

**OPENING SPEECH BY HONOURABLE DR. MRS. MARY NAGU (MP),
MINISTER OF STATE, PRESIDENT'S OFFICE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE
MANAGEMENT, TO THE 5TH S.A.D.C. EXECUTIVE PROGRAMME
SEMINAR ON E-GOVERNMENT HELD AT THE GOLDEN TULIP
HOTEL, DAR ES SALAAM ON 14TH SEPT. 2004**

Distinguished Delegates from SADC Countries,
Honourable Assistant Deputy Minister for IT Services from Canada,
Esteemed Resource Persons and Organisers,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am greatly honoured to host you and open for you this fifth SADC Executive Programme Seminar on e-Government. You may wish to learn that this seminar was jointly organised by my office and CESPAM, the Centre of Specialisation in Public Administration and Management, which is based in Botswana, working together with Commonwealth Secretariat's COMNET-IT, based in Malta and supported by the German development agency GTZ.
2. On behalf of the Government of Tanzania, it is therefore a pleasure to welcome all of you to Dar es Salaam and to wish you all an enjoyable few days in the city, while looking forward to a fruitful and productive outcome to the Seminar that brings all of you together. We also hope that, during your stay, you will also be able to sample at least a few of the many tourist attractions that are easily accessible from here, so that your visit may become memorable for reasons additional to the Seminar itself.
3. Just seeing so many of you here makes me realise the extent to which the theme of this fifth Executive Programme Seminar is of deep interest to the Governments of the SADC region, and beyond. However, let us be sensitive to the fact that we here are merely the fortunate few public servants who were able to afford the time and resources at this juncture in order to attend this special event. So we must be mindful that the relevance of our deliberations doesn't end merely at our desks, but also extends to reach all those who desired but were unable to be here with us.
4. Tanzania has a public service that consists of nearly 300,000 public servants. We serve a population of 35 million within a national territory of close to one million square kilometers. And, as some of you know at first-hand, we are also extensively engaged in peace efforts for our neighbouring

countries. These are among the reasons why we are fully committed to taking hold of the many unique opportunities accorded by e-Government, to enable us to better manage the future.

5. In the case of Tanzania, it adopted in 2003 a National Policy on ICT (Information and Communications Technologies), which was aligned to the five main objectives of our National Vision 2025. Among the ten key thrust areas was one that says, and I quote: “*the Public Service requires a specific emphasis in the National ICT Policy*”, end of quote. This has meant that ICT is now being promoted in government to increase the productivity of both the public and private sectors, while empowering the general public and also enhancing the range, quality and effectiveness of the delivery processes for more affordable public services. It can be done. We have already experienced this as a matter of fact, and we now want to rapidly broaden the outcomes.

6. For instance, between the President's Office for Public Service Management and the Ministry of Finance, we have an initiative to jointly manage the deployment and payment of all Public Servants through an Integrated Human Resource and Payroll Management System. While simply starting out to install the new system, we were able to identify and delete close to ten thousand ghost workers. Simultaneously we detected an sharp increase in the number of deletion requests coming in among the routine monthly payroll amendments. After commissioning the new system in June 2002, in addition to efficiency gains and greater accuracy of payments, we also gained notable benefits in the reduced volatility of our annual wage-bills against budgeted amounts, partly due to tighter controls on expenditure and partly to more accurate budgeting data.

7. After building up a history of transactions, we find we are now in a better position to detect and track fraudulent claims, perhaps even to deter them. So our next level of progress is to make available access to this system for those who are in the field, so that they can contribute directly towards assessing the validity of transactions as well as the accuracy of the data. To do so, we are in process of installing powerful high-speed printers to ensure that even in the absence of IT equipment, the monthly information package from the payroll will help them ensure compliance with full accountability. For offices that have IT resources, access through the Internet to the same data will be also available.

8. Given our continued poverty levels and severe resource constraints, we cannot afford to manage randomly, but must take a strategic approach to the application of ICT within government, so that the benefits may be shared as

widely as possible. At the very least, we will be generating and disseminating considerably more accurate and timely information that will contribute towards formulating better policies and day-to-day decisions at all levels. As a result, we expect to see improved corporate governance both within and beyond the public service. And with increased popular participation facilitated by ICT, we can ensure that our public services will increasingly become more responsive to the real needs and constraints of our population. Without a strategic approach, we will necessarily still use ICT in the public service, but without deriving any of the benefits offered by its use, and also without properly addressing our broadest and most acute priorities in socio-economic development.

9. This leads me to state that e-Government in today's world is not to be perceived as a luxurious option for the future, but must be addressed as an immediate imperative, especially given the urgent circumstances of addressing poverty reduction in the context of the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals. We cannot afford to be complacent on this issue at present. How will the coming generations judge us if we do not equip them for the realities they are growing with? And knowing that globalisation is synonymous with competition, how then can our local private sectors be competitive if they are constantly obstructed by an inefficient and unresponsive public sector? So we have to move forward boldly as that is what our own people expect from us.

10. Ladies and Gentlemen, I am sure you will understand that I am talking about using ICT in a strategic manner in order to boost productivity in the public service, and not about issuing free computers and connectivity just to build appealing statistics. We need to seize the opportunities offered by tiny handheld gadgets, which allow extension workers to carry entire encyclopedias with them inside their shirt pockets while automatically keeping them in touch with progress in their profession, even while they are in the field. We also need to build harmonised databases that can recognise our people from birth, into school, through their careers and until old age. At the very least, this will save many accumulated hours of filling out the same information repeatedly, though not always accurately, into the many unavoidable forms in our lives. At best, it will help the Government to be more responsive to its citizens, but having a more accurate and broader view of their realities.

11. Ladies and Gentlemen, I am sure you appreciate that the commitment of top-level leaders is vital for effectively carrying out far reaching transformations such as these. And for that to happen, it is important to avoid putting forward technology issues only, but to also consider the processes, organisations and

the staff. It is also very important to build gradually. In Tanzania's case, the Cabinet decision of 20th April 2004 to create an e-Government strategy focuses initially on just three deceptively straightforward priorities:

- establish a focal point to coalesce and reinforce existing, but fragmented and independent, e-Government initiatives;
- build a national wide-area network to carry efficient voice and data communications among all Government offices; and
- create awareness of these opportunities across the public service.

12. Thus, under the auspices of our Public Service Reform Programme, which was launched in June 2000, we are now able to bring to bear a whole array of independent activities into being a consolidated e-Government thrust. This means, for instance, that programmes for computer literacy training have been adapted towards specifically addressing the e-Government needs of trainees' departments. It also means we have seen increased consultations on systems development and procurements to ensure compatibility, wider adoption among potential users with reduced total costs of ownership. And we launched a project to create a template strategic planning process to create an internal policy for Management Information Systems within Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), so that we can be assured of developing a uniform but comprehensive approach across the whole of Tanzania's Public Service.

13. In addition, we are working towards developing a wide-area network for MDAs including all the Local Authorities, initially based mostly on V-Sat technology. Once the East African Submarine cable System comes into existence in a few years from now, this network will be ready to reap the benefits of significantly enhanced connectivity that will necessarily also be felt across all of our key sectors as stipulated by the National ICT Policy in accordance to our National Vision 2025. In developing this wide-area network, we are not afraid to partner with the Tanzania Peoples' Defence Forces, who have long experience in satellite telecommunications matters, thereby also ensuring that the network will support our national security in these troubled times. Much support has been offered to us towards building this network, but most particularly we recognise the share of the Royal Government of Belgium.

14. Why do we need this network? Because we want to be known not as an "Electronic Government", but as a "Networked Government", or in Kiswahili I would say "Serikali-Mtandao". In this day and age, it is more important to be connected than to be merely computerised because by being connected you

gain access the opportunities offered by the computerisation and connectedness of all others. To the layman, this should translate to being able to sort out vital issues with their Government such as applying for business registration or paying for licence renewals by simply visiting their District Council or a local cyber-café for a matter of minutes. Instead, today too many people have to spend whole days travelling to queue for hours in front of offices staffed by harrassed and underpaid clerks. It also means that the Government can now cheaply publish material on the Internet, which used to only be available in specific offices in Dar es Salaam. To give just a few quick examples, all Acts of Parliament, back to the early 1960's, and all Parliamentary debates with the CVs of sitting MPs are online at www.parliament.go.tz. Plenty of information about Tanzania's Public Service Reform Programme is online at www.estabs.go.tz. National school examinations results are published online at www.tanedu.org, while for the National Board of Accountants and Auditor, exam results are published at www.nbaa.or.tz.

15. Ladies and Gentlemen, in the context of the post Cold War era of Globalisation, there is no turning back. Anyway, what is it that we could look to turn back to? Surely not our pre-Independence era or that divisive period of the Cold War? In this new era of Globalisation, we have the opportunity to build a mesh of partnerships with one another at many level, and without the boundaries imposed by distance, thanks to ICT. In that line, we hope you will be able to appreciate the value of video-conferencing and distance learning when you visit the Tanzania Global Development Learning Centre during your Seminar's Session Four.

16. Indeed, the world of ICT has come a long way from the time of imposing mainframe computers to what is known as the mobile-Internet. As a result, there is a newly emerging concept of mobile Government as being the stage that comes beyond e-Government. This aligns with our Public Service Reform Programme's broad intentions of bringing the Government closer to the people in order to ensure that the delivery of public services corresponds closely and consistently to the real needs of the people. Let us not forget that the struggle for independence was because we wanted to have a Government that is *for*, *by* and *of* the people with institutions that assured our rights to enjoy democracy, accountability, and equal rights to our dignity. As articulated within NEPAD, African countries have committed to open up their institutions of governance for peer review. This is a challenge that we have set ourselves, and ICT offers many attractive and innovative options we should explore for this.

17. For these reasons, this series of SADC Executive Programme Seminars is very opportune, and I congratulate each one of you for choosing to be a part of it. After Mauritius, South Africa, Mozambique and Botswana, today Tanzania is proud to host this event. It is also an honour for us that the theme you are going to discuss here gives focus to applying e-Government for leading change management. We all recognise that the only constant in the world is change, and that survival depends more on being able to live with change than on just having strength. Therefore the biggest single challenge is then of managing change processes. ICT now offers tools to help us create awareness and mold expectations concerning impending changes. ICT also helps us to formulate, evaluate and support those change processes, plus to implement and later to monitor and analyse the outcomes. But this will only happen if we are cautious but bold enough to implement those ICT tools with such a focus in mind.

18. Ladies and Gentlemen, doesn't it does sound rather contradictory to have to be *cautious* but *bold* at the same time? How can we do that successfully? And what parameters will we need to establish? Who are the stakeholders and how will they be impacted? But where can we find the key players whom we will need? These are a few of the issues that I hope will be addressed in your Seminar over the next three days.

19. So let me conclude here by wishing you fruitful and valuable deliberations with plenty of networking among you. This is also a unique opportunity for each of you to form new friendships, and to gain from the experience of one another, so please make use of it. One particularity of e-Government is that there is no "one size fits all" solution. Another particularity is that it is not an static achievement, but a dynamic process with many entry points. This means that there is room to accommodate many approaches and perspectives, whereby each one of you will have something to contribute and help raise the understanding of others. Hopefully, you will also find some time to interact with the Tanzanians around you and gain pleasant memories from our country to take back with you.

20. It is now my honour to declare the SADC Executive Programme Seminar on "e-Government for Leadership in Change Management" is open, and I thank you all for your kind attention.