

Speech at the Grant Agreement Signing Ceremony between Legal and Human Rights Centre and the Embassy of Sweden in Tanzania

Anna Henga - Executive Director of Legal and Human Rights Centre

Prof. Geoffrey Mmari - the Chairperson to the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC's) Board of Directors,

Delegates from the Swedish Embassy, Norwegian Embassy and Irish Embassy,

The entire LHRC team,

***Members of the press and other distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,***

Greetings,

It is a great honour for me, as a relatively new Swedish Ambassador to Tanzania, to combine my first visit to Legal and Human Rights Centre with the signing of this new cooperation agreement. Legal and Human Rights Centre has just developed a new six-year Strategic Plan (2019-2024). It is the implementation of this Strategic Plan that the agreement foresees to support with so-called *core support*. The fact that it is core support is important from the simple reason that it is LHRC's *own identified and developed strategies and priorities* that we choose to support.

Sweden and Legal and Human Rights Centre have been partners since 2001. This means that we will be celebrating 20 years of cooperation and partnership next year. This is, really, rather extraordinary. This is a new phase in a longstanding cooperation between Embassy of Sweden and LHRC. It builds on our shared belief in human rights. The rights of everyone to live in dignity, freedom, equality, justice and peace, whoever they are and wherever they live. We also share the *belief that human rights are essential to the full development of individuals and communities*. This belief is the reason that Sweden, through its development cooperation, gives a lot of weight to supporting human rights defenders and organisations such as Legal and Human Rights Centre, not only in Tanzania, but globally.

The belief that human rights are important is a belief that Sweden, as a nation, shares with the nation of Tanzania. Being joint parties to the majority of the International Human Rights Conventions is proof of this togetherness and of seeing human rights norms as vital. This concurrence is key for our cooperation with Tanzania, both with the Government and with the other essential actors such as Tanzanian civil society. According to these human rights treaties, governments have the primary responsibility for protecting and promoting human rights. However, governments are not solely responsible for ensuring human rights. One provision in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) makes clear that businesses, civil society, and individuals are also responsible for promoting and respecting human rights.

Legal and Human Rights Centre's Strategic Plan is very relevant in this perspective. One of your strategic objectives aims at increasing peoples' understanding about human rights – both the rights holders' and the duty bearers' understanding. This is key in terms of promoting and respecting human rights. If you do not understand them, you can neither claim them nor protect them. Another LHRC objective highlights the importance of working closely with businesses corporate responsibility to respect human rights. This is becoming increasingly important in times when increased industrialization is emphasized. Standards, which ensure that communities also benefit from the presence of businesses and that the environment is not negatively degraded.

The specific focus on the realization of the rights of the most marginalized is yet another objective in LHRC's Strategic Plan that, in our eyes, enhances the relevance of LHRC's work. For all to be able to enjoy their human rights it is important to focus on individuals that have added challenges or are being structurally discriminated. Tanzania and Sweden, as member of the United Nations, have committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizing that the *dignity of the individual* is fundamental and that the Agenda's Goals – the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – should *Leave Nobody Behind*.

Finally, the last piece of LHRC's work I wish to highlight as crucial is the active role that LHRC is taking in advocating for rule of law, civic space, democracy, and constitutional and legal reforms. Tanzania is one of several countries that are suffering declines in indexes that measure levels of democracy, freedom and respect for human rights. This is a concern. Consequently, this area of work, which focuses on the political and civil rights of citizens represents the second spectrum of rights that need to be promoted and respected for economic development to happen and benefit all. One current example of this is LHRC's participation in the ongoing debate around the proposed amendments to the Political Parties Act where LHRC, with its legal expertise, engage in an informed debate about the possible consequences of a new legislation.

With the signing of this new agreement, we are certain that we are supporting a very important actor that takes its' responsibility, as per the UDHR, to promote and protect the human rights of the citizens of Tanzania, very seriously. Together we will work for the realization of the human rights treaties our respective nations are signatories to and we will work towards leaving nobody behind.

I look forward, in my capacity as Ambassador of Sweden to Tanzania, to make our long collaboration incessantly fruitful.

Asante Saana.