

**STATEMENT BY H. E. SAMIA SULUHU HASSAN,
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS AT THE GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE SEVENTY SIXTH SESSION OF THE UNITED
NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, NEW YORK -
23RD SEPTEMBER 2021**

*Your Excellency Abdulla Shahid, President of the General
Assembly;*

*Your Excellency António Guterres, Secretary General of the
United Nations;*

Excellencies Heads of State and Government;

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Let me commence by joining previous speakers in applauding you, Mr. President, for being elected to preside over the 76th Session of this august Assembly and for the exemplary manner in which you have been presiding over this Session. I also commend you for the ably manner in which you mastered to make possible for us to meet physically despite unprecedented circumstances brought by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The holding of a physical general debate this year albeit with some limitations, demonstrates again that humanity and multilateralism cannot and should not succumb to the virus. And thus where there is a will, there is always a way.

This spirit is what we need going forward. It is why I support and subscribe to the theme of this 76th session that call all of us to **“build resilience through hope to recover from COVID 19, rebuild sustainability, respond to the needs of the planet, respect the lives of people, and revitalize the United Nations”**.

Mr. President,

As this is my maiden speech at the United Nations General Assembly, Allow me on behalf of the people and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, to thank all members of the United Nations for your condolence messages extended to our nation following the untimely passing of our

late President, Dr. John Pombe Joseph Magufuli, on 17 March, 2021. May his soul continue to rest in eternal peace.

We remain indebted to you for the thoughtful and comforting messages which helped us to prevail over that unprecedented test to our nationhood. It is in the same vein that I thank the outgoing President of the 75th Session for dedicating a slot on the 59th Plenary meeting of the General Assembly, on the 16th of April 2021 to pay tribute to our beloved late President Dr. Magufuli. Indeed this was a gesture of solidarity and brotherhood.

Mr. President,

It is not by sheer coincidence that I chose to attend the United Nations General Assembly as my first trip outside Africa, since I took the office. I did so, out of my deep sense of conviction and faith in multilateralism in solving multitude of challenges that our world face today.

I am here to assure you that under my stewardship Tanzania will remain a formidable member of the United Nations and a dependable supporter of multilateralism. We will keep our arms open to those who embrace us and engage with us. We will continue to be the Tanzania that you have known and relied on. A Tanzania that peacefully and respectfully co-existed and cooperated with all countries, big or small, mighty

or weak, rich, or poor, to make this world, our world, a better place for all of us.

Mr. President,

COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us how vulnerable we are as individual countries regardless of our size, wealth, or geography. As we meet here today, we have less than a decade ahead to meet our collective commitment to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). I note with great regret that according to the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020, right now, the world is not on track to achieve the 2030 Agenda mainly due to the adverse impact of COVID-19.

The Report further shows that in some areas, this pandemic has even reversed the progress that was already achieved

years back. For instance, it is expected that around 71 million people who got out of extreme poverty will be pushed back into that situation because of this pandemic. What is depressing is the fact that these impacts are not felt evenly. We, in the developing world are the most affected. It is therefore imperative that concerted efforts are undertaken to address this devastating situation.

Mr. President,

Developing nations must be assisted in addressing socio-economic impact of the COVID-19. On this note, we are thankful to multilateral financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for their efforts in saving many economies from collapsing. These kinds of interventions

are important. We cannot afford to take refuge on the onset of COVID-19 as an excuse for not making sufficient progress on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr. President,

Tanzania has not been spared by COVID-19. After the onset of the pandemic, we in Tanzania, and I believe in many other developing countries, were stuck in the twilight of protecting lives and protecting livelihoods. Measures advocated by the World Health Organization (WHO) were geared towards protecting lives. However, in an economy like Tanzania's consisting of a big proportion of people living on subsistence economy, whom we need to keep them afloat, my country

therefore adopted all necessary measures to curb the spread of COVID-19, including joining the COVAX facility, to ensure that Tanzanians gain access to the COVID-19 vaccine.

The vaccination campaign has started in July this year with the most vulnerable communities and later on other age groupings.

Mr. President,

Globally, when COVID-19 vaccines were being developed, some of us were hopeful that this would mean something good to all of humanity. Nevertheless, we have come to learn that, the virus is moving faster than the global production and distribution of vaccines, as the vast majority of vaccines have

been administered in high and upper-middle-income countries. With the current pace, it is less likely that we will meet the WHO's threshold of vaccinating at least **40 percent** of people in every country by the end of 2021, and at least **70 percent** by the first half of 2022.

The level of vaccine inequity that we see is appalling. It is truly disheartening to see that whilst most of our countries have inoculated less than 2% of our populace and thus, seek for more vaccines for our people, other countries are about to roll out the third dose, calling it "booster vaccine". We tend to forget that nobody is safe until everyone is safe. It is indispensable that countries with surplus COVID-19 vaccine doses share them with other countries. On another note, it is

our humble request that patent rights on COVID-19 vaccines should be waived for developing countries so that they can afford to produce the vaccines. This is not only a necessary move to end this pandemic but also the right thing to do in order to save humanity.

Mr. President,

On economic fronts, the United Republic of Tanzania like other countries has not been spared by the effects of the COVID-19. Before the pandemic, our economy was growing at the steady rate of **6.9 percent** compared to current growth rate estimated at **5.4 percent**. We are now embarking on reviving the tourism sector which was badly affected because of travel

restrictions put in many countries as means to curb the spread of COVID-19.

While slowly trying to revive most of economic activities suffocated by the pandemic, the Government continues to work hard to improve the business environment and attract more investment. Aware of the nexus between economic growth and governance, we managed to maintain peace and political stability, with a vibrant democracy and institutionalized good governance practises, upholding rule of law and human rights.

Mr. President,

I wish to take note of the Secretary General's Report on "Our Common Agenda" which raises key issue of our common concern such as gender equality, climate change and youth development.

On gender equality, COVID-19 is threatening to roll back the gains that we have made. As the first female President in the history of my country, the burden of expectation to deliver gender equality is heavier on my shoulder.

It is for this reasons that I commend the initiative by the UN-Women, France, and Mexico to organize the Generation Equality Forum that took place in Paris in June this year,

whereby my country volunteered to champion for Women's Economic Rights and Justice.

Aware that being passionate about gender equality is not sufficient, my government is reviewing policy and legal frameworks in order to come up with actionable and measurable plans to ensure economic empowerment of women but also other aspects pertaining to gender equality and gender parity.

We are also working on designing an implementation gender-responsive macro-economic plans, budget reforms and stimulus packages with the objective of reducing the number of women and girls' living in poverty.

Mr. President,

The challenges of climate change are really affecting livelihoods, peace and security and forceful displacement of our people. Tanzania government spends 2 to 3 percent of GDP to mitigate and build resilience of communities, and this is a lot in a country which is still grappling with poverty coupled with emergency of the COVID19 pandemic. The pandemic has compromised our capacity to respond to harmful impact of climate change. Therefore, our actions today determine the future of our planet in terms of climate change. In this regard, I call for transparent modality for financial disbursement and emphasize that developed countries should fulfill their commitment to contribute USD 100 billion annually

by 2025 so as to facilitate the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Mr. President,

In concluding my remarks, I wish to echo my country's commitment in pursuing the principles of multilateralism as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. I urge other nations to continue supporting this august institution. The onset of COVID-19 has given to all of us a lesson that we are deeply intertwined, and that unilateralism will not get us anywhere when it comes to challenges that transcends our national borders.

A wise person once said, and I quote, "*Alone, one will go fast, but together we will go far*". Multilateralism must always prevail!

I thank you all for your kind attention!