



**Keynote address by Jacqueline Mkindi, Chief Executive Officer,
TANZANIA HORTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION**

**THEME: STRATEGIC POSITIONING OF RESEARCH AND TRAINING
INSTITUTIONS IN THE AGRICULTURE TRANSFORMATION IN
TANZANIA.**

AT

SUA CONVOCATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND LUNCHEON

26TH NOVEMBER, 2015

SUA, MOROGORO

Vice Chancellor, Prof. G. C. Monela,

**Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), Prof. P.R. Gillah,
Deputy Vice Chancellor (Finance and Administration) Prof. Yonika Ngaga
President of SUA Convocation, Prof. Gabriel Mbassa,
SUA ALUMNI PRESENT
SUA STUDENTS**

Ladies and Gentlemen!

I feel deeply honored and humbled to be given the opportunity to address this, very important professional event, the SUA ALUMNI Annual General Meeting and Luncheon. I strongly believe that this is not just like any other meeting but an event that will generate important resolutions that will define, probably, a different road map or may be a new direction towards the pragmatic contribution of the University, and the staff involved, the alumni members like myself and others in the private and public institutions towards supporting the agriculture transformation agenda in Tanzania.

May I therefore take this opportunity to thank the SUA management and the ALUMNI leadership for inviting me to be part of this beautiful event and also to give me this platform to share my experience and point of views as regards to our stake in the Tanzania agriculture development. Thank you very much so!

Ladies and Gentlemen; Well, I used to be a student here, back in the late 90s towards 2000 and I am therefore a PROUD PRODUCT AND MAKE OF SUA... I would like to express my deepest gratitude to this university, which has made me the person I am today. I cannot underestimate the role of this university in my formation as a TRANSFORMATIVE LEADER in the agriculture sector in this country. My DAYS at SUA made an essential part of my life: they taught me to be a social and sociable individual who can speak the professional language with different people across the globe. I found a lot of friends, and we continue to support our relationship even a decade after our graduation in 2000. Today, I'm the CEO and the Board Chairperson of the TAHA GROUP OF COMPANIES, the fastest growing and vibrant private sector member based organization in this country supporting the horticulture development in this Tanzania and across the region. The University contribution towards my leadership success is immense and cannot be

overstated. **May i also commend the great work and significant contribution the University is doing in this country!**

Ladies and Gentlemen: As a country we share the three worldwide common goals and aspirations: ***economic growth, social stability and better lives for the people.*** And we have so realized that these goals can be attained if agriculture is transformed and is placed at the center of our national social-economic development strategies.

As we all know, agriculture impacts the majority our people in this country and across Africa. Nearly 80% of the population rely on agriculture as their livelihood and 65% are smallholder farmers in the rural areas. Even with this fact, and for many years, agriculture is still a highly vulnerable sector faced with many challenges. We all know these challengess, I am not here to present to you the challenges in agriculture because they are known to us in this room.

The world population is estimated to reach nearly 10billion in 2050, while Africa's population will be about 2 billion greater than that of China or India by then. Regional urban populations, are projected to grow by 230% in East Africa over the next 15 years. Today's Total Population is 150M Urbanised – 38% (57M), Projected Population in 2030 is 250M, Urbanised – 54% (135M)

It is therefore a common agreement that in order to feed such population the **worlds food production must double**. The interesting part is that the world now acknowledges that it will be impossible to achieve this without the contribution of Africa and Tanzania in particular. The challenge however is how can we transform Africa Agriculture and put it in its right place in the global arena? **HOW?** Surely we cannot achieve that with a subsistence production system that is devoid of access to technology, experience, R&D and reliable market. **Simply put, agriculture must be transformed from what it is now to a proper business in its own right.**

To achieve this we need knowledgeable Africans and Tanzanians. Game changers, people who will walk the talk, people who will make affirmative actions and drive solutions towards agriculture issues. These will not be imported or fall from the sky **(like mana during the Moses time)**. They will have to be developed and nurtured in the finest education and competitive agribusinesses in our respective countries and institutions. One of such an institution that is a trailblazer is SUA.

I stand here today, a daughter of this land, educated and empowered to work and competing amongst the finest brains of this world. I have participated in the high-level global processes and programs such as the G8 and Davos summits, advocating for the Tanzania position. I AM A PRODUCT OF SUA! Given the challenges ahead, we today are just pioneers but with a mission to allow Africa and Tanzania play its role....

Africa today is importing about 67million tones Agricultural products from Asia, Europe and the Americas. We use about \$45billion to do that every year. This is unacceptable given what we have in our countries: the land, people, water sources, climate, etc. we have all that it takes to reverse the situation. What is happening now It is unacceptable!

Today, edible oils are the second most expensive product that we import after petroleum products! We can surely produce edible oils. But we are yet to achieve that. The import list includes sugar, and even cereals. We import juice concentrate, tomato paste and apples! This has to stop! **SUA MUST BE PART OF THAT ANSWER.**

We sing AGRIBUSINESS! FARMING AS BUSINESS! WE SING THIS SONG VERY WELL ...AGRIBUSINESS... BUT me and you know the agony of doing business in this country or in Africa mainly attributed to:

- Inefficiencies and complexities in systems and procedures, rules and regulations, and in people we deal with every day!
- Lack or inadequate capacity: Lack of institutional and human capacity in trade facilitation both from the public and private sector
- Corruption: two sides: those who give and the one receiving both sides but agree to create business corruption free zone
- Taxation system: multiple levies and fees charged by regulatory bodies. Agriculture is a highly taxed industry at least in Tanzania. A registered agribusiness firm in Tanzania has to pay about 43 different taxes, levies and fees. Yet we expect such companies to be sustainable and profitable!
- Unpredictable policies, and sharp transition between policies are some of the factors which always leave our farmers with irreparable losses and cause lots of frustrations to the business community
- Inadequate use of IT systems (manual work) and Excessive documentation requirements, unnecessary delays and bureaucratic procedures and Poor coordination hampering business transaction between partners.

- Poor access to and high cost of inputs i.e availability of substandard quality inputs in the markets, i.e fake seeds, chemicals and fertilizers

Ladies and Gentlemen, even with the challenges, I tell you It is possible to transform agriculture in this country if and importantly as professionals, decide to dwell and tap on to the key opportunities around us:

1. Advancement in science and technology- Innovation is key and how do we innovate: by leveraging science and technology, markets and global support
2. The regional integration processes i.e EAC, ECOWAS, SADEC
3. Growing global interests and momentum to support agriculture transformation agenda. Tanzania being the center of attraction!

The three above are a good sign that the agenda will succeed depending on our commitment and dedication, our genuine interest and desires translated into our smart and affirmative actions towards agriculture. Thinking outside the box, doing business un-usual, and establishing transformative partnerships should form part of our strategies.

I mentioned existing opportunities in agriculture: let us cite an example of horticulture, the industry I know best. Young men and women facilitated by TAHA earn TZS 20-30million per season per acre from the production and sales of watermelon. True data from our farmers.

Ladies and Gentlemen, With an investment of between TZS 800,000 and 2.5 million on an acre, farmers can earn a profit of as much as 20 million per acre depending on the type of crop and farmer's production and marketing plan. Onion business can offer a net profit of between 9 -14 million; tomato between 8-10 million; watermelon between 20 -30 million, carrots between 9 -13 million and green beans between 4 - 9 million per acre per season (12 weeks). This is an area where youths can make quick and clean money instead of complaining that there is no employment. But they need to be guided!

There are many opportunities like these in agriculture out there, but it requires partners' coordination and alignment in supporting agribusinesses.

- A University like SUA must position itself as a center of excellence where other agriculture led training and research institutions in Tanzania or in the region could come here to borrow best practices in technology drive.

- The global climate change and its impact demands SUA to provide a leadership in driving innovative solutions to production challenges from its demand driven scientific research activities. And also derive effective and efficient Mechanisms to connect and translating the research findings down the line to farmers. ***Give an example of US research and Private sector***
- when there are pests or diseases outbreak such as the recent Tuta absoluta, a tomato leaf minor outbreak in Tz, and after the research conducted by SUA, it is expected that the University will join hands with the private sector organizations like TAHA in establishing the Pest Control and Management Practice and participate effectively in the stakeholders awareness creation and capacity building programs. I am not saying you are not doing this....

Ladies and Gentlemen, As private sector partners for example, we fully appreciate that for a big institution like SUA to meet or exceed the expectations of her stakeholders, through its services, it requires strong and sustainable resource base, both technical and financial. And therefore coming up with innovative ways of mobilizing resources outside the government systems is paramount issue. Strategies that may require the institution to act against its traditional ways of doing things.

- Identifying the right skill sets within the university especially the young blood in the system; people who are enterprising or business oriented, and empower them to actively participate in the systems transformation processes may give us timely results. Some departmental leadership selection criteria may needs to be revised.
- I am also a believer of the true spirit of Public Private Partnership in addressing defined/specific agenda. The University should also continue to establish strategic ties with Private sector organizations for improved service delivery to the stakeholders. A good example is the formalized partnership between my organization, TAHA and the SUA Horticulture department through a signed PF with defined roles and responsibilities of parties. This allow for leveraging of resources i.e financial and technical in realizing common agenda for mutual interests.

Building farmers and agriculture value chain resilience starts by building institutions resilience and governance systems. As key stakeholders of SUA we have a stake or a role to play in ensuring that our university is competitively positioned to deliver demand driven, quality, timely, and reliable services to the industry. The Alumni members in their respective positions in this country and outside the country must be reached out and sensitized to participate anyhow in that process. As many as we are, and with our various skill set and abilities and capabilities, we can move the umovables.

With these remarks, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for listening and allow me to reiterate my organizations commitment to partner with SUA in promoting the development and transformation of the horticultural industry in this country. I invite you to invest in the in this industry and I promise you will never regret!

Thank you!