

**SPEECH BY M. J. MWAFFISI, PERMANENT SECRETARY IN
THE OFFICIAL LAUNCHING OF THE CHILD RIGHTS
CURRICULUM FOR EARLY YEARS PRACTITIONERS
ON 3RD JUNE, 2009, AT PEACOCK HOTEL DAR ES SALAAM**

Director for MS- TCDC,

Training manager, MS- TCDC

Representatives from CREDO – PRO,

Government Officials,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First and foremost, I would like to take this opportunity to express thanks and gratitude to the organizing committee of this workshop for inviting me to the official launching of the child rights curriculum for professionals. I find it very timely as far as child rights are concerned. Thank you very much!

I would also like to thank and congratulate Child Rights Education for Professionals (CRED-PRO), MS-Training Center for Development Cooperation (MS-TCDC) based in Arusha, the Child Rights Curriculum Advisory committee and the National Integrated ECD Secretariat, which comprises of officers from the Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children, Ministry of Education and Vocational Training and the Ministry of Health and Social

Welfare, Tanzania Early Childhood Development Net Work and Development partners. Together, you have done a wonderful job to develop this Child Rights Curriculum that we are launching today.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am obliged to say that the process of developing this curriculum was not an easy task. I believe there were many consultations and meetings of different stakeholders including government officials, different non-governmental organizations and other individuals who worked tirelessly to make this task accomplished. I would like to thank and congratulate them all.

Tanzania ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1991 and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) in 2003. Signing those two treaties meant Tanzania committed herself to fully realize all the stipulated rights in the documents. However, since then, the rights of children have been and are still being violated at all levels not only in Tanzania but all over the world. Thanks to all of you for realizing this and coming up with the idea of developing a curriculum that would address the issue by training professionals who deal with lives and development of children up to 8 years of age. I am also happy to know that this curriculum will equip professionals with skills and knowledge to apply child rights in their individual practice, in the development and provision of services and in advocacy for children.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Part of the bigger Integrated ECD journey started with Hon. Margaret Sitta (MP), Minister for Community Development Gender and Children announcing the start of the Tanzania IECD initiative during the EFA conference that was held in Arusha in February 2008.

Researchers of child rights issues have argued that it is not easy to be a child in Tanzania. This phenomenon could be true if we look at the extent of child rights violation in the country. For instance statistics show that one out of every twelve children born in Tanzania do not live to see their fifth birthday. Moreover, most of those who survive after their fifth year are victims of so many challenges of poor health services, inadequate nutrition, domestic violence in their homes, poor quality education and so on just to mention a few. As adults we should ask ourselves the following question; what are we doing to better protect our children and to promote their right to survival, protection, development and participation? In my opinion, the problem we face most is lack of support and good guidance to parents as well as the professionals around them working with children in the early years. CRED-PRO, MS-TCDC and all of us have realized the problems our children are facing and I am happy that we all have been active in developing this curriculum. Congratulations to all of you!

Ladies and gentlemen, if the curriculum that we are launching today will help protecting the best interest of children in Tanzania, I am very confident that we shall succeed to achieve our mission, our country will be a role model to other African countries in the implementation of the rights of the child. I am very proud also to mention that this curriculum has been prepared in the most professional way and the language that has been used is simple enough for the users and also for training others. Again congratulations for a job well done.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Before I end my speech, I would like to give the following recommendations:

- The curriculum should be translated into Kiswahili so that even those professionals who are not conversant with English could use it, so long as the basic idea is to see the rights of the child are being realized.
- One of the problems that exist in Tanzania as well as in other countries on the issue of child rights is that most children don't grow up knowing and demanding their rights. I would therefore like to propose that training of professionals on child rights should go along with teaching children their rights and their responsibilities at their very early stages of their lives. I am aware that this curriculum caters for all children under eight. This is a very sensitive period for children where they learn most of the

things that determine their future lives. If they are then made to know their rights the work of professionals will be quite easy, as they would be addressing an issue that is known to both of them. Our three key ministries and particularly the Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE) have a role of ensuring that the child rights component is effectively integrated in the syllabus for children under eight.

- Since this curriculum is relevant for many groups of professionals such as from Tanzania Institute of Education, Institute of Social Work, Teachers' Colleges, Health Training Institutes and Community Development Training Institutes, there is need to integrate and mainstream this curriculum into their training manuals.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Finally I would once again like to thank you all for the work that has been done up to now and your very good participation in this launching workshop. The process has just begun. We need to believe and be committed in child rights and hopefully soon or later the rights of our children will be realized so that they can live a more dignified life.

Child rights are human rights. Let us all depart on a journey that will fundamentally change how we perceive, understand and relate to children, childhood and families”.

Ladies and gentlemen, with these remarks I now declare the Child Rights Curriculum for Early Years Practitioners is officially launched and I wish you all the best. Long live child rights.

Thank you for Listening!