

# A Critical Look at Tanzania's Development Vision 2025

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## Introduction

By the mid-1980s Tanzania realized that her development policies and strategies had proved a failure as far as socio-economic development was concerned. In 1986, the until-then-resistant regime to IMF and World Bank packages aimed at providing economic reform assistance gave in and a reform package was agreed upon. The content of the package included policies that were at loggerheads with the key components of the policy of Socialism and Self Reliance as outlined in the 1967 Arusha Declaration: The fundamental policy that guided most sectoral development policies. Political and economic developments led to further sidelining of the Arusha Declaration policies when, for example, the Zanzibar Resolution of, 1991 did away with an important pillar of the Declaration -the Leadership Code. Causes of the failure of the Arusha Declaration policies to realize the intended objectives can be attributed to internal and external factors. In short we can say social-ism had failed and capitalism was winning, and winning fast! With these political and economic developments Tanzania found herself without a meta-policy to serve as the basis and guide for the development effort. Something had to be put in place for that purpose. In 1995, the government appointed a group of experts to formulate a policy document to that effect in consultation with the different sections of the Tanzanian community at large. The outcome was the Tanzania Development Vision 2025.

The vision aims to guide Tanzania's development effort into the 21 st Century and achieve a certain level of development by the year 2025. By 2025, Tanzania is expected to :

- Have a population with a high quality of life,
- Be a stable, peaceful and united country ,
- Have an intact well working good governance machinery ,
- Have a well-educated population and one that craves for learning, and
- Have a competitive economy capable of producing sustain- able growth and shared benefits.

These targets sound good and promising. However, a lot of issues need to be sorted out before anything spectacular happens in the next twenty-five (25) years. We look at some of these issues below.

## What is New?

The Arusha Declaration policies were in use for 30 years (1967- 1997) before they were replaced by the vision 2025. The general assessment of the Declaration was that Tanzania was "neither socialist nor self-reliant". The three "enemies" that the then Tanganyika had declared war against in 1961 - poverty , disease and ignorance- are still rampant. In fact, the situation is not promising as poverty has increased; old diseases have persisted, new diseases have surfaced, and those al- ready eradicated or somewhat controlled are resurfacing with new vigour. Literacy levels are falling and with the current practice of charging user fees, it is likely that the rates will fall even further.

The failed Arusha Declaration had all the objectives of the Vision 2025. First, it had emphasized man-centered development and the need to eradicate poverty. In other words, it aimed at a high quality of life for the population. Secondly, it clearly stated that in order for development to come about, there is need for good leadership and sound policies. Basically this is good governance. Thirdly, there was a full section on the type of education that Tanzania needed both at the level of the common man and the expertise needed for development purposes. For the former there was the Education for Self-reliance strategy and one of its implementation programs -the Universal Primary Education campaign. For the latter the First Five Year Plan's objective was that of having qualified Tanzanians to fill all professional posts by 1980. Fourthly , when it comes to a competitive economy, this has always been the refrain whether in shorter term policy documents such as the annual budget, or the longer term ones like the 1987 Chama Cha Mapinduzi's (the then only political party) Programu ya Chama 1987- 20021 .The Second Five Year Plan (1969-1974) which was drawn up to emphasize socialism and self-reliance had two of its objectives pointing in this very direction. These were, the need for mechanized agriculture and part industrialization via Import Substitution Industries. And, for the "shared benefits", the Arusha Declaration was deep into that in its attack on the way capitalist societies practiced inequitable wealth distribution.

There is therefore nothing new in the Vision 2025 that was not covered in the Arusha Declaration. Yet, the environment in which an attempt will be made to meet the very same objectives has become much more treacherous and competitive indeed, the introduction to the Vision acknowledges this. This is much more so because of the globalization processes we are currently witnessing. Policy-making has become internationalized, with local policy- making organs in poor countries having a passive role of discussing directives from the "payers of the piper". Since we are nowhere near self-reliance, it seems the same pattern will persist for some decades - the last remaining two objectives of the Vision 2025 inclusive. A question to ask at this point is: what is likely to be the stimulus and force behind the implementation of the Vision? Will it be donors or will the vision prescriptions as they appear be owned by the people?

Internally also there are many yet- to-be tackled problems which, throw a shadow of doubt as to whether anything is going to come out of the vision. Firstly, the issue of corruption is yet to be resolved by way of controlling or reducing it. Having appointed the Warioba Commission in 1996, which made recommendations the government, little has been done by way of follow-up. The donors, on whom the vision will rely heavily, are not happy with this state of affairs an they have so indicated to the government. Secondly, the presence of weak civil society organizations, which need time to mature, will certainly hamper a lively society that can positively contribute to the political processes in the country .These include opposition political parties, which have shown little cohesion, are cash strapped, and have now clearly shown that the vigour they started with is gone and are instead showing signs of disintegrating. Thirdly, as for the craved for unity amongst Tanzanians, the liberalized economy has put in the open the staggering gap between the haves and have-nots, a gap that is growing faster by the day. This impacts on social service delivery systems, which are now available only to those who can pay.

### **Means-Ends Mix-Up ?**

Going through the five main objectives of the vision, one wonders whether means and ends have not been lumped together. It would seem that it is only when there is good governance, and peace, stability and unity , that objectives like a sound economy and a high quality of life can be pursued and finally attained. Now that Tanzania is chasing both the means and the ends simultaneously, it can be accurately predicted that the remaining twenty-five years for the fulfilment of the objectives of Vision 2025 will not suffice for the realization of such ambitious objectives like eliminating abject poverty. What all this suggests is that there is also a mix-up of political and economic problems. The former would include, for example, the issue of good governance, which is within Tanzania's capacity to resolve. The latter, abject poverty , would always need external intervention as it has always been, and justifiably so because of partly historical reason.

### **Conclusion**

What the Vision puts before us is a -set of over-ambitious goals and objectives which are too many for a poor, dependent economy to pursue concurrently in as short a period as 25 years. The 30 years of the Arusha Declaration should serve as a reminder that in the search for social development, time runs very fast for the poor. Like other previous plans, one can only portend that little I will be achieved given "the uncritical opening-up to everybody" that comes with globalzation, without forgetting the catalogue of internal weaknesses and problems that need to be addressed as a prelude to the search for Vision 2025 objectives.

For Tanzanian specialist academics and policy analysts, the Vision reminds them of the saying "We Must Run While Others Walk" coined by President Nyerere in the

1970s. If Tanzania is to realize what is in the Vision by 2025, then she has to dash while others rest. In any event will they be resting?