SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. ALI MOHAMED SHEIN, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA, AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE ELEVENTH INTOSAI WORKING GROUP MEETING ON ENVIRONMENTAL AUDITING (WGEA 11) ON 26TH JUNE 2007- AT NGURDOTO HOTEL, ARUSHA

Minister of State for Environment Affairs,
Honourable Prof. Mark Mwandosya,

Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee of the Parliament,

Chairperson of the Local Authorities Accounts Committee,

Regional Commissioner for Arusha
Honourable Col. Samuel Ndomba,

Chairperson of Working Group on Environmental Auditing and Auditor General of Canada
Mrs. Sheila Fraser,

Controller and Auditor General of the United Republic of Tanzania
Mr. Ludovick Utoh,

Members of the Working Group on Environmental Auditing,

Distinguished delegates,

Invited Guests,

Members of the Mass Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am pleased to have the honour to officiate the opening of this Eleventh meeting of the INTOSAI Working Group on environmental auditing. This is an important meeting and I am glad to note that it is being attended by delegates from all corners of the world. I would like, therefore, to begin with a word of welcome. On behalf of the people and government of the United Republic of Tanzania, I warmly welcome you, ladies and gentlemen to this country which is gifted with wonderful natural resources but, like other countries, faces daunting environmental challenges. Let me take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to the INTOSAI Working group on environmental auditing for kindly choosing Tanzania to play host to this important meeting. I believe the distinguished delegates will find the venue, here in Arusha, which is near our prime tourist attractions, offering a conducive environment for your serious deliberations.

As I have said, Tanzania is naturally endowed with many attractions. Those of you who, yesterday, were lucky to have visited, during your environmental excursion the famed Ngorongoro Crater, have probably seen only a fraction of these attractions. I believe in spite of your busy schedule during this meeting, you may still find time, and chance, to visit Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa, Serengeti, Selous, Manyara and Mikumi game parks and the spicy Islands of Zanzibar, just to mention a few other attractive places. But it is my earnest hope that, all in all, you will be able to find your stay here in Arusha, and Tanzania in general, comfortable and enjoyable. As we say in Kiswahili, in welcoming you, "Karibuni sana".

Honourable Chairperson,
Let me express, once again, my gratitude to the INTOSAI Working Group on Environmental Auditing, and organizers of this event, here today, for the honour, and opportunity, given to me to address this high level international forum and share views with the distinguished participants on this issue of environmental auditing. I must admit that this is the first big gathering of Auditors from across the World to have ever assembled in this country. But I believe the honour bestowed on our country arises from the confidence and trust which the organizers have put on the National Audit Office of Tanzania and particularly in its ability, among other things, to host this big event. It pleases me to see how timely and relevant is the Motto of this meeting. The motto is quite to the joint, in Kiswahili, when it reads: "Yatunze Mazingira Yakutunze". Literary this means, "Protect the environment so that the environment can protect you".

This is a message for all of us to do the needful for our environment. It is a clear message which transcends our respective backgrounds and origins. In Tanzania, the office of the Vice President has been charged with oversight functions on environmental affairs. It is, therefore, my office which has the role of fostering what the theme of your conference calls upon all of us, that is to ensure that the environment in Tanzania is protected to enable this environment, in turn, to protect all the citizens of this country.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
As you already know, the subject matter of this meeting, is none other than "Environmental Auditing for Sustainable Development". This is an appropriate and pertinent subject not only for its relevance but also for coming up for discussion at the time when our country, and the world at large, is facing challenges arising from the effects of global warming. I am pleased to know, that during your discussion of this subject, you will focus on major issues of improving, and modernizing environmental audit, through the sharing of knowledge and experience, within your profession, and on the wise guidance of INTOSAI. It is my understanding, therefore, that among issues that this meeting will dwell on, include some discussion on contemporary topics on environmental auditing and global environmental challenges that we are all facing in the world today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
I need not over emphasize the importance of environment for sustainable development of Tanzania and, indeed, of the rest of our contemporary world. In that regard, we, in Tanzania, are investing a significant part of our resources in ensuring that we have development activities that favour the sustainable well being of the present as well as the coming generations.

I believe you are aware that ours is a highly interdependent and interconnected world. This is to say that environmental problems are not limited to a single country, but stretch across the whole of this planet. It is important to know that environmental stakes are already high. But as our populations continue to grow and consumption levels increase, these stakes get even higher, and the situation becomes worse. Therefore, there is need for governments to come up with deliberate measurers to ensure that issues of environment are seriously taken on board programmes, and worked upon accordingly.

It should be noted that the number of international commitments, particularly in relation to issues of environment, has grown significantly, over the past decade. So, appeal for sustainable development, as a solution to environmental problems, requires a truly global collaborative effort, which should involve governments, supreme audit institutions, non-governmental organizations, industries as well as ordinary citizens.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
I believe you will agree with me that our world is facing a lot of challenges that are associated with environmental issues. Tanzania is no exceptional to these environmental challenges. Productivity of the soil in most parts of our country has been declining due to land degradation. More than 50% of the people, in Tanzania, do not have access to safe and good quality water. Air pollution is not only another challenge, that is coming up as a major problem in this country, but also it has lowered environmental productivity in our towns. But it is gratifying to note, on the other hand, that the impact of air pollution, on rural areas, is still negligible. This is because there are limited industrial activities being carried out in these areas.

However, forests continue to be reduced in their size in this country as a result of human activities which include clearing of forests for agricultural activities and other uses such as a source of energy, namely "wood fuel"

But you know as well as I do that these, and other similar problems, which I have not mentioned, are not unique to Tanzania. They are common problems which are found in most developing countries. As a developing country, Tanzania faces increasingly, therefore, complex challenges in the development, use and protection of her environmental resources. Her interaction with international companies, for concessioning, in particular with regards to the attraction of foreign investment, and negotiation of complex investments, in such sectors as mining, requires the adoption

of better environmental planning techniques which would make the companies have particular focus on, and live up to their corporate social responsibility.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I have pointed out before, our country is facing many challenges. But the government of the United Republic of Tanzania under the able leadership of His Excellency Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, has taken various initiatives to confront these challenges. It should be acknowledged that the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977 as revised in 2000, places responsibility, as our supreme law of the land, on every Tanzanian, under its Article 27 (1), to protect the natural resources of Tanzania.

Initiatives taken to meet the challenges have included the establishment of the National Environment Management Council (NEMC), which has been tasked, as its name suggests, with the proper management of environmental issues. The Council initiates and implements various environment conservation and management programmes. Its tasks include also the preparation of strategies for environment conservation, provision of mass education and sensitization of the public on environment issues.

In the determination to tackle the environmental challenges, the government has created a Division of Environment, within the Office of the Vice President which is charged with, among other tasks, the day-to-day supervision and coordination of environmental matters.

Our government has also established an independent Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, which has the responsibility of developing, as well as managing, our natural resources. All this is to ensure that there is sustainable conservation of natural resources in our country, for the benefit of the present and future generations.

Our Government is quite aware that, unsystematic promotion of agriculture, which is the engine of development of this country, could bring forth negative impact and adverse effects on natural resources, and the environment, in general. Such impact in turn, undermines any further growth of the agricultural sector. The government has, therefore, embarked on promoting environmentally sound use and management, of agrochemicals to minimize this risk of adverse effects. Other measures which are being taken by the government include promotion of integrated and holistic approaches, through land use planning and management.

The government has also been taking necessary measures to arrest the fast depletion of forests. As I have said, forests are under threat of disappearing in Tanzania due to human activities in the quest to meet various needs, including wood fuel as a source of energy. Concerted efforts are, therefore, being made to minimize wood fuel consumption by developing alternative sources of energy, so as to save our forests.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
As you may be aware Tanzania has signed and acceded to various international agreements on issues concerning the environment. The intention of entering into these agreements is not only to safeguard the global environment generally, but also, our national environment, in particular. Allow me to mention some of these international conventions on environment to which our government is a signatory.

1. The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal:
   In acceding to this agreement, our country, alongside other countries, seeks to minimize the amount and toxicity of wastes generation and to ensure environmentally sound management of the wastes as closely as possible, from their source of generation. The Convention provides for assistance to least developing countries, including Tanzania, in environmentally sound management of the hazardous and other wastes which they generate.

2. The Convention on Biological Diversity:
   Tanzania signed this agreement since it requires countries to develop national strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

3. The International Convention on the Regulation of Whaling:
   Our government signed this convention to join with other countries in the efforts to protect all species of whales from overhunting; to establish a system of international regulation for the whale fisheries to ensure proper conservation and development of whale stocks; and to safeguard for future generations the great natural resources presented by whale stock.

4. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea:
   Tanzania signed this agreement so as to set up a comprehensive new legal regime for the sea and oceans; to adopt rules concerning environmental standards as well as enforcement provisions to deal with pollution of the marine environment.

5. The United Nations Conservation to Combat Desertification:
   Our country acceded to the Convention with the objective of combating desertification and mitigate the effects of drought through national action programs that incorporate long-term strategies, supported by international cooperation and partnership arrangements.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Let me point out, once again, that this meeting on environmental auditing is an important gathering. It is my expectation, therefore, that the National Audit Office of Tanzania will utilize this opportunity of knowledge sharing on environmental audit most fruitfully with its counterpart professional bodies and come up with an

achievable strategy of reviewing areas for desired results. Areas for review include, among others, solid waste management in our cities, industrial and consumer waste management, medical waste management and mining environmental management, to mention a few of them. It should also be an achievable strategy of proposing development interventions at the national, regional and international level.

Supreme Audit Institutions in our respective countries have a role to play in ensuring the successful implementation of environment management plans. Environmental Auditors are required to give assurance to the people and their countries with respect to the environment. The people need to be convinced that the environment is the most valuable resource. They need to ensure it is sustainable if converted into other land use. All this calls for the close involvement of the people in all stages of decision making on environmental matters as well as in all phases of implementation. It is important also to ensure that social and economic benefits emanating from the environment, and its sustainable use, are maintained, and enhanced, both at the local and national levels.

I must admit that the level of participation at this meeting on environmental auditing makes me quite convinced that the subject matter under discussion will be adequately, and professionally deliberated upon. The outcome will, no doubt, be to the satisfaction of the organisers and to the ultimate realization, of the objective of this gathering.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me conclude my remarks by extending to the distinguished delegates, once again, a warm welcome to Tanzania and feel at home during your short stay here. Finally I wish you success in your deliberations and conclusion of this important meeting. After having said these concluding remarks, I now have the pleasure to declare the 11th Meeting of the INTOSAI Working Group on Environmental Auditing officially open.

I thank you very much for your kind attention.

Karibuni tena, Tanzania