



**Permanent Mission of the United Republic of Tanzania
to the United Nations**

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STATEMENT BY

**H.E. AMBASSADOR RAMADHAN M. MWINYI,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF
TANZANIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS,**

**DURING THE TWELFTH SESSION OF THE PERMANENT FORUM ON
INDIGENOUS ISSUES, AGENDA ITEM 4 "HALF DAY DISCUSSION ON
AFRICAN REGION".**

NEW YORK, 23 MAY, 2013

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Chairperson

My delegation would like to thank the secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues for commissioning a study on resilience, traditional knowledge and capacity building for pastoralist communities in Africa that focuses on good practices and opportunities for pastoralist.

The United Republic of Tanzania has always expressed reservations on the claim that indigenous communities exist in her jurisdiction. In our case, indigenous concept found favour during the colonial era; a notion intended to belittle local communities as inferior and there has never been critical thinking to balance the nuance of this definition. As a result, underdeveloped societies are defined as indigenous rendering their culture "alien" and of low esteem. It is in this regard that we have difficulties in accepting the notion hence the definition itself. We believe that culture adopts itself to the environment as it evolves.

Colonialism subjected pastoralist societies in Africa to perpetual marginalization and discrimination leading them to remain backward. Cognizant of this situation, immediately after independence, Tanzania adopted measures that were meant to engender the wellbeing of all people

regardless of their ethnicity or tribal affiliation to redress inherent imbalances. The Government invested heavily on the provision of social amenities and economic empowerment as well as political participation for all communities including the minority groups. Most societies have evolved overtime, taking up new ventures in addition to the customary ones. Good examples of these are the Masaai people whose vibrant culture is a part of our national identity.

Chairperson,

Efforts are still underway to ensure no community in Tanzania is left behind in the development endeavour as stipulated in the MDGs and translated in National Development plans and programmes. Nevertheless few of our minority groups continue to maintain their traditional ways of life and their lives depend on access to lands and accompanying natural resources. Most of these groups are not commonly known compared to the Masaai who are in locations of tourist attractions.

Schemes such as Productive Social Safety Net (PSSN) is designed to support the poorest and the most vulnerable communities to assure the wellbeing of minorities through a series of interventions aimed at (i) protection of households from seasonal and unexpected shocks affecting their income and assets, (ii) provision of tools for mitigating poverty and vulnerability, and (iii) empowerment to enable them to improve their living standards and get out of food poverty.

Chairperson,

In Tanzania Certificate of Village Land is issued to members of the community who form themselves into a village for the purposes of recognition. According to the laws, a village is the only legally-recognized autonomous entity on land matters whereby a land certificate is offered for the whole community. However, in some instances hunter-gatherers may not constitute the number required by law to form a village as they are numerical minority. Nonetheless, in 2011 the Hadzabe were granted a Collective Community Land Certificate without necessarily meeting the required qualifications.

Chairperson,

As for the celebrated case of Loliondo, the Government allocated about 2500 square kilometres of land to the inhabitants, the Masaai their own community development, most of whom were landless and whose lives are highly vulnerable. This allocated land is bigger than Luxembourg land size (2,586 sq km) or four times bigger than the land area of Singapore (624 sq km). The remaining 1,500 square kilometres of land is retained as Game Controlled Area for continued protection of the wildlife and the environment for the benefit of the present and future generations of humankind. The Government took this decision with the understanding that environment conservation is as important for eco-system protection as it is for community livelihood and community development. Again, 1,500 square kilometres are crucial breeding area for wildlife, a corridor for iconic great migration of wildlife in particular for millions of wildebeest and a critical water catchment area. This decision is not inimitable; it has been applied countrywide since independence.

Chairperson,

Participation in governance affairs is a fundamental political right where every person has the right to participate in decision making including voting and be voted for as provided in the Constitution. Minority groups alike enjoy this right with no discrimination and do have their representation in decision making process. Recently, the pastoralist and hunter-gatherer organizations actively participate in the constitution-making process to enable their interests be included in the new constitution.

Chairperson,

We urge the international community to work with our Governments to support all communities, including the Maasai. They need to acknowledge well intentioned decision to conserve biodiversity, wildlife for the present and future population demands as well as for development.

I THANK YOU