



THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

**SPEECH BY H.E. DR. PHILIP ISDOR MPANGO, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE
UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA, AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE
14th AFRICA SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICY MAKERS CONFERENCE**

**AICC, ARUSHA
10TH JULY 2025**

- ***Hon. Ridhiwani Kikwete (MP), Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office, Responsible for Labour, Youth, Employment and Persons with Disability;***
- ***Hon. Kenan Kihongosi, Arusha Regional Commissioner;***
- ***Hon. Ministers from Tanzania and other Participating African Countries;***
- ***Mr. Muyangwa Muyangwa, Chairperson, Africa Social Protection Association (ASSA);***
- ***Mr. Nassoro Ameir, Chairperson, Tanzania Social Security Association (TSSA);***
- ***Members of the Boards of Trustees and Heads of African Social Security Funds;***
- ***Mr. Meshack Bandawe, Secretary General, Tanzania & Africa Social Protection Associations;***
- ***Invited Guests;***
- ***Members of the Media;***
- ***Ladies and Gentlemen.***

Good morning!

On behalf of H.E. Dr. SSH, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, I wish to extend to all delegates a proudly Tanzanian welcome, *Karibuni sana!* Please feel at home. I am informed that this noble conference, which Tanzania is privileged to host, focuses on the catalytic role of Social Security Funds for building economic and social infrastructure in our continent. I commend the organizers of this conference for the efforts that went into preparing and hosting this Conference, but more so, for choosing this very important theme at this critical juncture when the global landscape for financing development has become increasingly tight due to geopolitical conflicts, a series of global shocks, slow down in global growth, and narrow fiscal space in most African countries. As you all know, infrastructure development is at the heart of our continent's **Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want**. It envisions transforming Africa's infrastructure in order to improve connectivity through high-speed railways, highways, and robust ICT infrastructure; but also, energy security through regional power pools, clean and affordable energy; it also seeks to enhance digital connectivity by building ICT infrastructure, digital economy, innovation and global competitiveness.

Distinguished Delegates;

Traditionally, Social Security Funds were primarily pre-occupied with mobilization of collective savings for subsequent investment in social protection. However, over time the Funds found it prudent to diversify their portfolios into new frontiers such as real estate and infrastructure. Fortunately, social protection and infrastructure development have a symbiotic relationship. Improved infrastructure has the potential to improve livelihoods through job creation and catalysing economic activities, and thereby reducing the need for social security programs. Moreover, robust social

security schemes provide social safety nets that allow more people to participate in productive economic activities. In short, while social protection is crucial for reducing poverty and inequality, good infrastructure on its part, facilitates socio-economic activities and thereby drives growth and improvement of people's welfare.

Distinguished Delegates;

Despite various measures taken by African governments to modernize socio-economic infrastructure, the infrastructure deficit remains one of the biggest development challenges facing most African countries. Currently, Africa's infrastructure needs, which are estimated at \$130-170 billion annually, are holding back the continent's growth, limiting access to essential services, and affecting the continent's global competitiveness. The infrastructure funding gap is estimated at between \$68 -108 billion annually. In that regard, given the tightening of the global investment financing, many development analysts are in agreement that Social Security Funds are well placed to act more and more as a catalyst to accelerate infrastructure development in Africa by closing the financing gap. To this effect, we look forward to Africa's social protection policy makers participating in this conference to come up with practical ideas and solutions on how Social Security Funds can play this role better and sustainably.

Distinguished Delegates;

In the case of Tanzania, Social Security Funds have been instrumental in supplementing the Government's efforts over the years in building socio-economic infrastructure. For instance, Social Security Funds have participated in financing a number of projects including residential & commercial housing estates (Garden Avenue Tower, Sam Nujoma Commercial Complex, Dege Eco Village, Dungu Farm etc.); industries (leather, sugar, cotton, and tea); transport infrastructure, including the landmark Mwalimu Nyerere Toll Bridge across the Kigamboni creek in Dar es Salaam. We need more of such projects throughout Africa. However, I must hasten to add that investment in the development of socio-economic infrastructure, by Social Security Funds, has been marred by a number of risks and challenges. These include:

First, diversification of the investment portfolio of Social Security Funds into infrastructure development may compromise the primary objective of these Funds to provide social protection and social safety nets to the most vulnerable, especially for the retirees, the sick, and people with disability. Therefore, Social Security Funds need to ensure that contributions by members that are set aside as a safeguard against economic and social shocks and poverty remain adequate to cater for the primary objectives upon which they were established.

Second, is the challenge of ensuring that the infrastructure projects that Social Security Funds invest in are economically and financially viable. Infrastructure projects that are not viable are likely to erode the ability of Social Security Funds to meet their obligations promptly. If robust feasibility studies of such infrastructure projects are not done *a-priori* could result in longer payback periods to the

beneficiaries or even complete failure to pay them back. Care should be taken to avoid poorly planned and excessively costly projects or overly complex projects that are difficult to manage and those that do not address the needs of the beneficiaries of the social security schemes.

Third, some estimates indicate that the informal sector in Africa account for 40 to 60% of the economies, and that infrastructure development is quite wanting in the rural sector. I wish to encourage experts attending this conference to come up with strategies on how best Social Security Funds can contribute to augment on-going efforts to scale up financing of investments in rural socio-economic infrastructure. This could help increase productivity and quality of life in rural and peri-urban areas, increase job opportunities and reduce rural-urban migration; and

The **fourth** challenge that I see, relates to ensuring sound governance of Social Security Funds and tackling of administrative complexities promptly. My call in this regard, is for the experts in the room to provide a compass on how best African countries can harness modern technologies including ICT and AI to navigate through such risks

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Before I leave the podium, I wish to encourage all participants to make use of your time during and after the Conference to experience the beauty of Arusha and surrounding areas. I am aware that an excursion to the Ngorongoro Crater has been organized on 12th July 2025. I would encourage each one of you to make time for this trip to witness one of the wonders of the world. For those who wish to stay a little longer after the Conference, I also encourage you to visit other world-class tourist attractions, including Arusha National Park, Mount Kilimanjaro – the rooftop of Africa and the pristine beaches of Zanzibar.

I once again wish you a fruitful conference, urging you to proactively participate in sharing experiences and best practices, with the aim of resolving existing challenges and coming up with appropriate and forward-looking resolutions that will enable the Social Security Funds to catalyze the development of socio-economic infrastructure in Africa.

With these remarks, it is now my singular honour to declare, on behalf of H.E. Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the URT, that the 14th African Social Security Policy Makers Conference is officially opened.

Asanteni Sana! Thank you.