



**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 SECOND PAN AFRICAN  
NETWORK OF INDEPENDENT MEDIA COUNCILS SUMMIT (NIMCA)**

**AICC, ARUSHA  
15 JULY 2025**

- ***H.E. Dr. Hussein Ali Mwinyi, President of Zanzibar and Chairman of the Revolutionary Council;***
- ***Hon. Prof. Palamagamba Kabudi, Minister of Information, Culture, Arts and Sports, GoT;***
- ***Hon. Tabia Maulid, Minister of Information, Youth, Culture and Sports, RGZ;***
- ***Hon. Kenani Kihongosi, Regional Commissioner of Arusha;***
- ***Mr. Ernest Sungura, Chairperson of the African Media Council and also the Executive Secretary of the Media Council of Tanzania;***
- ***Dr. Tawfik Jelassi, Assistant Director General, UNESCO;***
- ***Ms. Susan Ngongi Namondo, UN Resident Coordinator in Tanzania;***
- ***Your Excellencies Ambassadors and Distinguished Representatives of Development Partners;***
- ***The Hon. Justice (Rtd.) Benard Luanda, President of the Media Council of Tanzania;***
- ***All leaders of Media Councils present;***
- ***Owners and Executives of Media Organizations;***
- ***Distinguished Guests;***
- ***Ladies and Gentlemen.***

It is a great honour and privilege to officiate the opening of the Second African Network of Independent Media Councils Summit 2025, standing in for H.E. Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania. H.E. the President extends a warm welcome to all participants, particularly our esteemed guests from across the continent. The URT is pleased to host you here in the tourist city of Arusha. *Karibuni sana!*

Allow me also to express my sincere appreciation to the organizers of this important Summit for meticulous preparations. Your tireless efforts to convene stakeholders from across the continent, are a testament to your commitment to foster meaningful policy dialogue on the critical issues of journalism, press freedom and communication, as well as the pivotal role of the media in advancing sustainable development in Africa.

#### ***Distinguished Participants;***

I have been brought to understand that this Summit is being held in Tanzania for the first time since its inception in 2024 in Cape Town, South Africa. This is an honor to our country and the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT). The latter works closely with the Ministry of Information, Culture, Arts, and Sports to improve media policies. I am

pleased to note that the Summit has attracted a diverse spectrum of stakeholders from across Africa, with the aim of continuing to strengthen the media environment, promote press freedom, uphold journalism ethics, and enhance the media's vital contribution to social development.

### ***Distinguished Participants,***

To my understanding, the primary mandate of media councils or press associations worldwide, is to regulate and oversee the conduct of media organizations within their respective jurisdictions. Media councils are expected to ensure accountability, address ethical concerns, and safeguard the interests of the journalism profession. By fulfilling these responsibilities, media councils play a crucial role in fostering public trust and elevating journalism standards. Their work centres on formulating and enforcing codes of ethics for journalists and media outlets, grounded in the principles of accuracy, fairness, and objectivity. Moreover, media councils are responsible for receiving and investigating complaints related to breach of ethics and for administering or recommending appropriate sanctions.

### ***Distinguished Participants,***

Media councils and media organizations today face a wide range of challenges that significantly impact professionalism, credibility, and their overall effectiveness. Foremost among these is steady erosion of public trust, which has been exacerbated by unchecked spread of disinformation, hate speeches, and polarizing narratives, particularly through digital platforms and social media. These misleading and often harmful messages distort facts, fuel societal division, and blur the lines between credible journalism and propaganda. As a result, the public becomes increasingly sceptical of traditional media sources, perceiving them as biased, unreliable, or even complicit in spreading misinformation. This crisis of confidence, not only affects media outlets themselves, but also undermines the authority and legitimacy of media councils, whose role is to promote accountability, enforce ethical standards, and protect the integrity of journalism. Without public trust, both the media and the institutions tasked with regulating them, struggle to fulfill their mandates effectively. Financial constraints further exacerbate the situation by limiting research and thereby reducing the quality of journalism. As a result, some outlets turn to sensationalism and hence, compromising ethical standards. Media councils, especially those that are over reliant on media funding, are also impacted, given limited resources to be able to regulate and support the sector effectively.

### ***Distinguished Participants,***

The development of a vibrant media relies on strong legal and institutional frameworks that uphold freedom of expression and the right to information. The theme of this Summit, **"Advancing Media and Communication Regulations for Journalism Excellence in Africa,"** reflects the need to strengthen the media environment while balancing public interest, freedom, and ethical standards.

In recent years, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, in collaboration with media stakeholders, undertook a review of the Media Services Act, aiming to align it with the Constitution, international human rights standards, and technological advancements. Key reforms include removing provisions that gave excessive powers to the Director of Information Services, revising penalties imposed on journalists, and streamlining the licensing process to ensure greater transparency. Additionally, the Government is finalizing a new National Information Policy to replace the 2003 policy. The new policy addresses the rise of digital media, social networks, and modern security challenges, while emphasizing press freedom, ethical responsibility, and the public's right to access information.

***Distinguished Participants,***

I have scanned through the agenda of this meeting, and noted that it encompasses comprehensive discussions on diverse models of media councils, including their organizational structures, operational frameworks, and how they uphold their critical mandate to safeguard professionalism and ethical standards. This, therefore, presents a valuable opportunity to draw lessons from countries that have made significant progress in strengthening journalism and promoting media accountability.

I am also informed that Ministers or their representatives from several African countries, including Tanzania, will actively participate in key sessions focusing on policy matters and the role of African governments in shaping the future of the media. These discussions are expected to address critical areas such as the development of sound media policies, the creation of a conducive investment environment, and the adoption of innovation in this era of digital transformation. Therefore, this forum offers a unique platform for sharing experiences and crafting more effective, forward-looking strategies. I urge all participants to use this opportunity productively.

***Distinguished Participants,***

Before I vacate this podium, I would like to underline four (4) critical issues for the African media to take-on, going forward:

**First,** is the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in information dissemination. It is clear that AI has brought about a radical transformation in the media sector, including improving methods of data collection and analysis, news writing and editing, as well as content dissemination. Despite these opportunities, AI has also introduced challenges such as the spread of misinformation and deliberate disinformation. Currently, media outlets worldwide face the challenge of distinguishing truth from distortion. For African countries, which are still building public understanding of ICT use and scope, the threat of misinformation and disinformation is even greater. I hope that this Summit will come up with recommendations, particularly on legislative proposals or areas that need improvement, to effectively harness the benefits of AI in the media industry. Our laws, policies, and regulatory frameworks must take into account this new digital frontier. We need laws, policies, and regulations that will guide the use of AI in a way that protects journalism ethics, the right to accurate

information, and the right to express opinions for sustainable development. Therefore, your discussions on improving laws and regulatory frameworks for the media and communication are crucial, as the media plays a catalytic role in driving economic growth. Expressed differently, in today's information-driven world, the media has a significant role to play in promoting shared economic growth through provision of facts on employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, startup capital, dissemination of commercial information, and advertising digital financial services. By investing in the media, we also foster innovation, accountability, and citizen participation in economic and social activities.

**Secondly,** access to information as a fundamental freedom, is key in building an inclusive knowledge society. Therefore, in its noble duty, the media is bound to ensure all groups in society, especially people with disabilities, women, youths and children have access to information in a manner that is consistent with their status. Access to information is a right of every individual, and so, the media ought to protect it. Through this audience, I call upon media houses across Africa, to institute appropriate policies that will ensure access to information by these groups, through much more carefully designed programs, use of friendly language and proper timing, in order to leave no one behind.

***Distinguished Participants,***

**Thirdly,** I wish to emphasize is the vital duty and responsibility of the African media to tell Africa's story through an authentic African lens or voice. For far too long, the continent's image has been shaped by external narratives often emphasizing vulnerability, wars, conflicts, and failure (dark continent), while overlooking the immense potential, resilience, and progress of our people. It is time for African journalists to reclaim this narrative by telling powerful and inspiring stories: stories that showcase the triumphs of our communities, world famous business entrepreneurs, the academic excellence of our students, the innovation of our youth, the courage of our women, and Africa's growing contributions to science, technology, good governance, and the global economy. Nearly four decades have passed since the historic Yaoundé Conferences of the late 1970s and early 1980s, which called for equitable access to global information flows and meaningful participation of the media from developing nations. Today, we are reminded of the urgency to revisit and reaffirm those commitments and to begin writing our history in our own words, with our own voice. In advancing the African Union's Agenda 2063, which envisions a continent defined by peace, unity, prosperity, and global respect, the media must play a transformative role. It must serve as a bridge that connects nations, facilitates meaningful dialogue across the continent, and safeguards Africa's rich historical and cultural heritage for generations to come.

***Distinguished Participants,***

**Fourthly,** is a call to media councils across Africa to remain steadfast in promoting media accountability and in safeguarding freedom of expression. This includes timely and professional handling of all complaints lodged against media outlets and the

taking appropriate corrective measures where warranted. Additionally, media councils should intensify efforts to strengthen the capacity of journalists by offering continuous training and opportunities for professional development. Such initiatives are essential to equip media practitioners with the tools and skills needed to effectively combat the rising threat of misinformation and deliberate disinformation.

***Distinguished Participants,***

In conclusion, I wish this conference every success. Let us be reminded that, through collective innovative effort, we can build a resilient, accountable, ethical and transformative media in Africa that catalyzes economic, social, and political developments, while steadfastly protecting the rights and interests of our people, and mother Africa.

I wish to end my opening remarks by joining the Media Council of Tanzania to congratulate in a very special way our leader, the late Mzee Ali Hassan Mwinyi, the Second-phase President of the URT for his outstanding contribution to upholding freedom of speech that culminated into the establishment of the Media Council of Tanzania. I also commend highly the Media Council of Tanzania for bestowing on H.E. Ali Hassan Mwinyi with a prestigious award posthumously. Your Excellency President Hussein Ali Mwinyi, please accept sincere congratulations on behalf of your late father and the entire family from H.E. Dr. SSH, President of URT, the Government and the People of Tanzania for this great honor.

With these remarks, and on behalf of H.E. Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, it is my distinct honour to declare the Second Pan-African Media Councils' Summit officially open.

**Thank you for listening.**