

**OPENING SPEECH BY HONOURABLE STEPHEN MASATO
WASIRA (MP), MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE FOOD
SECURITY AND COOPERATIVES AT THE LAUNCH OF
ORGANIC PRODUCTS EXHIBITION AT THE
BLUE PEARL HOTEL,
DAR ES SALAAM 28 MAY 2007**

**Hon. Mrs Janat Mukwaya,
Minister for Tourism, Trade and Industry from
Uganda**

**Hon. Mrs. Maria Nzomo, Ambassador and Permanent
Representative, Mission of Kenya in Geneva,
Switzerland;**

**Hon. Mr. Marten Lumbanga, Permanent Representative,
Mission of Tanzania in Geneva, Switzerland;**

**Hon. Mr. Arsene Balihuta, Permanent Representative
Mission of Uganda in Geneva, Switzerland;**

Permanent Secretaries;

Invited Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed my great pleasure and honour to be given this opportunity to officiate this exhibition of organic production today as one of the important events during this East African Organic Conference.

Madame Chairperson, I have also noted with pleasure that this exhibition has drawn exhibitors from the whole all of the five East African countries namely Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania. The range and quality of the products being exhibited is very impressive, and a testimony of the potential of our countries to become a major player in production, consumption and trade of various types of organic products. These products include coffee, cotton, tea, cashew, cocoa, honey, various spices, and vegetables. I would like to take pride of this success and this opportunity to congratulate all the producers and exhibitors for a job well done.

Madame Chairperson, this exhibition is an important event which I believe, has a potential not only to market the organic products to consumers outside our countries but also can be an important vehicle to educate our people in our region to participate in production and consumption of organic products and in so doing contribute in increasing production and consumption.

Madame Chairperson, I am informed that the demand of organic products is increasing at the rate between 15 and 20 percent annually in almost all of the important markets in Europe, America and Asia. The challenge is for producers including ourselves to march that demand with the supply. This is a great trade opportunity to our producers and processors, if only we could increase production and productivity.

Madame Chairperson, Organic farming in Africa must be viewed beyond the perspective of providing commodities for the global market. Rather it should be seen as an agricultural system that *“enhances”* and *“manages”* the complexity of the ecosystem rather than reducing and simplifying the biophysical interactions on which agricultural production depends. I am convinced, given the opportunity of producers in our region will be able to increase production. It is our role here today, all of us from the public and private sector to create such opportunities and facilitate our producers to benefit from such an opportunity. Collaborative efforts are much needed in order to marshal our capacities between our countries and also between the public and private sector within our countries in a

true public private partnership. I believe such collaboration can be done and the presence of the public sectors from all of our countries in this meeting amidst various producers and entrepreneurs in the organic industry is a testimony to that.

Madame Chairperson, we are all aware that consumers worldwide are increasingly demanding for quality products. They are also demanding information about how the product is produced, processed, transported and marketed. These concerns encompass environmental, social and healthy issues. As a result, produces in our countries have to meet an increased number of standards. These include ***Good Agricultural Practice, Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points and various Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary requirements.*** I am pleased to learn that organic production systems provide opportunities for our farmers to build capacities to meet the requirements of such standards. This means, organic production is providing opportunities for our produces to remain competitive in an increasingly complex marketing arrangement.

In recognition of the need to assist our farmers to increase production and productivity, in July, 2007 the Fourth Phase Government of Tanzania, launched a Programme for that purpose namely – the **Agricultural Sector Development Programme – ASDP**. Through the Programme, public and private investment will be marshaled for the purpose of empowering producers to increase production; productivity and quality at the same time facilitate access to markets. Producers are encouraged to develop collaborative projects and seek facilitation through their local governments. It is therefore my anticipation that, in their bid to increase production and productivity, Tanzanian organic producers and processors will also participate in this important Programme and realize the expected benefits like the rest of producers.

Madame Chairperson, I have been informed that, the organization of this Conference and this exhibition is a collaborative effort involving many players from the East African region and beyond the region. Let me take this opportunity to all the organizers to thank them in particular:-

- (i) The National Organic Agriculture Movements of East African Member States in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania Burundi and Rwanda;
- (ii) The United Nations Environmental Programme – UNEP and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development – UNCTAD in the framework of the joint UNEP-UNCTAD Capacity Building Task Force on Trade, Environment and Development (CBTF);
- (iii) Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations;
- (iv) The International Trade Centre;
- (v) The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements – IFOAM; and
- (vi) Export Promotion Organic Products from Africa – EPOPA.

Madame Chairperson, with these few remarks, it is my pleasure to declare the exhibition officially opened.

Thank you for your attention.