STATEMENT BY H.E PROF. PALAMAGAMBA J.A.M. KABUDI (MP), MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND EAST AFRICAN COOPERATION OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA, AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE SEVENTY FOURTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

NEW YORK, 27 SEPTEMBER 2019

Your Excellency, Prof. Tijjani Muhammad Bande, President of the General Assembly,

Your Excellency, Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations;

Your Excellency Heads of States and Governments;

Distinguished Delegates,

I bring fraternal greetings from His Excellency Dr. John Pombe Joseph Magufuli, the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, who though he had so much wished to personally attend this very important gathering, could not be able to do so due to other exigencies at home. He, therefore, asked me to represent him and deliver this statement on his behalf.

In this respect, I would like to, first of all, congratulate you, Mr. President, on your well-deserved election as President of the 74th General Assembly. Please be assured of full support and cooperation of the Government and People of the United Republic of Tanzania in discharging your responsibilities.

I wish also to pay a glowing tribute to your predecessor, Her Excellency Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garces, firstly, for being the fourth woman in the history of the United Nations to hold such a prestigious position; and secondly, for her efforts, commitment and the effective leadership she demonstrated during her tenure.

Mr. President;

The theme of this year’s Assembly session is “Galvanising Multilateral Efforts for Poverty Eradication, Quality Education, Climate Action and Inclusion”. Needless to say, this theme is very appropriate and timely. It is appropriate because, as you are all aware, four years ago, in September 2015, this August body adopted the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with three key dimensions, which are: economic development; social inclusion; and environmental sustainability. Coincidently, in that very year, in November, H.E. Dr. John Pombe Joseph Magufuli assumed the Office of President of the United Republic of Tanzania. The new Administration came with new strengths, thoughts and zeal for economic transformation for betterment of welfare of the people of the United Republic of Tanzania, especially vulnerable groups.

The main agenda of this Administration is to eradicate corruption, institute ethics and discipline in public service, enhance tax collection as strategy to achieve quick socio-economic growth.These efforts are also aimed at improving the quality of education in the country; eradication of poverty and tackling unemployment.

I am pleased to inform this august Assembly that during the last four years, the Government has been able to live up to its promises by delivering to its citizens in many aspects. In July this year we presented a Voluntary National Review of SDG progress at the High Level Political Forum highlighting our achievement in the implementation of SDGs both in Tanzania Mainland and Tanzania Zanzibar.

Mr. President;

Being aware that good governance is critical in eradicating poverty and achieving socio-economic development, this Administration has taken bold measures to fight corruption at all levels, including by establishing a Corruption and Economic Crimes Division of the High Court. Measures have also been taken to remove wasteful Government expenditure by improving management of fiscal and financial discipline; enhance accountability and transparency in the Government. In addition, over the past four years the Government has been implementing various reforms, including the proper management of natural wealth and resources by enacting the Natural Wealth and Resources (Permanent Sovereignty) Act of 2017 and the Natural Wealth and Resources Contracts (Review and Renegotiation of Unconscionable Terms) of 2017. These pieces of legislations are inspired and premised on the General Assembly Resolution 1803 of 1962 on Permanent Soveregnity over Natural Resources; and Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States adopted in 1974 by the United Nations Resolution 3281. These reforms, among other things, have assisted to enhance Government revenue collection from an average of Tanzania shillings 850 billion to Tanzanian shillings 1.3 trillion per month. Thanks to the new mining law also, revenues from the mining sector have exponentially increased from Tanzanian shillings 191 billion in the Financial Year 2016/2017 to Tanzanian shillings 335.18 billion in the Year 2018/2019. As a result, the Government has been able to increase its Development Budget allocation to 40 percent from 25 percent in 2015.

Consequently, we have been able to implement strategic economic infrastructure projects and also improve social services to our citizens in education, health, water and sanitation, as well as enhancing availability of electricity. Since December 2015, the Government has embarked on providing free education in public primary and secondary schools. Through this initiative, enrolment of pupils has increased by 35.2 percent in primary schools. This measure has provided children from extreme poor households and those living with disabilities access to basic education. Each month, the Government allocates about Tanzanian shillings 23.865 billion to implement this programme. In order to improve the quality of education, the Government has since 2017 employed 18,181 new primary and secondary school teachers in order to reduce pupil-teacher ratios and also built new school infrastructures and provide educational equipment and materials.

At tertiary level, the number of students who benefited from higher education student’s loans have also gone up from 98,300 in 2015 to 122,663 in 2019, with an increased budget of Tanzanian shillings 365 billion in 2015 to Tanzanian shillings 455 billion in 2019.

Mr. President,

On the health sector, it is gratifying to note that, one of the main themes of this year General Assembly session is on Universal Health Coverage. The Government has, through its two major public health prepaid schemes, namely the Community Health Fund and National Health Insurance Fund, increased number of beneficiaries from 20 percent of the population in 2015 to 33 percent in March 2019. In addition, as of March 2019, 352 health facilities (304 new health centres, 9 hospitals and 39 Dispensaries) have either been constructed or rehabilitated countrywide since December 2015, amounting to a total of 696 health centres.

Furthermore, the Government is building 67 new districts hospitals. We have reformed procurement and logistical processes of medical supplies and, thus, increased supply of medicines in our health facilities, whereby the availability of 312 essential medicines in the country is now at 79 percent.

Regarding the energy sector, the Government of the United of Tanzania has embarked on a major programme of rural electrification whereby 5,109 new villages have been supplied with electricity since December 2015, making the number of villages with electricity in the country to reach 7,127 out of the total 12,259 villages. As a result, 67 percent of the population have access to electricity from less than 50 percent in 2015. In order to guarantee affordable and reliable energy, the Government is implementing several power generation projects, including the Nyerere Grand Hydropower Project, which once completed, will produce 2,115 megawatts, which is more than the total electricity currently produced in the country.

On water supply, about 71 percent of the population have now access to clean and safe water from 56 percent in 2015. In addition, new water projects are being implemented at an estimated cost of Tanzanian shillings 1.666 trillion (around US$ 650 million) across the country.

With regard to transport infrastructure, since December 2015, the Government has constructed more than 2000 kilometres of tarmac roads and expanded its major ports (in Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar, Mtwara and Tanga). In August 2019, we inaugurated our new Terminal III at the Julius Nyerere International Airport in Dar es Salaam and the expansion or upgrading of other airports in the country, including Terminal III at the Abeid Amani Karume International Airport in Zanzibar, are still ongoing. In addition, construction of two phase’s standard gauge railway of the Central Corridor totalling 722 kms is progressing well and is expected to be completed in 2021 at an estimated cost of US$ 3 billion.

Mr. President;

Climate Change and Environmental conservation is one of the priorities of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, 38.12 percent of our total land area of 945,087 square kilometres is designated as protected areas, which includes National Parks, Game Reserves and Natural Protected Forests. In this respect, this year, the Government has established yet another four National Parks increasing the number of National Parks to 24 in order to protect our ecosystems, forests, biodiversity and land as part of environmental conservation.

In addition, in June 2019, we have banned the use of plastics bags in the country and continued to reduce the use of fuel oil and diesel propelled electricity to just 5.6 percent.

Furthermore, in order to reduce the impact of climate change, the United Republic of Tanzania is investing in renewable energy. However, our efforts have been constrained by high cost of the renewable energy technologies. We therefore, urge the international community to collaborate in order to make the renewable energy technologies accessible and affordable.

Mr. President;

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania remains committed to promoting democracy, good governance, human rights and the rule of law. Indeed, these democratic principles are guaranteed in our Constitution. As I speak, there are 21 registered political parties in the country operating freely and some are represented in Parliament. In the case of Tanzania Zanzibar three opposition party leaders are in Government.

The United Republic of Tanzania has a vibrant and diversified media representing different expression of opinion as evidenced by 152 registered radio stations of which only 3 are state owned. In addition, Tanzania has 34 Television Stations and only two state owned and has also granted 172 newspaper licences.

Mr. President,

In improving investment and business climate in our country, the Government has from 1st July 2019, has started implementing its Blueprint for Regulatory Reforms to Improve Business Environment in Tanzania. In Fiscal policies, we have abolished more than 154 taxes. We are convinced that these efforts will propel our country to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr. President;

 We are witnessing an increasing trend within the international system moving towards unilateralism. In this regard, the United Republic of Tanzania once again reiterates its commitment to multilateralism and calls upon all member states to embrace multilateralism not only in order to eradicate poverty, improve the quality of education, combat climate change and achieve Inclusion, but also in order to maintain international peace and security as well as to achieve a just and better world.

Mr. President;

In August 2019, during the 39th SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Dar es Salaam, the United Republic of Tanzania assumed the Chairmanship of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The Summit, among others, adopted the theme of our Chairmanship, which is “A Conducive Business Environment for Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development, Increased Intra-Regional Trade and Job Creation”.

This theme is premised on the fact that the SADC region and the African continent in general, despite being rich in terms arable land (30 percent of the world’s arable land), 30 percent of the world’s known mineral reserves, a large population of about 1.3 billion people, wildlife, a wide diversity of ecozones and plant species that are of extremely importance; livestock and marine ecosystems, hydrocarbons and mineral resources, Africa which is therefore not poor has been compelled to be poor. Africa has continued to be a source of raw materials for other countries and a destination of manufactured goods and services from other countries. Ironically, Africa produces what it does not consume and consumes what it does not produce. This must change. In this regard, Africa must pursue vigorously the path of industrialization, which will also create jobs for the youth who constitute 60 percent of its population. I appeal to the international community to provide African countries with fair and better terms of trade. This will enable our countries to participate in global value chain and increase the purchasing power of our people.

Mr. President;

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania as chair of the SADC would like to urge the international community to call for lifting up unilateral sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe. Far too long, Zimbabwe has been on sanctions, which have negatively affected its people, especially the vulnerable groups such as women, elderly and children. These sanctions have also negatively affected other countries in the Southern African region. These unilateral sanctions should unconditionally be removed now.

Mr. President;

This year, the United Nations celebrates its 74th Anniversary. Article 1 of the UN stipulates that “the purpose of the UN is to maintain international peace and security”. In this respect, it goes without saying that since its inception in 1945, the UN has recorded some important milestones; however, some challenges still remain. In this respect, I wish to refer to theDemocratic Republic of Congo, the country that has been in conflict situation for so long. Despite various efforts, this conflict situation continues to persist. In this regard, the United Republic of Tanzania believes that the support to the DRC need to be genuine aimed at addressing the challenges facing the country comprehensively and holistically with a view to attaining durable peace, stability and economic prosperity. To this end, we pledge to work together with the United Nations and other members of the international community to restore peace and stability in the DRC and turn it into an exporter of peace and shared prosperity.

Mr. President;

In conclusion, I would like once again to reiterate our support to the United Nations and the ongoing reforms to make the Organization more relevant and representative of global community.

“I thank you for your kind attention”