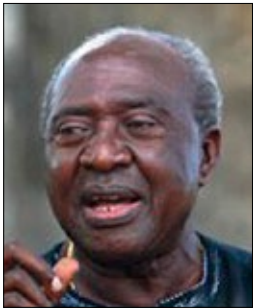


The greatest achievement

By **JOHN SAMUEL MALECELA**

FORMER PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST VICE PRESIDENT OF TANZANIA



JOHN SAMUEL MALECELA was born in Dodoma in 1934. He completed a Bachelor's degree at Bombay University and a Master's degree at Cambridge, and holds an honorary degree from the University of Texas. As one of Tanzania's most experienced statesmen he has served as Ambassador to the UK, Ethiopia, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the UN as well as Minister for Foreign Affairs, Communications, Transport, Mineral Resources and Agriculture. From 1990 to 1994 he served as Prime Minister and First Vice President of Tanzania.

The United Republic of Tanzania's existence to date is one of the greatest historical achievements Africa has had in its endeavour for independence and strength. Uniting our countries, whose borders were not originally created by Africans, but by colonialists, was a great dream of most of our founding fathers.

I remember one particular interesting incident when our leaders met in Cairo for the first OAU Summit. At that time I was Tanzania's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. That was just four months after the Union agreement was signed by Presidents Julius Nyerere and Abeid Aman Karume in 1964). I had an opportunity to attend the Summit as part of the delegation led by the late President Nyerere.

At the summit, all the leaders agreed that there was a need for Africa to unite. However, there was a difference of opinion, on how could this be possible. Some came with a plan to form the United States of Africa. On the other hand, some advocated for a gradual economic regional integration that would eventually bring about the continental unification needed.

It is obviously impossible to talk about the unification of Tanganyika and Zanzibar in 1964 without a mention of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere. Nyerere was a man with a vision and a deep rooted commitment to Africa. He was a man who wanted to do every thing in an African way. He was a true advocate of African freedom and dignity.

At Cairo (July 1964) Mwalimu, unlike some other leaders arrived as a humble son of Africa advocating for union in an African way. We saw some leaders arriving there with big delegations and pompously claiming their commitment to African unity. Mwalimu presented the argument that African unity was possible in the way shown by the union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar.

Immediately after the Zanzibar Revolution of 12th January 1964 there was a feeling that the two countries needed to unite together to form a stronger nation. A major reason for that need was the very strong social and, indeed historical ties that existed between the people of the two countries. We also had some security reasons that brought us together.

In early 1964, before posted to New York, I was a Regional Commissioner for Mwanza. By virtue of that position, I was then a Member of Parliament. I remember a Committee was formed prior to the signing in April and my brother Job Lusinde was a member

of it. The Articles of the Union were agreed, signed by the leaders and later ratified by the Tanganyika Parliament and the Zanzibar Revolutionary Council.

Despite having a Protectorate Agreement with the government of the Sultan of Zanzibar, which had been toppled a few months earlier, the United Kingdom was among the first governments to support the union. We really need to appreciate the support of the United Kingdom and other countries for this achievement.

As a central figure in the Union Government, variously as Prime Minister and First Vice President, I have witnessed several steps taken to improve the Union. We have always been trying to resolve all the issues claimed to hinder the good progress of our Union.

Notably, as Prime Minister, I was involved in the formation of a committee chaired by Mr. William Shelukindo, then Principal Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office, to address some concerns about the Union. The Committee came up with 108 issues to address about the Union. In co-operation with the then Chief Minister of the Zanzibar Revolutionary Government, the late Dr. Omar Ali Juma, we designed a plan of action published in a book title Muafaka (Agreement) in 1994.

Towards the end of my tenure as Prime Minister, a group of Members of Parliament, particularly from the mainland tabled a motion in the National Assembly demanding a third government (Government of Tanganyika). I did not believe in the three governments' solution, but as the Prime Minister of the time, I supported the idea of organising a referendum to decide on that. This was not well understood among the public, hence a belief that I was supporting the Group popularly known as G55.

Despite all the challenges our Union has encountered during its 50 years of existence, I am still strongly convinced it was an important move for the establishment of our nation. The Union has fulfilled Mwalimu Nyerere's dreams of building a strong and highly respected country. Tanzania managed to achieve a leadership position at international level due to its stability in the Union and support for the liberation of Africa.

During the 50 years of existence, Tanzania has been a centre for peace and liberation in Africa. All in all, the role played by Tanzania in international and African affairs has been commendable beyond imagination. **E**