

**OPENING SPEECH BY HON. EZEKIEL M. MAIGE (MP), MINISTER FOR NATURAL
RESOURCES AND TOURISM AT THE OPENING OF THE UNWTO REGIONAL TRAINING
SEMINAR FOR EAST AFRICA ON TOURISM POLICY AND STRATEGY, SEA CLIFF HOTEL
DAR ES SALAAM, 12TH SEPTEMBER, 2011**

Ms. Nuru Millao, Deputy Permanent Secretary - Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism,

Mr. Helder Tomas, Deputy Director, Programme for Africa (UNWTO),

Mr. Steve Noakes Seminar facilitator from THEMIS UNWTO,

Mr. Adrien Chatenay Seminar facilitator from THEMIS UNWTO,

Seminar Participants from participating countries,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All protocols observed,

Good morning,

It is a great honor for me to be with you this morning for official opening of the Seminar on Tourism Policy and Strategy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by expressing my gratitude to Mr. Taleb Rifai the Secretary General of United Nations World Tourism Organization for accepting to support the undertaking of this important Seminar. I wish to thank also the staff at the UNWTO, technical experts involved in training, organizers of the seminar, and participants for making this training possible. May I also take this opportunity to welcome you to Tanzania and Dar es Salaam City in particular.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Tanzania joined the UNWTO in 1975. Ever since, we have worked closely with UNWTO for more than three decades. From this membership, we have benefited through participation in the General Assembly Meetings and various tourism fora organized under the auspices of UNWTO. The implementation of various resolutions and declarations under UNWTO has benefited the tourism industry in Tanzania in many ways. In addition Tanzania has been an active member in the preparation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and participate in its implementation through incorporation of some issues of Global Code of Ethics for Tourism in the Tourism Policy, Tourism Act of 2008 and associated guidelines.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to say few a words about my country. Tanzania is a land of many wonders un-parallel diversity of fauna and flora. The scenery, good climate and topography of the country, including its very friendly people is the essence for the growth of robust tourism industry. The large number of natural attractions and the vast size of the country provide opportunities for developing and promoting different tourism products ranging from game viewing, Scuba diving, beach holiday activities, mountain climbing, game hunting and archeological ventures. We are making efforts to use these opportunities to develop the tourism industry for the benefit of our economy, employment creation and poverty alleviation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Ministry aims to develop sustainable quality tourism that is ecologically friendly to the conservation and restoration of the environment and its people's culture. In so doing the industry is seeking to maximize the net gains/benefits that emanate from the various tourism activities. To be able to achieve this mission we need to have sound policy and strategies that govern the development of the tourism industry. This Seminar is fundamental to the development of tourism in our tourism destinations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In Tanzania tourism is among the sectors which have great economic growth potential. It provides substantial amount of foreign exchange earnings, employment and stimulates other economic sectors like agriculture thereby contributing to the economic growth. Its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product is about 17%. Statistics reveals the increase of revenue from US\$730 Mill in the year 2000 to US\$1,254.50 Mill in the year 2010. In the same period the tourist arrivals increased from 501,669 to 782,699. We need to plan and inject new vigour to increase the share of tourism in our economic growth.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In order to align our tourism industry with the domestic and international tourism developments, we are reviewing the National Tourism Policy of 1999. The Revised Tourism Policy will take into considerations promotion of tourism and economic growth, improvement of livelihood of the people, through development of sustainable and quality tourism.

The government will continue to play the catalytic role of providing and improving the infrastructure as well as providing conducive environment for investment. We are improving the working relationship with the Tourism Private Sector through

encouragement of Public Private Partnership. Tanzania is operating in a competitive atmosphere in terms of provision of quality tourism products, from the given number of tourist destinations and wide choices available to tourists. In this case, the Tourism Policy has clearly spelt out the need to have an effective legislation in creating a conducive and competitive environment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my hope that, at the end of the seminar participants will have learned various issues surrounding Tourism Policy and Strategies and translate these skills into actions through devising policy and strategies that will result into development of tourism in our destinations. Therefore, I wish you to be the instruments of change in tourism development when you go back to our countries.

With these few remarks, it is my honour to declare the Training Seminar on Tourism Policy and Planning for the East African Countries officially open.

Thank you for your attention.