

**ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY HER EXCELLENCY DR. SAMIA  
SULUHU HASSAN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC  
OF TANZANIA BEFORE RECEIVING THE GLOBAL  
GOALKEEPER'S AWARD, 04<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2025, HYATT  
REGENCY HOTEL, DAR ES SALAAM**

*Your Excellency Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, Former President of  
the United Republic of Tanzania,*

*Your Excellency Dr. Amani Abeid Karume, Former President of  
Zanzibar and Chairman of the Revolutionary Council,*

*Your Excellency Dr. Philip Isdor Mpango; Vice President of the  
United Republic of Tanzania,*

*Honourable Dr Tulia Ackson, Speaker of the National Assembly,*

*Hon. Jenister Mhagama (MP), Minister for Health Tanzania*

*Amb. Dr. Moses Kusiluka, Chief Secretary,*

*Eng. Zena Said, Secretary to the Revolutionary Council of Zanzibar  
and Chief Secretary,*

*Dr. Anita Zaidi; President of the Gender Equality Division at the  
Gates Foundation.*

*Honourable Albert Chalamila, Regional Commissioner of Dar es Salaam,*

*Dr. Rasa Izadnegahdar; Director, Maternal, Newborn, Child Nutrition & Health at Gates Foundation,*

*The Delegation from the Gates Foundation,*

*Distinguished Guests,*

*Members of the Press,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

*Good afternoon,*

*Dr Anita and the delegation,*

I wish to welcome you to Tanzania and thank you for coming all this way to engage with us. We are honoured to have you here, and we salute your commitment to championing global health.

I am honoured to stand before this gathering to accept this prestigious **Global Goalkeepers Award**. This award is not only encouraging but also inspiring for many reasons. Foremost is that the Gates Foundation, in addition to being an important player in

the global health agenda, has continued to be a valuable partner to Tanzania. Secondly, this Award is recognition of the collective leadership and commitment by Tanzanian people, who work tirelessly to improve the lives and livelihoods of women, children, and families in Tanzania. So, we thank you very much.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,* Reducing maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent mortality and improving nutrition has been at the core of our national development agenda. As a Head of State who also happens to be a mother, investment in maternal health is something that is very dear to me. This is why upon assuming this high office, I pledged that in addition to investing in health facilities and staff we would prioritize maternal and child health.

Since 2021, we have undertaken various measures to improve Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health, as well as nutrition. It is encouraging to note that, due to various strategic interventions, maternal mortality ratio has declined from **556** per **100,000** livebirths to **104** per **100,000** livebirth and more children now get to celebrate their

fifth birthdays as under-five mortality has declined from **67** to **43** per **1,000** livebirths.

In our quest to improve Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health, as well as nutrition, in addition to what has been said, allow me to add my voice to what has been done and what we should do to put the health agenda at the top since 2021 we undertook the following measures:

- (i) **Foremost**, we scaled up investments in health infrastructure and increased the number of health facilities providing comprehensive emergency obstetrics and newborn care from **340** in 2020 to **523** in 2024, particularly in rural and hard to reach areas;

**Firstly**; we increased the number of Registered Medical Specialist in Obstetrics and Gynecologists from **69** in 2020 to **338** in 2024.

**Secondly**; we have been offering free maternal and under five health services. We have also strengthened the referral system by procuring **727** ambulances in **9** years from year 2015 to

2024, thereby enhanced access to emergency obstetric care, by bridging the gap between rural communities and health facilities, and ensuring timely interventions for life-threatening cases.

To complement the existing referral system, we have introduced the *M-mama* emergency obstetric and newborn care referral services. This is done together with the Vodafone Foundation. Furthermore, we have increased the number of Ultrasounds or Sonographic Machines from **345** in 2020 to **970** in 2024. For the hard to reach areas, the Government has undertaken massive construction of rural roads to facilitate trips to and from the health centres.

*Fourthly*, we have leveraged on advancement of ICT to conduct countrywide maternal and perinatal death reviews virtually. As a result, we have realized that competency in managing some of the obstetric complications is a challenge in about 80% of maternal deaths. This has guided our efforts to intensify capacity building through mentorships to the healthcare providers.

*Fifth*, we rolled out multi-sectoral strategies including the use of technology in nutrition assessment by procuring COBAS machines. These machines have strengthened the capacity of our National Laboratory to conduct nutrition-related analysis such as the use of biological samples to assess nutritional status. By using local expertise, we have designed a modern local salt-mixing machine that ensures adequate iodine levels. Collectively, these various interventions have decreased the rate of wasting among children under the age of five from 4.5% in 2015 to 3% in 2022, stunting among children under five has declined from 42% in 2015 to 30% and underweight has decreased from 16% to 12% over the same period. Here we haven't done as well as we could, but there is progress, the journey continues, and we are continuing to take measures to reducing underweight children, stunting and malnutrition.

*Sixth*, we have been implementing a National Accelerated Action and Investment Agenda for Adolescent Health and Wellbeing (NAIA-AHW) focused on addressing teenage pregnancies and gender inequality, empowering girls with

education and life skills. These efforts provided the tools need for girls to make informed choices and lead healthier lives. As a result, teenage pregnancy has decreased from 27% to 22%.

*Seventh* is the Community Health Workers (CHWs) who have been instrumental in improving access to essential healthcare services at the grassroots level. CHWs have served as a vital link between health facilities and communities, delivering critical health education and promoting immunization and nutrition programs. They have contributed to the increase of awareness and addressing barriers like transportation and cultural practices. Their role in preventive care, coupled with early detection and referrals, has not only reduced preventable deaths but also strengthened community trust in the healthcare system.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

This progress has not been achieved in isolation. It is the result of collective actions, the unwavering dedication of our health workers, the partnership of civil society organizations like

the Jakaya Kikwete Foundation, and the support of global allies like the Gates Foundation.

However, much as we celebrate these achievements, we recognize that the journey is far from over. We still have work to do to further improve these metrics and improve health services. Additionally, other challenges such as climate change, global health crises, and economic inequality remind us that our work must continue with renewed vigor.

You may wish to note that this year we are finalizing implementation of our National Development Vision that covered the 25-year period from the year 2000 up to this year 2025. In it we had set to increase health and well-being of Tanzanians, and to raise the life expectancy. I am happy to note since then life expectancy rose from 51.5 year to 66 years in 2022. Over the next 25 years we aim to further invest in health and increasing accessibility so as to raise the life expectancy up to at least 75 years of age. In this regard, we call for continued engagement with the Gates Foundation as we work to meet our health goals for our people.

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

It is my ambition to realize continued investment in specialized health facilities and services. One area where we seek continued partnership is training and capacity building to ensure we address the shortage of qualified staff and specialized manpower.

Tanzania's story is a testament to what is possible when we place health, nutrition, and equality at the forefront of our priorities. As a global community, we share a responsibility to ensure that no woman, child, or adolescent is left behind.

To my fellow leaders and policy makers in this room today, let this award inspire us to push the boundaries of what is achievable. Let us commit to investing in systems that uphold the dignity of every individual, ensuring that progress is sustainable and inclusive.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

As I conclude my remarks, let me dedicate this Award to all healthcare workers whose compassion, skills, and resilience made

our efforts meaningful. Together, we will continue to champion the Global Goals, ensuring that health and opportunity remain a universal right.

**Thank you for your kind attention**