

NSSF owes its successes to Nyerere

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When Julius Kambarage Nyerere, Mwalimu – the teacher – died on 14th October 1999, the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) was hardly two years old. Like a toddler of that age the NSSF could not crawl, let alone stand up by itself.

However, the Fund which was transformed from the defunct National Provident Fund (NPF) in May 1997 is directly associated with Mwalimu's legacy. As the first president of Tanzania, Mwalimu signed the NPF Act in 1964 providing the newly independent country with its first contributory pension scheme.

In the intervening years, Mwalimu oversaw the growth of the NPF and later, the birth of the NSSF. Despite having stepped down from power in 1985 he still found the time to support the newly formed NSSF in its initial mobilization and publicity campaigns.

The fact that he found the time to do so means

he valued the objectives of the NSSF, because after relinquishing power, Mwalimu became a rarity due to his tight schedule. In the mid-1990s he facilitated the Burundi Peace Negotiations, as well as attending to his other crucial engagements both locally and internationally. Despite all these commitments he was ever available for the NSSF.

As we look back at the ten years since his demise, we feel proud to have achieved most of what he stood for, namely the Fund's success. With a market share of close to 60 per cent in the country's social security industry, the NSSF is now a regional force to be reckoned with.

Our successful membership outreach drive is now targeting people both in the formal and informal sectors. There is no doubt whatsoever that egalitarian Mwalimu would have found this campaign irresistible for registering Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and other members of society.

Equally important is the fact that the Fund has been pivotal in steering the country's economic development. For example, the NSSF has provided a loan totalling 40 billion Tanzanian shillings to the country's power utility company, Tanesco. Doubtless these funds would have been costlier if they had been raised from external sources. Again, the Fund is currently constructing buildings for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at the newly launched University of Dodoma (UDOM) under a special Government loan.

When fully functional the UDOM will accommodate a total of 40,000 students, making it the biggest university in East and Central Africa. Under similar financial arrangements, the Fund is constructing staff houses for civil servants in Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Pemba, and Zanzibar. Yet another multi-billion project, the "Machinga Complex" is nearing completion in up-market Dar es Salaam. The Government contracted the Fund to construct it to accommodate unlicensed traders.

The above achievements are only a few of the Fund's many projects, all courtesy of Mwalimu's legacy. As a measure of keeping alive Mwalimu's burning commitment to the NSSF, one of the Fund's strategically located buildings in Dar es Salaam has been named after him. It is called the Mwalimu Nyerere Pension Tower. As we commemorate ten years since his death, we rededicate our efforts and spirits to work even harder so that the NSSF can better serve its members and the country at large. **E**



Nyerere sitting in traditional dress