

Remarks by the Ambassador of Finland

Ritva Jolkkonen

Mheshimiwa mgeni rasmi,
Your Excellency Mama Anna Mkapa, First Lady

Distinguished Representatives of the Organizing Universities of Dar es Salaam, South Florida and Helsinki, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure and indeed an honor to address you this morning. At the outset I would like to congratulate the three universities for taking the initiative to organize this Conference on Development Ethics in Dar es Salaam. Academic research on ethical values involved in the development process and globalization is very relevant and timely. It is the first time these ethical issues have been discussed in such a comprehensive and interdisciplinary manner in Tanzania and Africa. I think the organizers deserve a special credit for this. I would also like to pay a tribute to the Guest of Honor, Mama Anna Mkapa, the First Lady; I think your presence here this morning is a special honor and expression of support and interest in the topic of this conference.

Finland is very pleased to be associated—through the University of Helsinki—with this conference. Why is Finland interested in ethical values of development?

The first reason is that through our own national development process we have learned how important national identity and shared values are for the development of society and nation building. During this century Finland has undergone a very rapid transformation from a poor, isolated rural country to a modern, or postindustrial, information-based, high-tech nation. I believe we have a lot to share from this national experience. Secondly, it is very important for us to be engaged in this discussion in Tanzania, which is our oldest and a major development partner. Tanzania has made commendable progress in establishing partnership-based cooperation with donors. Discussion on ethics and values is an important dimension of this dialogue.

In the coming days this conference will discuss a number of key issues on the present development process. In these welcoming remarks I would like to address briefly the ethics of development in the framework of *globalisation*. Economic globalisation is often seen as a threat in developing countries including Tanzania. This is understandable as economic globalisation has a strong impact on both postindustrial and developing economies. However, globalisation is a reality; it is not possible for any country to

step aside and develop in isolation. Rather, we have to look into ways and means of how to benefit from globalisation, how to make it an opportunity, and yet, how to protect the most vulnerable economies and people from its negative effects.

This requires *global* and *local* action; globally we need to strengthen mechanisms for global governance. This means strong global and multi-lateral institutions and cooperation, based on common vision and values.

But equally important is to *empower the local community*. The present experience shows that the local culture and identity play a key role in the development and success of any economy. Today and in the future sustained economic growth will be increasingly based on *knowledge capital*. This knowledge capital comprises not only codified knowledge but also knowledge that is produced by local traditions and culture. Today we call this *tacit knowledge*. Therefore, in any country building a knowledge-based economy requires strong investment in education. But at the same time it requires empowerment of local communities, encouraging utilisation of the local knowledge and traditions.

Local and global level are closely linked; local identity and knowledge are important factors in the development process and integration in the global economy.

I wish all success for this conference; I am convinced that this conference will contribute to further discussion on development ethics. I also hope this conference will cross the bridge between academic research and development practice and the results of the conference can benefit the planning and implementation of development programs.