses;
Diplomatic Spouses;
WAMA Board Members;
Invited Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Let me start by warmly welcoming you all to the State House for our annual get together between the First Lady and diplomatic spouses to welcome and celebrate the New Year 2012.

I thank you all for accepting my invitation and for coming. Let me take this opportunity to welcome those of you joining us for the first time. Welcome to Tanzania, welcome to join this wonderful company. I hope your stay in Tanzania will be enjoyable and fulfilling. **Karibuni sana.**

Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

The past year women in Tanzania joined others globally to celebrate 100 years of the International Women's Day. The celebration marked a significant milestone to gauge our successes towards realization of women rights and roles in the development process of our society. Indeed, much has been accomplished. The rights of women are much recognized now than any other time before. Our roles are more visible now than any other

time before. Today, many initiatives are in place to deal with issues of women from global to grassroots level. More resources are being allocated and better coordination of programs such as UN WOMEN and the universalization of rights is more evident.

Yet, our struggle for women rights remains more relevant today than any other time before. Statistics of the plight of women today are still shocking. According to the World Bank, Women constitute fifty percent (50%) of today's global population and forty percent (40%) of the global workforce.

In Africa, women are majority farmers and produce about eighty percent (80%) of the continent's food, yet women own only one percent (1%) of the world's wealth. These statistics in a nutshell inform us that gaps remain in so many areas. In their totality, they call for more efforts to address the structural imbalances that hinder the realization of women rights and welfare in the so advanced world. I am pleased to note that the 2012 World Development Report prepared by the World Bank will be focusing on women. I commend the World Bank for such a commitment to women's plight. I believe the report will give a befitting profile to the women and development agenda. We in WAMA are looking forward to echo the recommendations of the report and to raise our advocacy for the agenda for women and development.

For that reason, the WAMA Foundation continues to place the women and development higher on its agenda. WAMA is grateful of the support and cooperation it receives from partners and stakeholders, some of whom are present in this occasion.

We are particularly impressed with the efforts of the government of United Republic of Tanzania in giving deserved attention to the questions of maternal and child health and the overall question of women rights and welfare in Tanzania. We recognize with admiration its participation on the World Commission on Information and Accountability for Children's and Women's Health and the African Leaders Initiative Against Malaria (ALMA). These efforts altogether deserve special mention and our support.

WAMA is looking forward to compliment our government in addressing the same to the needy and underprivileged women and girls who have not been reached by these and other similar efforts. We shall stay on course on our programs on education, health and economic empowerment which have already lifted many from the scourge of poverty and put a smile on many lives that we have touched. I wish to share with you some few highlights of our previous year achievements and the ongoing programs for year 2012.

Education

Ladies and Gentlemen;

In the education sector, among the major highlight of our work was the launching of WAMA Nakayama Secondary School. To date 167 girls who are orphaned or come from poor families have been enrolled in the school. This year Ninety 90 new students will join the school. I am pleased that through the generous support from our well-wishers this year we shall start the construction of 12 staff houses, 6 classrooms for A-level and two dormitories. On the other note, I am glad to inform you that through the

support from our partners we shall construct a new school similar to WAMA Nakayama Secondary school in Lindi Region.

Health

Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

In my last year's sherry party address, I informed you about our initiatives to address the problem of maternal and infant mortality through advocacy campaign and supply of maternal and child health service equipments to health centers and dispensaries countrywide. I am pleased to inform you that last year WAMA in co-operation with Project C.U.R.E as well as your respective Embassies successfully mobilized equipment worth 3 Million USD which will this year be distributed to Six Regional hospitals in the country. On advocacy, we have worked with Malaria No more to launch the Kilimani Sesame's Malaria Education Outreach Campaign to protect our children from Malaria. I count on your continued support to continue these noble programmes.

Women Economic Empowerment

Ladies and Gentlemen;

We remain committed to address the income poverty which is among the root causes of the high maternal and infant mortality among women and girls, and a causal factor for increasing teenage pregnancies among secondary and primary school students. During the past year we have stepped up our women mobilization efforts and developed standardized curriculums and packages for WAMA women economic empowerment initiative. We have now launched the first Union of WAMA Foundation

Village Savings and Loans Association with 700 members organized in 40 groups. Our hope is that this year the members shall utilize the knowledge they received through training to expand their funding base in order to engage in different economic activities.

Conclusion

Invited Guests,

As we celebrate the achievements that I have mentioned today and those that I have not mentioned, I am optimistic about the year ahead of us. I wish to thank all of you for the support that you have given to WAMA and to the government and the people of Tanzania. I look forward for your usual cooperation in this year. It is my sincere hope that this year we shall continue to work together to support different initiatives to help the needy.

On that note, I wish you a happy and prosperous 2012.

Thank you very much.