

**ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY H.E. DR. SAMIA SULUHU
HASSAN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF
TANZANIA ON THE OCCASION OF CONFERMENT OF
HONORARY DOCTORATE (*HONORIS CAUSA*) BY
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY;
NEW DELHI, INDIA**

- *Right Honourable, Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India;*
- *Chancellor of the Jawaharlal Nehru University*
- *Senior Indian Government Officials present,*
- *Ministers, Permanent Secretaries, and other Members of my Delegation,*
- *Faculty Members, fellow Alma-mater, and Students*
- *Members of the Diplomatic Corps,*
- *Distinguished Invite Guests,*
- *Ladies and Gentlemen,*

➤ *Namaste*

➤ *Good Morning*

They say, there is no midway in falling in love with India. Be it an Indian song, Indian movie, or an Indian cuisine. It is very difficult to resist an Indian charm. I agree! I have experienced it when I came to India for the first time in 1998 to study at the Hayrabad National Institute of Development and Administration. The memories are still vivid. And I can attest further for the colorful reception I received during this visit, as a President of my beloved country.

Few Minutes ago, I came in to this University as a visiting guest.

Few Minutes after, you have embraced me as a family, and conferred me with an Honorary Causa Degree. I am now

standing here as a family member of the great Jawaharlal Nehru University. No more as a visiting guest.

This is what makes India irresistible. This is what makes India - *'Incredible India!'* Not just the beauty of its landscape, but also the generosity, and the kindness of its people.

I am humbled that my new family boasts of illustrious members, including the current Minister of External Affairs, the Honourable Dr. S. Jaishankar, and the current Finance Minister, the Honourable Nirmala Sitharaman, who both graduated here.

*Mr. Chancellor,
Right Honorable Prime Minister;
Ladies and Gentlemen.*

My heart is brimming with gratitude and my soul is humbled by the profound recognition bestowed upon me by this great University. Receiving an honorary doctorate is an extraordinary privilege that I accept with great pride and humility. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to Jawaharlal University for deeming me worthy of this *Honoris Causa*. This Honorary Causa degree will forever be etched in my history as the first to be awarded to me by a foreign university. Thank you for decorating and adding colour to my history.

Thank you for the kind words you spoke about me, and the reason behind conferring me with this honour. For a moment, as the citation was being read, I paused to reminisce and appreciate the long and laborious journey I have endured, the heavy weight I have lifted, and the remarkable contribution I have made to my country so far. Rarely do I get time to breath, unwind and appreciate the journey since life in

the Presidency gives one no time to think and reflect about oneself. It has been and will always be a journey for the people, the country, and the world. Today, you gave me an opportunity to reflect.

The flashback took me to my tiny coastal village at Kizimkazi in the island of Unguja, Zanzibar, where I was born and raised. I reflected on my childhood as a girl child in a predominantly traditional African and Muslim community. A daughter bore/borne by a housewife and fathered by a teacher, had little chance and no hope of becoming a President of Tanzania especially given my educational journey whereby I studied higher education while working. Never had I dreamt of having a prefix before my name, let alone dreamt of this prefix coming from a prestigious University which is miles away from home. I become. Certainly, not because I am extraordinary. Not because I am self-made but because I am a

product of many pair of eyes and hands which saw the potential in me, nurtured and supported me. I am forever grateful to my late parents who saw an importance of investing into a girl child, taking me to school, and supported my quest in furthering my education. To my family who supported me through out in my career, who tolerated my absence in their lives to allow me to pursue further studies and a political career. Not least to my friends, mentors, and the entire support system.

This award also goes to the leaders and members of my party, the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) which entrusted me with many roles and opportunities, including being the Presidential Running Mate, and later the Chair of the Party, and the President of the United Republic of Tanzania. And to Tanzanians who gave me the honour of being their President, and lent me their trust and overwhelming support. But in

particular this award I dedicate it to the Tanzanian girl child who lives in the remotest parts of the country I want them to know with hard work and commitment all glass ceilings can be **tore** down!

I am acutely aware that, whatever I achieve as a leader of my country, is partly because I am standing on the broad shoulders of my brothers, my predecessors who have dedicated their lives into making the institution of Presidency into what I have inherited. Their legacy is woven into the very fabric of this institution, and it is with profound reverence that I accept this honour also in their names.

I could go on and on thanking everyone since my success, if any, is a cumulation of many trusts, many efforts and many supports I have received on my way up. And, we in Africa believe that, *'When the heart is full it pours out through the*

mouth'. I restrain from over thanking because the list is endless.

Mr. Chancellor,

Right Honorable Prime Minister;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

While I rejoice and celebrate this honor, I am reminding myself that '*there is no free lunch*'. Much as you did not out of courtesy conditioned me to deliver remarks upon being conferred an honorary degree, I understand it is customary for an awardee to do so. And, it may be inappropriate not to seize this opportunity to share with you my reflections on issues of mutual concern. I therefore wish to share with you my reflections on '*What is India to us, Tanzanians and Africans*'.

To us Tanzanians, India is not simply a country. India is an extended family member simply separated by a coastline, a

strategic ally, a dependable partner and a friend for all seasons.

India As Our Extended Family

India and Tanzania's relations dated long before pre-Independence from our colonial master United Kingdom. The monsoon trade connected our people through the Indian Ocean. The Indian community has lived and thrived in Tanzania for decades and span generations. They form part of Tanzania's citizenry and contributed to our struggle for independence and national building thereafter. And so, It comes to no surprise that Indian food which range from Indian Rice, curries to traditional Indian desserts form part of our menus on our tables. Moreover, some Indian words

(laki, pesa, kalam, rangi, tayari, lakini, duniya and kismat) are part of our cultural heritage. On the other hand, Colorful Hindu temple forms hallmark in many of our towns, while the Diwali festive is celebrated by all of us as a testament to our unity and appreciation of customs and traditions of our Hindu brothers and sisters.

Suffice to say, we are more connected rather than disconnected. The blood ties, history, and relations are augmented by the Indian Ocean. This reflection is on my delegation which include Tanzanians of Indian origin. They are here as Tanzanians, not Indians. This is what I meant when I said India is our extended family.

Mr. Chancellor,
Right Honorable Prime Minister;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Traces of our connectedness are also evident in trade. India is our **4th largest** trading partner. In the past **5 years**, our bilateral trade volume has increased from **2.6 billion USD** in 2017/2018 to **6.5 billion USD** in 2022/2023. India is also **top 5** investment source for Tanzania with **631** investment project worth **3.7 billion USD**. These are not words. These are numbers. And we all know, words speak loud, but numbers speak clearer.

Given our historic bonds and bilateral ties there is no excuse why India is not our number one bilateral trade partner and investment source. This is an issue that preoccupied my discussion with Her Excellency President Droupadi Murmu and Right Honorable Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In a

move to give a strong accent to our resolve, we have decided to elevated our relationship into a new Strategic Partnership anchored in four pillars: Maritime Security, Defense Cooperation, Development Cooperation and Trade and Investment.

I would like to thank the President of India, Her Excellency Droupadi Murmu, for her invitation and the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Narendra Modi, for engaging with me and my team through the details of our cooperation. At this point allow me thank everyone who has made my visit to India a success, with a special mention for His Excellency Binaya Pradhan, India High Commissioner to Tanzania, who also happen to be an alumni of this great university.

India As Our Strategic Ally

*Mr. Chancellor,
Right Honorable Prime Minister;
Ladies and Gentlemen.*

Beyond familyhood and trade partnership, India is our strategic ally. India is now a powerhouse. It possesses needed soft and hard powers enough to shape outcomes, influence change, and able to raise a voice to be heard in the lobbying corridors, and rooms where world decisions are made, and our fate as developing countries is decided.

We, in the developing world, immensely appreciates the leadership and contribution that India is making in preserving and restoring sense, value and humanity to our increasing plurilateral, manipulative and a materialistic world. India as

our formidable member in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Commonwealth, and Group of 77 (G77) in the United Nations, continues to be our voice and mouthpiece in avenues where we do not have a seat.

We trust India's leadership not because of its sheer size and economy, but because of its historical contribution and moral standing. India has remained truthful and loyal to the cause of the Global South and the developing countries in general. We appreciate the fact that you have continued to uphold the importance of multilateralism, and valuing society over market (people over profit). The role that builds hope for a better future.

We in Africa are delighted, with India's ascendancy to a position of global influence. We are comfortable because we

are confident that India will never forget Africa. Signals and actions by India justify our confidence. India has advocated for the admission of the AU as a permanent member to this prestigious club of the **G-20**. This is a just gesture.

Tracing back, India played an important role in the decolonization of Africa. India provided material support for the armed liberation struggle of Southern Africa. India is now our important ODA partner. India has formalized our engagement through India-Africa Summits. By opening the first overseas campus of the world renown India Institute of Technology in Zanzibar, it has demonstrated desire to export its success in skills development and technologies to Africa. India cares about peace and stability in Africa as it is the largest Troop Contributing Country in United Nations Peace Keeping Operations most of which are in Africa. We in Africa

can say here today, without fear of contradiction, that even when India reaches a pinnacle of global power, as it is bound to at some point, it will still retain the noble cause of Global South in her heart. This is what, at the very least, we expect of India.

India As a Reliable Partner

*Mr. Chancellor,
Honorable Prime Minister,
Ladies and Gentlemen.*

We are living in a different era and confronting new realities and new challenges that India cannot overcome them alone. neither can Africa. Having uniting our efforts can increase our strength to face them, and leverage our power to

tackle them. Our partnership has helped us before to fight against piracy in the Indian Ocean; to help regulate and conserve our shared marine resources (through the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission - OTC); stood up against unfair trade propositions in the WTO; and pushed for the reforms of the United Nations and its Security Council.

The COVID 19 pandemic exposed us to the realities of inequality, Globalization did not deliver on its promise. The champions of globalization were the first ones to close their borders. The market did not work fairly for the developing countries, when it comes to vaccines and PPTs. And the narratives of *'leave no one behind'* and *'global public good'* became nothing but empty rhetoric. *True colors came out. Masks fell off!*

India, fortunately, did put humanity first by supplying millions of doses of vaccines to about **100** developing countries. This was admirable, but we need to do more together to prepare for inevitable future pandemics. The need to invest in Global Health Security to prepare our countries for future pandemics is imminent. Having vibrant pharmaceutical industry and advancement in research and development (R&D), I am convinced that India is better placed to take leadership of this important crusade. We must work together to win the next test.

*Mr. Chancellor,
Honorable Prime Minister,
Ladies and Gentlemen.*

Another area of convergence for Indo-Africa partnership is our noble fight for a just Green Energy transition. Much as we are positive about green energy transition, we are of the opinion that the time frame, and the cost switching towards a greener path should observe the principle of '*common but differentiated responsibilities*'. By saying so, we are not rebelling, but we are simply calling for justice. A just greener transition. Certainly, this is not too much to ask.

India being the **world's fifth** largest producer of solar power and the **world's second** cheapest solar power, it stands a chance to impact Africa positively in terms of green energy transition. India provides an opportunity for Africa to leapfrog energy crisis in underserved areas through affordable and adaptable off grid and mini grids equipment and

infrastructure. Likewise, Africa offers India the scale to expand its green energy industry, and lead the transition.

Concluding Remarks

Mr. Chancellor,

Honorable Prime Minister,

Ladies and Gentlemen

I said at the beginning of my remarks that, India means so much to Tanzania and Africa. I hope I have tried in the course of my delivery to shed light on what India means to us as an extended family, a strategic ally, and a reliable partner. Our geographical proximity, cultural affinity and demographic similarity give logic to a deeper Indo-Africa economic and political cooperation and partnership.

Our destiny is intertwined. Africa cannot purport to penetrate to the center of the world economy without India. On the other side, India's leadership of the Global South in pursuit of a fair global order cannot be attained, if Africa is in the periphery. This is to say, Africa and India are almost and always tied at the hip when it comes to unlocking the global challenges to our growth and development.

In our struggle against colonialism, and our cry on fairness in the global financial architecture, to principled world economic order, India has always been a shoulder for Africa to lean on. Next year, we commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Declaration for the New International Economic Order (NIEO), of which India was the main proponent. We must admit there was over-optimism in terms of the timeline and

scale in attaining the New International Economic Order, that resulted in disappointment. However, the new realities and lessons learnt, must compel us to forge for Indo-Africa cooperation to push for a more fairer world. Together, we can be a formidable voice and a force to be reckoned with.

Mr. Chancellor,

Honorable Prime Minister,

Ladies and Gentlemen

In closing, I extend my deepest gratitude once again to this esteemed institution for the privilege of receiving this honorary doctorate. I accept it not as a culmination of my efforts, but as a reaffirmation of the boundless potential that hard work, dedication and selflessness holds for us all. Let us

move forward with a renewed commitment to harness the transformative power of cooperation, and in doing so, let us forge a future that is marked by unity, understanding, and a steadfast dedication to the betterment of humanity.

This honour comes with responsibility and expectations. It is a call to action, a call to leverage the privilege that it confers for the betterment of our world. It is a call to use our knowledge, our skills, and our resources to effect positive change, to advocate for those whose voices have been marginalized, and to champion causes that resonate with the values we hold dear.

As I stand here today, I am mindful of the profound interconnectedness of all human beings. We are bound by a common purpose, a shared destiny, and a collective responsibility to leave this world better than we found it.

Together, we have the capacity to shape a legacy of compassion, empathy, and progress that will endure for generations to come.

Thank you for your kind attention!