



**Statement by the SADC Executive Secretary, Her Excellency Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax,
on the commemoration of the Julius Nyerere Day: 14 October 2020**

In what is more than a death anniversary, every 14 October, the people of Southern Africa honour the memory of *Mwalimu* Julius Kambarage Nyerere, former President of the United Republic of Tanzania, who died on this day in 1999. After Tanzania gained independence in 1961, *Mwalimu* Nyerere supported the struggle for liberation and the fight against racism and colonialism in most African countries. This year, as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) is commemorating its 40th anniversary since its establishment, we pay tribute to *Mwalimu* for laying a solid foundation for the unity, peace, freedom and socio-economic developments we are witnessing today. SADC will continue to honour such a man of unparalleled commitment to liberation and development.

Today, as we celebrate *Mwalimu* Nyerere's leadership and devotion to liberation and socio-economic development, I wish to underscore that the greatest honour that we can all bestow upon this great son of Africa is to carry forward the vision of peace, freedom, reconciliation, social cohesion, solidarity, resilience and development for the generations to come. As his close friend and colleague, H.E. Dr Kenneth Kaunda, the former President of Zambia, said the best way of remembering *Mwalimu* Nyerere is to carry on where he left.

Although it is now 21 years after his death, *Mwalimu* Julius Nyerere will always be remembered for his unrelenting support for total independence and freedom of many African countries which earned him the respect and admiration in Africa and beyond.

Today, we see the footprint of *Mwalimu* Nyerere across the African continent for the pivotal role he played together with other eminent African leaders to establish the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, which later became the African Union in 2002. As a commitment to peace and justice in Africa, Tanzania hosted the Liberation Committee of the OAU. In southern Africa, the history of SADC is incomplete without a special mention of *Mwalimu* Julius Nyerere who, alongside other leaders, founded the Frontline States and the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) in 1980 which he described as a "major instrument for self-reliant development in the southern part of Africa". SADCC was later transformed into SADC in 1992.

While *Mwalimu* was a leading and popular figure in Southern Africa and Africa at large, he was well respected in his home country of Tanzania, not only as *Baba wa Taifa*, Father of the Nation, but also for his approach to socio-economic development. As *Mwalimu*, the Swahili word for teacher, Nyerere believed that education was a key to social progress. He promoted quality education which resulted in a record increase in school enrolment and literacy levels among Tanzanians. He established the "Ujamaa Programme", a socio-economic programme geared towards transforming rural areas of Tanzania to be self-reliant and achieve sustainable development.

In 2019, SADC adopted *Kiswahili* as a language for oral communication for the SADC Summit in recognition of *Mwalimu* Nyerere's and *Kiswahili*'s role in the liberation struggle. In addition, SADC, in August 2020, adopted a mechanism to honour its founders like *Mwalimu* Nyerere. At the continental level, it is pleasing to note that a statue in honour of *Mwalimu* Nyerere is being constructed at the African Union Peace and Security building in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

From all corners of the continent, we shall forever be grateful for all the sacrifices *Mwalimu* endured for a just cause. *Asante Sana, Mwalimu* Julius Nyerere.

#NyerereDay