

**STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF
TANZANIA HONOURABLE JAKAYA MRISHO KIKWETE AT THE
OPENING SESSION OF THE SECOND REGIONAL INTER-
MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE OF THE INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE OF THE GREAT LAKES REGION.
LUSAKA 21-22 JULY 2005**

**Your Honour, Mr. Lupando Mwape, Vice President of the
Republic of Zambia**

Fellow Ministers and Members of Parliament,

**Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General
to the Great Lakes Region, Mr. Ibrahima Fall,**

**Representative of the Chairperson of The African Union
Commission, Ambassador Mamadou Bah**

Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners,

Excellencies Co-chairs of the Group of Friends,

Distinguished Invited guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me your Excellency to express my sincere gratitude to you for taking time from your busy schedule to come and officiate the opening of this second meeting of the Regional Inter-ministerial Committee of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region. Your presence with us today is yet another testimony of your unquestionable support for our noble collective objective of achieving irreversible peace, stability, democracy and development in the Great Lakes Region. Not only is your President one of the signatories of the Dar es Salaam Declaration, but Zambia is a custodian of peace accords being implemented in the region. The peace agreements on Angola and the DRC are cases in point.

Vice President,

Allow me also at this juncture, to convey my heartfelt congratulations to H.E. President Levy Patrick Mwanawasa (SC) on his election to the Presidency of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (**MMD**), at the just-concluded MMD National Party convention at the Mulungushi Rock of Authority in Kabwe. His resounding victory at the national Convention, which saw him scoring more than a thousand votes, is a testimony of the confidence bestowed on him by the broad membership of your party. I trust that the party mandate expresses the wish of the people of Zambia through their representatives at that successful INDABA.

Your honour

The Dar-es Salaam Declaration signed on 20th November 2004 was a clear commitment of our leaders to jointly work together towards a prosperous, peaceful and stable Great Lakes Region. I would like, your

Excellency, to avail myself this opportunity to reiterate Tanzania's continued commitment to the full implementation of the spirit and letter of the Dar es Salaam Declaration for the Great Lakes Region. I am also pleased to note that all the other countries have remained on course in search for lasting peace and security, stability and prosperity in the Great Lakes Region.

Your Honour, Vice President

Ladies and Gentlemen

During the first Inter-ministerial meeting that was held in Kigali in February this year, I mentioned in my statement that the Great Lakes Region seems to be going through what skeptics have come to define as a vicious cycle of interminable conflicts. However, recent positive progress being registered in Burundi provides us great solace that there is finally light at the end of the tunnel. The electoral process is going well. As a matter of fact they are nearing the end.

The positive developments in Burundi have been further reinforced by the recent decision of the last armed group in Burundi, the **PALIPEHUTU-FNL** to rejoin negotiations with both the transitional Government of Burundi and hopefully with the post election government. These developments signify that we can put an end to armed conflict in the Region and prove the skeptics wrong.

Mr Vice President, as an active and committed partner of the Burundi peace process negotiations, Tanzania has, and will continue to do anything within its means, to mediate inter-party peace negotiations with the objective of achieving national reconciliation and reconstruction in Burundi. Although these negotiations between the PELIPEHUTU-FNL and the government of Tanzania are currently at the

technical stage, we remain optimistic that the parties will soon agree on modalities of ceasefire, and make quick progress towards the final goal of achieving durable peace and cessation of all hostilities. I call upon the countries of the Great Lakes Region as a whole to continue to extend support to the process of peace, democracy and national reconstruction in Burundi.

Your Honour

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The election process in the Democratic Republic of Congo is also on course. It is imperative for all countries of the Great Lakes Region to lend solid support to the people and government of the Democratic Republic of Congo in their endeavor towards peaceful, free and fair elections. I have no doubt that all countries in the Region wish to see a peaceful and unified Democratic Republic of Congo that is open to viable economic partnership with other countries of the Great Lakes Region.

Mr. vice president

Ladies and Gentlemen

We welcome the grand achievement made on peace in Sudan recently. These have ended Africa's longest standing war in Southern Sudan. We all join in to wish the new government of national unity every success. We promise our unqualified support to President Omar al Bashir and Vice President John Garang and the entire people of Sudan. We sincerely hope that using the experience gained from the Naivasha process the Government of Sudan can successfully negotiate and

therefore end the Darfur crisis peacefully. Summon courage and political will to make Darfur crisis history.

Mr Vice President

It is heart warming in deed to note that the tensions between the DRC and the Republic of Rwanda have eased. The eruption of these tensions soon after the Dar es Salaam Summit was like an anti climax It almost soured the otherwise serene atmosphere created by First Summit of the Great Lakes Region.

Your Honour

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Ministers from countries of the Great Lakes Region will be meeting here for the next two days to examine priority programmes and projects aimed at enabling member states of the Great Lakes Region to jointly realize the conference objectives of promoting Regional peace and security, humanitarian and social development, good governance and regional economic integration. This meeting is a follow-up to our first meeting that was held in Kigali. Following the Kigali Regional Inter-ministerial meeting, Technical Task Forces and the Regional Preparatory committees worked diligently to develop a list of priority programmes and projects which the Ministers will deliberate upon and take appropriate decisions

Your honour Mr. Vice President
Distinguished delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to end by thanking the Government of Zambia for ably organizing and hosting this conference. We are deeply humbled by your warm hospitality. We are not surprised this is a typical the Zambian peoples. Thank you. I wish also to take this opportunity to commend the secretariat for a job well done. In this regard, I would like to recognize the contribution of a great African son, our brother Ibrahim Fall, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General to the Great Lakes Region for his tireless efforts to ensure the success of this process. Likewise allow me to express my gratitude for the contribution extended by the African Union Commission. I would like also to recognize and thank sincerely the Group of Friends for their continued support and partnership in advancing this process. Last but not least allow me to salute the leadership and diligence shown by all Honourable Ministers in supporting the process in our respective countries.

Mr. Vice president

It would be remiss of me if I did not recognize our senior officials in the regional preparatory committee and the joint secretariat of the UN/AU for their dedication and commitment to peace stability and prosperity of the Great Lakes Region. They have done an excellent job in advancing the course of this process. In fact it is then more than anybody else who have really made this process a success. Let us all give them a big hand of applause. We thank you. We have no reward but history will reward you handsomely.

It now gives me great pleasure and honour to welcome your Excellency Vice President of the Republic of Zambia to open the second Regional Inter-Ministerial meeting of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region

Thank you very much.