

# The Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation

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**JOSEPH BUTIKU** was President Nyerere's Personal Research Assistant, as well as Chief of Staff and Personal Envoy prior to his current role. He also attended Monduli Military Academy, graduating as Lieutenant, and subsequently attaining the rank of major. He was then Principal Private Secretary and Chief of Staff under President Ali Hassan Mwinyi, Regional Party Secretary of the CCM in Mara Region, later becoming Regional Commissioner.

**T**he role of the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation is explained in the words of Julius Nyerere himself: "The Foundation shall promote peace, unity and people-centred development throughout the world, particularly in Africa."

The Foundation's objectives are also the promotion of dialogue among the peoples and governments of Africa on ideas and actions toward peace, unity, and people-centred self-reliant development. It is also committed to sharing experiences between governments, non-governmental organisations and individuals on these issues. The Foundation also collects, analyses, and disseminates information, while engaging in appropriate revenue-generating and fund-raising activities. It also promotes the study of Nyerere's work throughout his life, and to that end collects documents, letters, speeches, interviews, reports, and other information related to him.

The Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation was established in June 1996 as a permanent tribute to Nyerere's contribution to sustainably improving the quality of human relations. Nyerere was first and foremost a believer in the world and in human history. He held strong beliefs about equality, duty, freedom, and respect. He worked for peace, unity, and people-centred development in Africa and the world. He acknowledged the link between the ideals he worked for and the Foundation he helped to establish, writing: "I can only be thankful that an institution established to promote peace, unity, and people-centred development in Africa has the promotion of those ideas among its objectives."

These objectives are very broad. They form the basis of the Foundation's work, which is anchored in Nyerere's belief that people, everywhere should be able to enjoy and develop themselves within the context of freedom and democracy, and based on good governance and social justice. The Foundation is about people. When we talk about development, we are talking about the development of people. This means that in its operational strategies, it must put people first, and be willing and able to work with all peoples as individuals and with their institutions. In this case governments are key partners of the Foundation.

Building partnerships worldwide, and especially in Africa, is one of the key roles of the Foundation. Nyerere emphasised this himself when he wrote: "It is

the Foundation's belief that there is too little contact and cooperation between activists in civil society, in business, trades unions, and other social groupings. We shall be trying to help our continent to develop together in peace and unity." Peace, unity and human development cannot be the work of one group of people or even the work of a single country. It is a global collective responsibility. As Nyerere pointed out, it can only be accomplished through partnerships between populations and through organisations and governments: "The Foundation does not itself expect to bring peace, unity, and people-centred development to Africa – not even to parts of Africa! That would be absurd. Its ambition is to help and facilitate work in these areas by – in part – bringing together the different actors involved in each case. So far it has been the governments of this continent which have been taking the initiative in promoting sub-regional cooperation."

The purpose of the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation is to play a modest role in bringing peace, unity and development to Africa. In carrying that out we will need genuine partners from outside Africa. During the past decade of its existence the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation has participated in the Burundi Peace Negotiations, first through the facilitation of Nyerere, and later under Nelson Mandela. The Foundation was acting as a legal body and conduit.

In collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme in January 1998 the Foundation organised a workshop on Experiences of Individual and Institutional Mediators in African Conflicts. In 1998, in Addis Ababa, in collaboration with DESA/ECA, the Foundation took part in a joint conference on Governance in Africa.

With the support of the Government of the Republic of Uganda the Foundation organised a Symposium on the Great Lakes Region in Kampala aimed at reinforcing regional solidarity. The Foundation also contributed to the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region focusing on peace, security, governance and regional development. A Summit was held in November 2004 and The Dar es Salaam Declaration was issued, later followed by an act on peace, security, stability and development, adopted in Nairobi in 2006.

At home, the Foundation has, with the support of OXFAM, organised a workshop on Debt Cancellation,

held in April 1998. In Collaboration with ACCORD (African Centre for Constructive Resolution of Disputes) of South Africa the Foundation organised a National Dialogue on Constitutional Development in Tanzania. The joint MNF/ACCORD workshop was held in Dar es Salaam in December 2002. The Foundation also organised and ran a national development dialogue that provided a rare opportunity for people to raise and discuss many issues relating to their development, such as democracy, education, employment, health and environment, leadership, and poverty.

The true legacy of Mwalimu Nyerere lies in the many documents he himself wrote, the books he read, and whatever other people have written, or will write about him. This is an area where the Foundation will actively seek the cooperation and intellectual contribution of academic institutions like the University of Edinburgh. The contacts left by Mwalimu himself with such institutions are numerous. The challenge of the Foundation is to identify and partner with them efficiently and effectively.

Before he died, and based on the work of the South Commission of which he was Chairman, Nyerere proposed a survival agenda for Africa in the 21st Century. He introduced and elaborated that agenda in his own words: "I can say that to make it in the 21st Century, Africa must address the continent's inheritance of the multiplicity and artificiality of nation states, with their built-in tendency to endemic instability. It must

also adopt economic and social policies that maximise the mobilisation and use of internal resources, both material and human, as well as maximising inter-African co-operation in all fields of development, both at the regional and at sub-regional level, while working fully with other regions and countries of the South to maximise South-South Co-operation and Solidarity; and in co-operation with other countries' regions of the South work relentlessly with the Economic North to build a World of Justice for all, in which the struggling poor of the World have a chance, both nationally and internationally." The Foundation's Corporate Strategy Plan (2008-2018) and the Rolling Strategy Plan (2008-2013) are based on the 5 major operational areas identified and recommended in the South Commission Report The Challenge to the South.

And finally, the ethical role of the Foundation was defined by Mwalimu himself in these words: "If the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation is to be useful to the people of this country and Africa, its real job will be to hold fast to the principles themselves, and on the basis of those principles to judge the past in its own context. Individual and institutional honesty, and scholastic integrity: these must mark all the work of this institution....among people and governments, the sharing of experiences must govern its operations... but all will be useful only if they are done with a commitment to truth as far as it can be ascertained by us humans..." **F**

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Mwalimu Nyerere talking to former President of Burundi, Major Pierre Buyoya during the Burundi Peace negotiations

